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Scientific journal **SOCIAL WELFARE INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH** is a joint periodic international research edition of Lithuania and Ukraine that presents methodological studies and researches of authors from different countries, reflects variety of scientific sociocultural schools and topics concerning interdisciplinary approach in the understanding of human social welfare. The articles published in the journal are reviewed by two members of the editorial board or their appointed experts. The journal is published twice a year: in June and in December of each year. June edition is published in Šiauliai University (Lithuania). December edition is published in Open International University of Human Development “Ukraine” (Ukraine)

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Preface by Editors-in-Chief

We are glad to present to the readers the fourth issue of our joint scientific journal “SOCIAL WELFARE *INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH*” published by the universities of two countries – Lithuania and Ukraine. In this issue we continue to publish results of international interdisciplinary scientific researches in various aspects of social sphere. We are also glad to have authors from Canada and Turkey joining us this time.

Among positive tendencies of the last years we can name integration of scientific research of scientists from different countries. So the fourth issue of our journal also contains researches conducted in universities of different countries. A complex research of volunteers training peculiarities brought together scientists from Lithuania, Turkey, Spain, Italy and Portugal. A comparative research of study quality assessment was done by an international group of scientists in universities of Lithuania and Ukraine. Another research offers a comparative analysis of models of teachers training quality provision in the USA and Ukraine.

Traditionally a lot of attention is paid to problems of vocational training of social sphere specialists. Several authors dedicated their researches to various aspects of working with people with disabilities. It is still a topical theme in the view of UN Convention concerning the rights of people with disability. For example, Ukraine has only just approved the National plan of actions according to the Convention for 2012–2020.

Canadian scientists have initiated an interesting tradition: they plan to publish a series of articles with common subject, like social support of elderly people and those with disabilities.

Several articles in this issue present the results of researches conducted in terms of various international projects.

In the fourth issue of the journal, eleven articles of twenty-four researchers are presented. The authors of the articles are from Canada, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Turkey and the USA. According to research topics the scientific articles are divided into four sections: “Social Challenges”, “The Development of Professional Competencies”, “Disability Studies” and “Psychosocial Rehabilitation”. All articles are original research works oriented towards the possibility of implementation in many states.

The cross-cultural perspective and character of our edition allows us to investigate social problems from different points of view, and to get new ideas and new knowledge within the frames of wide scientific discussion. The peculiarities of intercultural and interdisciplinary collaboration are distinctive and we expect that in the future our research partnerships will be stronger and stronger.

The articles in the journal are presented in English. The journal is published twice a year. The June edition is published at Šiauliai University in Lithuania; the December edition is published at the Open International University of Human Development

“Ukraine”. We believe, that our academic publication will be popular not only among Lithuanian and Ukrainian researchers, post-graduates, specialists, and students concerned with creating social welfare, but also will become known in Europe and other parts of the world.

Last year our journal was included in EBSCO: SocINDEX with Full Text (<http://search.ebscohost.com>), this year it is presented in Copernicus Index (<http://journals.indexcopernicus.com>). We will continue to strive for its inclusion in other prominent scientific research databases.

The Editors-in-Chief acknowledge the authors, the Editorial Board, the designer, the staff of the Publishing Office and everyone who has contributed to the publication of the journal “SOCIAL WELFARE *INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH*”. Special thanks are for our future readers. We will not be able to exist without you. By inviting you for collaboration with our social scientists, we believe in the meaningfulness and future of our work together.

*Editors-in-Chief Kateryna Kolchenko
and Ingrida Baranauskienė*

CONGRATULATIONS

The editorial board of international scientific journal “SOCIAL WELFARE *INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH*” along with the staff of Šiauliai University and University “Ukraine” offer their genuine congratulations to Editor-in-Chief Dr. Ingrida Baranauskienė on being awarded an honorary degree “Emeritus Professor of the Open International University of Human Development “Ukraine”.

This title means recognition of many years of Dr. Baranauskienė’s fruitful activity on development of international cooperation, project activities in the area of scientific relations establishment and faculty exchange.



*Dear Ingrida, we wish you health, success, satisfaction
from your brilliant work
and support of your colleagues and friends!*



AN INITIAL INVESTIGATION OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS TO UKRAINE: PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE OF RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

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Abstract

Ukraine and the United States are engaged in education reform movements to improve quality of future teachers. Reform in the United States focuses on the use of evidence-based practices and data-based decision making. Reform in Ukraine focuses on democratic, learner-centered education. Using one university in the United States, this research investigates the degree to which preservice teacher candidates in different teacher training programs (early childhood, elementary, secondary, special education) perceive knowledge of components from the Response to Intervention model, a major focus of school reform. Application of the study to Ukraine is discussed.

Key words: *Response to Intervention, data-based decision making, progress monitoring, research-based instruction, preservice teachers, elementary, special education, early childhood, secondary education.*

Introduction

Though there are differences in the structure of formal education between the United States and Ukraine, there are many fundamental similarities. One similarity is the desire to assure that teachers deliver high quality education to their students. Because the delivery of high quality of instruction is a reflection of higher education teacher training programs, programs in the United States and Ukraine are engaged in the process of serious reform to improve teacher quality. In the United States, one focus of the reform is to increase the effectiveness of future teachers in their ability to assure positive educational outcomes for their students. Preservice teacher education candidates are instructed on the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. This model requires that teachers use research-based instruction and frequent data-based progress monitoring of student performance to guide future instruction. The intent is to assure that all students are achieving at expected levels. When students do not meet expectations, teachers will use the RTI model to intervene, change the instructional approach, monitor progress and continue to make instructional decisions based on the data.

Ukraine is involved in a similar reform process. The 2010 Ukraine Country Report (MESU, 2010) indicates that teacher education reform in Ukraine includes both preservice and inservice professional development in the “learner-centered approach” to teaching. A learner-centered approach is one that focuses on the outcomes of the learner, similar to the RTI model.

Ukraine joined the Bologna Process in 2005 in order to offer an education system comparable to other European countries (Bologna Process, 2010). The Bologna Process was a consortium of European countries whose goals are to create a higher education system that employed common standards and expectations for quality assurance for students, graduates, and higher education faculty. Joining this consortium allowed Ukraine to assure that the educational system in place in Ukraine was competitive with other universities in the European region and the world. Ukraine continues to address reform to assure a high quality education for all.

As a well-known systemic change in public schools throughout the United States, RTI effects how students in public schools are identified for supplementary and intensive services and the types of interventions received. Beginning around 2001, RTI moved quickly through schools in the United States as a public school system-wide reform focusing on six key components:

- 1) All students can learn;
- 2) Early intervention is helpful for students who are struggling;
- 3) Decisions should be made using data;
- 4) Student progress should be monitored and used to inform instruction;
- 5) Evidence-based, validated interventions should be used to the greatest extent possible;
- 6) All children should be systematically screened to identify those who may need further intervention.

(National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2006).

Research Aim

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived knowledge level of RTI in the preparation of preservice teachers in the United States at one university. University students in four categories: special education, elementary education, early childhood education and secondary education were the subjects of this initial investigation.

Review of Literature

Hoover et al. (2008) reported that 90% of states were in some stage of discussion or implementation of RTI. Another survey (Marshall, 2009) suggested that 71% of school administrator respondents were implementing RTI within their schools. This survey also reported that inadequate teacher training was one factor that impeded implementation. Teachers in both general and special education are key players in the success and implementation of RTI. If not well-prepared and well-versed on the concepts of RTI, new teachers entering the field from teacher preparation programs could perform in a less-than-adequate manner when carrying out this initiative.

Similar to Ukraine's involvement in the Bologna Process, many programs in special and general education in the United States follow established standards to ensure high quality programs. For example, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredits 656 institutions using rigorous standards for teacher education (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2011). Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) for many teacher preparation fields hold high standards for preparing teachers in their fields and work through NCATE to nationally recognized programs. NCATE standards and SPA standards incorporate several critical components of RTI. For example, NCATE Standard 1, Element 1d, states that teacher candidates "assess and analyze student learning, make appropriate adjustments to instruction, and monitor student progress..." (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008). Specialized professional

association standards are aligned with NCATE standards in using assessment for progress monitoring and data-based decision-making to inform instruction (see, for example, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2010; Association for Childhood Education International, 2007; Council for Exceptional Children, 2002). The Council of Exceptional Children standards (2002) include using assessment to “regularly monitor progress” and promote professional and ethical practice where teachers keep “current with evidence-based practice”. The National Association for the Education of Young Children standards (2010) incorporate using appropriate knowledge, standards and resources to “design, implement, and evaluate developmentally meaningful and challenging curriculum for each child”. In surveying SPA standards, however, it appears that special education (Council for Exceptional Children) standards use more precise language promoted in RTI, e.g., “evidence-based practice”, “regularly monitor progress”, and “ongoing analysis of the individual learning progress”.

Although many institutions of higher education in the United States are accredited and their teacher training programs nationally recognized, the level at which they incorporate important components of RTI appears to be inconsistent. In the state of Illinois, Reschly et al. (2008) reported that 74% of higher education course syllabi reviewed did not show evidence of teaching progress monitoring and 77% did not show evidence of teaching universal screening (critical components of RTI). Other comparable studies show similar results (Smartt & Reschly, 2007; Walsh et al., 2006). As part of a State Personnel Development Grant request for proposals integrating RTI into higher education, Illinois included a study of course syllabi review from preservice and graduate programs and interviews with NCATE coordinators at five public institutions of higher education to determine the extent to which institutions integrated elements of RTI (Illinois State Board of Education, 2011). Syllabi were evaluated to determine the extent of evidence indicating inclusion of five elements of RTI:

- Three-tier problem solving and response to intervention;
- Universal screening and problem identification;
- Scientifically based reading instruction in a three-tier model;
- Scientifically based progress monitoring tools;
- Effective problem solving teams.

Data indicated that two of the five institutions included RTI components in syllabi at a higher level than other institutions, even though the majority of elements were rated lower (i.e., little or no evidence). Even though all institutions showed some degree of implementation, data suggested low levels of RTI content implementation as evidenced in the syllabi reviewed. Interviews with NCATE coordinators suggested that most programs expected candidates to gain RTI knowledge through clinical placements, as opposed to course instruction. Additionally, it was unclear if clinical placements used for candidates implemented RTI practices. The study concluded that institutions of higher education needed to incorporate RTI into coursework more fully.

Despite this evidence, some universities are moving toward integrating components of RTI in teacher education curriculums, but in different ways and with different intensity. In 2006, the University of Utah’s Urban Institute for Teacher Education began refocusing curriculum on a three-tiered model of support for students in elementary and secondary education. The university offers a core set of courses around the tenets of response to intervention. This example is considered atypical for teacher education institutions around the country (Sawchuk, March 2011). Loyola University Chicago requires teacher education students to complete a project demonstrating their knowledge of data-based decision making and progress monitoring, two key components of RTI. Students must also demonstrate successful outcomes for students who require more intensive interventions (Sawchuk, March 2011). At the University of Michigan in Ypsilanti, which houses one of the nation’s largest higher education special education departments, the topic of RTI is not a formal program of study, but components of RTI are

addressed in various courses (Sawchuk, March 2011). In 2011, Illinois was implementing a personnel development grant to a partnership of institutions of higher education to provide professional development on evidence based practices and response to intervention to teacher education deans and faculty (Illinois State Board of Education, 2011). One key component of this grant required collaboration with a similar personnel development grant for public schools so that preservice teachers from universities collaborated with public schools.

The RTI reform is a paradigm shift for most schools, teachers and teacher education programs in the United States. It requires role and responsibility changes for teachers at all levels, placing more responsibility for individual student progress on general education teachers and requiring teachers to be knowledgeable about providing interventions of varying intensity to all students, with and without disabilities. This paradigm shift encompasses significant implications for preservice teacher education programs. For instance, general education preservice teachers will assume more responsibility for individual student outcomes. They need to be well-informed about each student and display the skills and knowledge to choose and implement research-based interventions and strategies, assess students, and monitor student progress over time. General education preservice teachers need to be able to use data to make instructional decisions for individual students. It is critical that these skills be fully embedded in general education teacher preparation programs (Richards, et al. 2007). Likewise, special education teacher preparation programs need to be prepared for the changing roles of special education teachers. Special education teachers need to display knowledge of collaborative consultation with general education teachers, apply intensive interventions for students not identified as having a disability, and assist in developing and implementing school-wide reliable and valid progress monitoring techniques (Richards, et al. 2007).

Education reform in Ukraine is meeting similar resistance from university professors, as well as inservice teachers in the field. There is a “crisis of professional identity of Ukrainian teachers” in the transformation from the Soviet style of education to the European democratic, learner-centered style of education (MESU, p. 17). Teachers in Ukraine appear to display skepticism about this change and their ability to make these changes. Preservice teacher training programs in Ukraine are in the process of making structural and content changes in preservice programs to assure that universities are addressing national standards and quality assurance consistent with the Bologna Process.

In the United States, Weishaar and Weishaar (2012) describe an apparent mismatch between the rapid pace at which public school teachers are implementing RTI, the initial level of RTI awareness and implementation within higher education teacher preparation programs, and the focus of professional associations for teacher preparation programs on meeting explicit standards that include components of RTI. Although public schools are planning and implementing RTI, it appears that schools of education have not kept pace with training candidates in RTI, even though NCATE and SPA standards incorporate the critical aspects of RTI.

Research Methodology

This study involved completion of a survey by preservice candidates at one Midwestern public institution of higher education in the United States to determine perceived knowledge of key RTI components among four groups: elementary education, early childhood education, special education, and secondary education. Data was analyzed using Chi-Square to evaluate differences between the four groups.

Participants

Participants included 226 preservice candidates enrolled in one of four initial undergraduate teacher education programs at a metropolitan state university in the Midwest.

The university included approximately 14,000 undergraduate students, with 1000 candidates enrolled within the School of Education in both teacher education and non-teacher education programs. The School of Education was accredited by NCATE and all programs nationally recognized by their respective SPA. The 226 participants for this study included all candidates within the programs of special education (20), elementary education (102), secondary education (59), and preschool education (45) who were enrolled in the final courses the semester prior to student teaching (i.e., first semester seniors) during fall 2010.

By first semester of the senior year, candidates in all programs experienced the following common curriculum:

- Passed a required test of basic skills, required by the state, that focused on reading, writing, and mathematics skills;
- Successfully completed an educational psychology course, foundations of education course and exceptional child course;
- Completed some methods courses;
- Completed one course focused on literacy methods;
- Completed at least one practicum experience.

At this point in the programs, there were also some differences in curriculum. Elementary education coursework focused primarily on content-area instruction (e.g., social studies, art, physical education, literature, math, science), while early childhood education coursework appeared more developmentally-focused (e.g., language development, family and community relationships, understanding the pre-primary child). Special education included coursework on collaboration, behavior management, transition, and language development, for example. Secondary education coursework focused primarily on content and did not include additional courses outside of the common education courses.

Candidates within general and special education took educational psychology and foundations of education courses together as a mixed group. All other courses were program-specific. With the exception of secondary education candidates, candidates moved through their programs in cohort groups. Secondary education candidates completed content-related coursework (including methods of teaching a particular content) before proceeding to education-related coursework.

Survey

Participants completed a 16-item paper/pencil survey about their perceived RTI knowledge and skill level, source of their knowledge and skills, and an overall rating of their knowledge and skills. The first 13 items were intended to assess important elements of RTI and required responses using a 5-point Likert scale.

- 1 = I do not have the knowledge or skill at this time.
- 2 = I have basic knowledge and skills in this area.
- 3 = I have the knowledge, but still need some support to develop skills.
- 4 = I can use this skill with little support.
- 5 = I am skilled in this area and could teach this skill to others.

These 13 items were based on the key elements of RTI as defined by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (2006) and adapted from surveys used in Illinois as developed by Loyola University Chicago (2008, 2009, 2010).

On item 14, respondents rated the level (all, some, none) of the source for RTI knowledge and skills (university coursework, university practicum, professional development, workshops and personal reading/research). Finally, item 15 asked for an overall rating (none, basic or limited, adequate, advanced/expert) of the respondent's RTI knowledge and skills. The survey questions are detailed in Figure 1.

Please select your program:

<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education

Figure 1. Survey for Preservice Teachers

Directions: Please read each statement and evaluate your skill level within the context of implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) at the classroom/school level. Response to Intervention is a federally promoted model for identifying students at-risk of learning problems in the public schools in the United States. Public school educators must be able to provide high quality instruction and interventions based on student need, collect performance data to monitor student progress frequently, and make decisions about changes in instruction based on data collected.

Using the scale below, write the number which best reflects your skill level relative to RTI:

- 1 = I do not have the knowledge or skill at this time.
- 2 = I have basic knowledge and skills in this area.
- 3 = I have the knowledge, but still need some support to develop skills.
- 4 = I can use this skill with little support.
- 5 = I am skilled in this area and could teach this skill to others.

1. Understand the components of a three-tiered model for service delivery.
2. Understand the 4 steps in a data-based problem-solving model.
3. Understand what type of data is obtained from conducting universal screening.
4. Can articulate the relationship between universal screening and data-driven decision-making.
5. Can articulate the relationship between universal screening and early intervention.
6. Understand how frequent data-based progress monitoring is connected to the assessment of student performance.
7. Understand when a specific intervention should continue, change, or discontinue.
8. Knowledge of resources available to determine if your instruction/intervention is research-based.
9. Understand the "Big Five" areas for research-based teaching in reading.
10. Identify strategies for differentiating instruction.
11. Develop strategies to supplement core reading instruction.
12. Understand how to implement progress monitoring at each tier.
13. Understand how to use data to develop progress monitoring goals.
14. How much of your knowledge and skills related to Response to Intervention came from the following sources:
 - 14a. University Coursework
 - All Some None
 - 14b. University Practicum
 - All Some None
 - 14c. Professional Development Workshops
 - All Some None
 - 14d. Personal Reading/Research
 - All Some None
15. Overall, how would you rate your skills and general knowledge of RTI?
 - None
 - Basic or Limited

- Adequate
- Advanced/Expert

Procedures

The survey was administered during September 2010 for each group. Preservice teachers completed the survey during a program-specific methods course for each group. Researchers read a scripted statement to each group of participants briefly addressing the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, and protection of anonymity. Candidates in each group were given 10 minutes to complete the survey. Those choosing not to participate turned in blank surveys. Surveys were color coded by program (i.e., early childhood, elementary, secondary, and special education). All students in any one session completed the same color survey.

Analysis and Results

One hundred percent of the preservice teachers (i.e., 226) in four programs completed the survey (i.e., no one returned a completely blank survey, although some questions were not completed by some respondents). Results included 20 special education candidates, 102 elementary education candidates, 59 secondary education candidates, and 45 early childhood education candidates.

Preliminary analysis of data for questions 1–13 (elements of RTI knowledge) indicated that there was a high correlation between items, so it was not possible to distinguish significant differences based on these questions. Additionally, although technically questionable, treating the responses to questions 1–13 as continuous variables, averaging the responses by respondent, and applying ANOVA also yielded results which were consistent with those derived with a categorical analysis (Chi Square) with Q15 overall (knowledge). In other words, the results from questions 1–13 (elements of RTI knowledge) yielded the same results as Q15 (overall knowledge of RTI). Because of this initial analysis, it was determined that conclusions and implications based on the questions 1–13 would not be useful. Because questions 1–13 and Q15 essentially showed the same results, the researchers decided to analyze differences using Q15 as an assessment of RTI knowledge.

Analysis of data was conducted in the following manner: 1) By program (elementary, early childhood, secondary, special education), comparison of question 14a through d (source of knowledge and skills) with question 15 (overall rating of knowledge and skills), and 2) By program (elementary, early childhood, secondary, special education), question 15 (overall rating of knowledge and skills).

The first analysis reviewed results from question 14a through d (i.e., source of knowledge and skills) by program using Chi Square test. This data is summarized in Tables 1–4.

It is notable that on Question 14a (source of RTI knowledge coming from university coursework), there was a significant association between groups and amount of knowledge perceived to be obtained from this source. 65% of special education preservice respondents reported that all of their knowledge came from coursework, while secondary, preschool, and elementary preservice respondents reported that 30%, 34%, and 14%, respectively, all of their knowledge came from coursework. Question 14b (source of RTI knowledge coming from practicum), although significant, must be interpreted with caution because 25% of the cells had expected counts less than 5. However, given this caution, results suggested that respondents in special education, early childhood, and elementary education perceived that a large portion of RTI knowledge came from practicum experiences (52% special education, 70% early childhood, 70% elementary). This was not the case with secondary education respondents, where 54% perceived no knowledge coming from practicum. Questions 14c (source of RTI knowledge coming from professional development) and 14d (source of knowledge coming from workshops) suggested no significant association between source of knowledge and

group. These questions must also be analyzed with caution, because a large percentage (42% for 14c, 33% for 14d) of the cells had expected counts less than 5.

Table 1

Comparison

Groups by Question 14a

Frequency Table of Groups by Question 14a (Source of RTI Knowledge and Skills-University Coursework)

Groups (Program)	All*	Some*	None*	Total
Special Education	13 5.4222 65.00 21.31	6 11.467 30.00 4.65	1 3.1111 5.00 2.86	20
Secondary	18 15.996 30.51 29.51	35 33.827 59.32 27.13	6 9.1778 10.17 17.14	59
Early Childhood	15 11.929 34.09 24.59	24 25.227 54.55 18.60	5 6.8444 11.36 14.29	44
Elementary	15 27.653 14.71 24.59	64 58.48 62.75 49.61	23 15.867 22.55 65.71	102
Total	61	129	35	225

*Frequency
Expected
Row Percent
Column Percent

Frequency Missing = 3

Statistics for Table of Groups by Question 14a

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	6	26.8864	0.0002

Table 2

Comparison

Groups by Question 14b

Frequency Table of Groups by Question 14b (Source of RTI Knowledge and Skills – University Practicum)

Groups (Program)	All*	Some*	None*	Total
Special Education	5 1.6261 26.32 26.32	10 11.725 52.63 7.30	4 5.6486 21.05 6.06	19
Secondary	2 4.8784 3.51 10.53	24 35.176 42.11 17.52	31 16.946 54.39 46.97	57
Early Childhood	5 3.8514 11.11 26.32	32 27.77 71.11 23.36	8 13.378 17.78 12.12	45
Elementary	7 8.6441 6.93 36.84	71 62.329 70.30 51.82	23 30.027 22.77 34.85	101
Total	19	137	66	222

*Frequency
Expected
Row Percent
Column Percent

Frequency Missing = 6

Statistics for Table of Groups by Question 14b
(Source of RTI Knowledge and Skills – University Practicum)

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	6	30.9523	<.0001

Note: 25% of the cells have expected counts less than 5 and validity of using Chi-Square might be affected.

Table 3
*Comparison
Groups by Question 14c
Frequency Table of Groups by Question 14c (Source of RTI Knowledge and Skills – Professional Development Workshops)*

Groups (Program)	All*	Some*	None*	Total
Special Education	1 0.2676 5.26 33.33	3 3.7465 15.79 7.14	15 14.986 78.95 8.93	19
Secondary	0 0.7887 0.00 0.00	9 11.042 16.07 21.43	47 44.169 83.93 27.98	56
Early Childhood	1 0.5775 2.44 33.33	12 8.0845 29.27 28.57	28 32.338 68.29 16.67	41
Elementary	1 1.3662 1.03 33.33	18 19.127 18.56 42.86	78 76.507 80.41 46.43	97
Total	3	42	168	213

*Frequency
Expected
Row Percent
Column Percent

Frequency Missing = 15

Statistics for Table of Groups by Question 14c
(Source of RTI Knowledge and Skills – Professional Development)

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	6	6.4822	0.3714

Note: 42% of the cells have expected counts less than 5 and validity of using Chi-Square might be affected.

Table 4
*Comparison
Groups by Question 14d
Frequency Table of Groups by Question 14d (Source of RTI Knowledge and Skills – Personal Reading/Research)*

Groups (Program)	All*	Some*	None*	Total
Special Education	1 0.426 5.26 20.00	8 9.8834 42.11 6.90	10 8.6906 52.63 9.80	19
Secondary	1 1.278 1.75 20.00	26 29.65 45.61 22.41	30 26.072 52.63 29.41	57

Early Childhood	0 0.9865 0.00 0.00	27 22.888 61.36 23.28	17 20.126 38.64 16.67	44
Elementary	3 2.3094 2.91 60.00	55 53.578 53.40 47.41	45 47.112 43.69 44.12	103
Total	5	116	102	

*Frequency
Expected
Row Percent
Column Percent

Frequency Missing = 5

Statistics for Table of Groups by Question 14d
(Source of RTI Knowledge and Skills – Personal Reading/Research)

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	6	4.9810	0.5463

Note: 33% of the cells have expected counts less than 5 and validity of using Chi-Square might be affected.

The final analysis of data was performed by comparing question 15 (overall rating of RTI skills and knowledge) across programs using a Chi-Square test. Results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Groups by Question 15
Frequency Table of Groups by Question 15 (Self-Rating of Overall Skills)

Groups (Program)	None/Basic*	Adequate/Expert*	Total
Special Education	4 16.018 20.00 2.21	16 3.9823 80.00 35.56	20
Secondary	47 47.252 79.66 25.97	12 11.748 20.34 26.67	59
Early Childhood	40 36.04 88.89 22.10	5 8.9602 11.11 11.11	45
Elementary	90 81.69 88.24 49.72	12 20.31 11.76 26.67	102
Total	181	45	226

*Frequency
Expected
Row Percent
Column Percent

Frequency Missing = 2

Statistics for Table of Groups by Question 15

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	3	51.7208	<.0001

Results of this test clearly demonstrate the existence of a significant association between groups and self-reported knowledge. There was a significant difference in self-reported overall knowledge of the special education group vs. the early childhood, elementary and secondary education groups. Members of the special education group appeared to consider themselves more knowledgeable than their peers in the other groups. It is notable that the three non-special education groups reported higher rates of “none/basic” and lower rates of “adequate/expert” knowledge compared to the special education group.

Discussion of Results

Implications

Although this sample was small, there were clear indications of differences between perceived knowledge and source of knowledge between special education, secondary, elementary, and early childhood preservice candidates. The majority of special education candidates (80%) rated themselves as having adequate or expert knowledge and skills in RTI, compared with secondary candidates (20%), early childhood candidates (11%), and elementary candidates (12%). The majority of special education candidates (64%) indicated that *all* knowledge and skills came from coursework, as compared with secondary candidates (30%), early childhood candidates (34%), and elementary candidates (14%). 52% of special education candidates reported that *some* of their RTI knowledge and skills came from field experiences, compared with early childhood candidates (70%) and elementary candidates (70%). Interestingly, 54% of secondary education candidates reported that *none* of their RTI knowledge and skills came from field experiences. Overall, special education candidates rated themselves higher in RTI knowledge and skills and reported the primary source as university coursework.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study. First, the extent to which results can be generalized is restricted because of the limited sample (i.e., one public university in the Midwest). Second, the survey has not been subjected to validity and reliability studies other than content validity. Third, candidate perception of RTI knowledge and skills may not accurately represent real knowledge and skills. It might be more accurate to assess knowledge and skills using performance-based measures.

Conclusion and Application to Ukraine

This study begins to clarify perceived RTI (research-based instruction, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making) knowledge and skill differences between preservice teacher preparation programs at the point just before student teaching in early childhood, elementary, special, and secondary education for one institution in the United States. There were clear differences between perceived levels of RTI knowledge by candidates in general education (early childhood, elementary and secondary) and special education. The source of RTI knowledge varied across programs, with special education candidates indicating that knowledge and skills were gained primarily from university coursework, with some from practicum experiences. The source of RTI knowledge for early childhood and elementary candidates came less from university coursework and more from field experiences. Secondary education candidates reported gaining little RTI knowledge and skills from university coursework and half of these candidates reported gaining no RTI knowledge and skills from field experiences.

For future study in the United States, the following areas of investigation might be pursued. The methodology could be strengthened by refining the survey instrument, conducting reliability and validity studies, and broadening the sample to include institutions across the

country. Additionally, performance-based assessment might more accurately reflect RTI knowledge and skills. Analyzing growth of RTI knowledge and skills across time by assessing at various points during candidates' programs might reveal more accurately where information is gained.

In the United States, curriculum in each program area might affect to what extent and when RTI components are introduced and integrated. Study of the curriculums across programs could begin to identify how, where, and when critical RTI components are introduced and mastered. Because curriculum is often closely aligned with state and/or national standards, it would also be beneficial to compare national accreditation standards and program standards with key components of RTI. If an institution is nationally accredited and the program is nationally recognized, to what extent are the standards aligned with critical RTI components? The current study generally surveyed standards and a more in-depth analysis would be useful.

According to 2010 Ukraine Country Report, teachers were "not prepared to assimilate the new democratic approaches" (MESU, 2010 p.17), the focus of reform. Because the new principles were based on western pedagogical theories, teachers experienced difficulty finding ways to incorporate them into their teaching. The extent to which university programs train future teachers could impact the extent to which the reforms are successful in the schools. A study of the perceived knowledge and implementation of the Ukraine reform movement across different preservice teacher candidate programs (elementary school, secondary basic school, and upper school) within the higher education system could be informative. Important elements of school reform could reveal gaps in how preservice teachers are trained. Future studies could address the following questions:

1. How do Ukrainian preservice teachers at institutions of higher education perceive knowledge of the Ukraine reform components?
2. Do preservice teachers in various programs (elementary, early childhood, secondary, special education) at institutions of higher education differ in their self-assessed knowledge of the components of the Ukraine reform efforts?

The answers to these questions could help universities train future teachers and ultimately impact student learning in schools.

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RIGHTS AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED APPROACH TO AGING AND DISABILITY: AN OVERVIEW OF ISSUES AND APPROACHES

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Abstract

This analysis paper is part of a larger project led by the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) and funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), called “*From Research and Knowledge to Better Practice: Building Strategies and Partnerships for Livable Communities That are Inclusive of Seniors with Disabilities*” (2008-09). The central purpose of the larger project was to develop and test a model of livable and inclusive communities that includes the needs, preferences, and circumstances of seniors with disabilities. A participatory method was used to accomplish this goal by identifying the key principles and elements of what makes communities livable and inclusive for seniors with disabilities and to develop and test a Livable and Inclusive Community Evaluation Tool and process to measure the extent to which the community meets their needs. In addition, a Livable and Inclusive Community Planning Tool was developed and introduced to several pilot communities across Canada.

This paper provides an overview of issues, needs and approaches to disability and aging and is the beginning of the subsequent series of papers. In this discussion the terms “seniors” and “older adults” are used interchangeably reflecting the flexible use of the terms in the North American context.

Key words: *Disability, Aging, Aging with Disability, Seniors/Older Adults, Accessibility, Community living, social model of disability, Inclusion, Disability Lens, Senior Lens.*

Disclaimer. “This analysis paper is part of a larger project led by the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) and funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), called “*From Research and Knowledge to Better Practice: Building Strategies and Partnerships for Livable Communities That are Inclusive of Seniors with Disabilities*” (2008-09). This research project was partially funded by the Government of Canada’s Social Development Partnerships Program. The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.”

Introduction

Disability as seen from the disability movement perspective is a social issue whereas disability from the aging perspective is seen as loss of capacity. These two perspectives have implications for how disability is viewed and addressed. In both perspectives, there is a

perception of greater acceptance of disability if it comes gradually. The sudden or progressive onset of a disability is a key variable (in terms of timing, but also how it happens) in the self-identification with disability status. For persons with disabilities entering their senior years, there is a redefinition and questioning of self-identification. There might be an identity crisis, harder fights, or even burnout. However, there are similar issues that affect both seniors and persons with disabilities: vulnerability, safety and security, fraud and exploitation, supports and healthy living, economic viability, assets and poverty, social isolation, access to housing and the public built environment, etc. It is clear that in both cases, the environment and support systems have tremendous impact on these issues.

There are different notions that society has in relationship to aging and to disability. There are well known stigmas associated with aging (that one will necessarily be disabled which is not true) and with disability itself (unattractive, unable to work, to live independently, etc). The Federal government recently conducted a study entitled *Canadians Attitudes Toward Disability* (2004) that discusses some of these issues. Many people who are growing older fear the prospect of the onset of disability and experience stigma around the possibility of aging with a disability and how this might impact their lives. These individuals may not feel comfortable with using disability-related services, advocacy groups, etc. Most seniors do not accept the label of disability, even when formal structures and systems tell them they have a disability. Although such labels are sometimes necessary for people to access supports, there is a complex social stigma associated with both aging and disability (double stigma). Variables such as cultural differences, religion, language, family role, age, gender, and social environment all play a role in how a person will accept to self-identify as a senior with disabilities. Some people may be reticent in associating with seniors with disabilities because it may symbolize loss of independence and dignity and raise the issues related to the acceptance of mortality. Time is also an issue, as there is less time for seniors to accept and deal with disability. In some cases, seniors may refuse to take on “disability” as a label, but will take on the impairment itself (recognizing for example, a loss of hearing but not accepting to be qualified as a person with a disability). The obvious consequence is that many seniors under-report disability. But disability is a natural part of life. Although younger populations with rights-based attitudes might accept it more than seniors – and we might see a difference in attitudes in 5 to 10 years due to that, disability status needs to be re-valued among seniors.

We currently have very little knowledge of what the pathway or trajectory is for persons with long-term disability who are aging and continue to need various disability supports and who want to continue to participate in the community. It is important to develop an understanding of this issue to examine the disability support programs in both the government and voluntary sectors of both the disability and the seniors programming as well as to examine generally ways the communities have moved toward inclusive livable societies. There are tensions arising in various sectors regarding eligibility for and use of certain types of disability supports such as parallel transportation, certain types of housing. These tensions actually demonstrate the growing seniors’ population and the recognition of good programming in the disability sector and vice versa. However, the sectors have traditionally not been brought together to discuss this kind of issues. One area where the two groups have been brought together somewhat is in the area of physical access and design of inclusive communities.

Canada’s population is aging, and as a result, the numbers of individuals experiencing a form of disability is also increasing. Disability in this sense is defined as “physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (United Nations, 2006). Seniors, or individuals over the age of 65, by their sheer numbers, are gradually becoming a more significant component of Canadian society, and it is incumbent upon the government and

non-government sectors to ensure that communities are inclusive and livable from the point of view of seniors.

The concept that seniors with disabilities should be included and fully participate in the community is based on a social model of disability which takes the view that disability is a consequence of environmental, social and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with impairments from full participation in society. In this case, the responsibility lies with society to change in order to accommodate the individual as opposed to the other way around. For example, if an individual who uses a wheelchair is registered for a recreational program, then it is up to the program to ensure that the building is accessible. Full participation in society means that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else, are able to make informed choices, pursue personal goals, and are seen as equal. Using the social model of disability as the basis, the purpose of this paper is to examine how the community environment can become more conducive to full participation of seniors with disabilities by placing the onus on the community partners, with participation from seniors, to evaluate their respective communities and develop a plan of action.

The purpose of this study was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of issues between aging and disability sectors, as well as a review of the current initiatives in the areas of aging and disabilities. This study demonstrates the overlap between the two sectors and highlights the required areas in a combined evaluation model.

Object and methodology of the research

We took a systematic approach to the literature review. Our understanding of an effective literature review is one that includes the following characteristics: a) methodologically analyzes and synthesizes quality literature; b) provides a firm foundation to a research topic; c) provides a firm foundation to the selection of research methodology; d) demonstrates that the proposed research contributes significantly new information to the overall body of knowledge or advancing the research field's knowledge to influence policy and practices. This is based on the work of Hart (1999), Shaw (1995a) and Webster and Watson (2002). The literature review provided the current status of the body of knowledge (BoK) in this research field (Iivari et al., 2004). Our literature review revealed the existing knowledge and gaps where new research is needed, provided a solid theoretical foundation for the study, substantiated the presence of the research problem and directions. The review also provided models of practice that will assist in determining best practices for future policy and program development.

Aging and Disability – What the statistics tell us

Recent studies show that Canada's population is aging. It is estimated that in 2001 there were 3.92 million Canadians age 65 and over. It is anticipated that as the baby boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1965) ages, the number of seniors is expected to reach 6.7 million in 2021 and 9.2 million in 2041 (nearly one in four Canadians). Seniors (age 65 and over) are the fastest growing population group in Canada overall, with the most notable increase occurring among the oldest Canadians. In 2001, more than 430,000 Canadians were age 85 and over and this age group is expected to increase to 1.6 million individuals by 2041 or 4% of the overall population (Health Canada, 2002).

There is evidence to show that as Canada's population ages, the disability rate increases, demonstrating a direct relationship between the two. The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) 2006 conducted by Statistics Canada was designed to collect information on adults and children who have a disability. The survey defines disability as self-reported limitations in everyday activities due to a physical or psychological condition or to a health condition. The data revealed that among children age 0 to 14, 3.7% reported a disability, with

the rate increasing to 11.5% among individuals aged 15 to 64, and further increasing to 43.4% among persons aged 65 and over. Furthermore, more than half (56.3%) of persons aged 75 and over reported having an activity limitation (Statistics Canada, 2007). However an aging population does not account entirely for the increasing rates of disability. Other factors such as changes in the perceptions of Canadians towards their limitations and an increased willingness to report them all contribute to the increase disability rates.

Women reported slightly higher rates of disability than men across most age groups, including seniors. Differences in the rates began to show at age 25 when rates of disability are slightly higher for women than men, and this trend continues into the senior age groups where approximately 54% of men and 57.8% of women over the age of 75 experienced activity limitations (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Based on the connection made between the senior population, gender and higher rates of disability, we know that a province's demographic profile does have an impact on the disability rate for that province. The PALS survey results showed that Quebec had the lowest disability rate at 10.4% and Nova Scotia, a province with one of the highest percentages of seniors, had the highest disability rate at 20.0%. Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia, the three provinces that are the focus of this project, have very similar rates of disability at 15.5%, 15.7% and 16.0% respectively (Statistics Canada, 2007).

The primary causes of limitations in activity cited by individuals age 15 years and over were pain, mobility restrictions, and agility problems. Approximately 11% of the total population age 15 and over reported one of these limitations, and 70% of these same individuals who reported one of these three disabilities were also affected by the other two. The rates of disability associated with pain, mobility and agility increase with age along with difficulties hearing and seeing. For example, less than 2% of individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 reported in the PALS survey that they experienced challenges with mobility; however 44% of people age 75 and over were affected (Statistics Canada, 2007). Moreover, the causes of disability change as a person ages and the degree to which the person's activities are restricted becomes more severe.

This aging population has important implications in terms of health care, community planning, community attractions and spending patterns. With our aging population, there are an increasing number of people who are aging into disability. At the same time, there are an increasing number of people with long-term disabilities who are aging due to better health and community supports.

Within Canadian health and social services, people with disabilities and older people are constructed as two distinct client groups. Separate organizations and departments provide services and support to each group. These two groups have remained distinct even though they share many commonalities. However in terms of community participation as well as barriers and facilitators in the environment, many of the needs gaps are similar. There is a need to examine more efficient use of community resources with the increase in these populations. Questions arise as to how best to address the needs of people whose issues relate to both aging and disability. It is recognized that an age friendly society will also be a disability friendly society and indeed a more universally designed society – better for all. Surprisingly, even though there are many commonalities, there has been very little dialogue between disability and aging sectors including government departments, on-profit agencies, researchers and consumers themselves.

Common Issues between Seniors and People with Disabilities

Despite the evidence showing the increasing numbers of senior individuals experiencing disability, the senior and disability sectors have historically been addressed separately in both

the health and social service and policy realms. As a result, barriers have been created to receive necessary supports and services needed to attain quality of life. The common services used by seniors and people with disability calls for combined approaches to service delivery and policy development to ensure that seniors with disabilities can fully participate in the community.

• Home Support Services

Home care and home support related programs are an essential resource for any individual whose daily functioning is compromised. The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (Krogh & Ennis, 2005) undertook a national study of home care policies and supports across Canada. The value of home care and support programs was emphasized by consumers across Canada when they described the importance of good home support as a key contributor to health and quality of life, assisting individuals to reach their human potential, attain life goals and exercise full citizenship. Good quality home support for many was characterized by consumer control regarding caregiver, schedule, location and type of service. Well-trained staff who valued consumer expertise and respectful relationships was also described as essential components of quality home support (Krogh & Ennis, 2005).

However, the reality is that programs available to persons with disabilities and seniors differ in terms the range of support options available. As well, the eligibility criteria for home support services differ, with some excluding persons with disability and others excluding seniors, yet the service is required for both groups of individuals. As people with disability age, the transition from the disability services to the senior services can be challenging with the former advocating for more consumer control practices and the latter focused on a more paternal approach to service provision. This begs the question of what losses are experienced by people with disability as they transition to senior related services. In light of this, it is important to examine the possibility of integrating models of home care and support from the disability and aging fields. This enables the provision of a fuller range of supports and services to maximize independence for those with disabilities who are growing older and the senior population by emphasizing the strengths from both sets of models. Also, coordinated and integrated services result in cost efficiencies. The integration of service model requires changes in policy in the health and social service sectors to support the integration of home support services.

• Accessibility

The built environment can act as a barrier or a catalyst to the participation of individuals aging with disabilities as well as those aging into disabilities. The built environment refers to items such as housing, parks, recreation facilities, and public transportation systems. Too often the built environment is not designed to facilitate access of individuals who have restricted mobility, such as the presence of stairs in houses, an absence of ramps into buildings, a lack of clear walkways, and a lack of mobility friendly transportation options. When buildings are designed with accessibility in mind, the net effect is that individuals with disabilities become more independent, relying less on external supports, and are more likely to fully participate in the social, economic, and environmental aspects of the community.

• Stigma Associated with Aging and Disability

Society attributes and assigns different labels to the notions of aging and disability, also known as societal stigma. For example, there is a widespread assumption the seniors with disabilities cannot be productive in the paid employment sector and are incapable of living independently. Many people who are growing older fear the prospect of the onset of disability

and experiencing the stigma that surrounds disability and how this might impact their lives. Many seniors are reluctant to accept that they have a disability for fear of the stigma, even though acknowledging the disability is necessary to access needed supports. Variables such as culture, religion, language, family role, and gender all have an impact on whether a person will self-identify as a senior with disabilities. Some people may be reluctant to identify themselves as seniors with disabilities as it carries with it a “double stigma”: the negative connotations society associates with aging and disability. In some cases, seniors may refuse to accept the “disability” label, but will take on the impairment itself (recognizing for example, a loss of hearing but not accepting to be qualified as a person with a disability).

How terminology such as “disability” is defined by a particular group is affected by the stigma surrounding disability and aging. Many organizations for seniors refrain from using terms such as disability and discuss “healthy aging” instead. Within the disability movement, however, the term “disability” is not defined as an illness but rather as a state in which a person can live a full productive life. For example, some seniors believe that disability aids and devices such as wheelchairs are signs of frailty. In contrast, the disability community feels that use of these types of aids and devices can lead to greater pride and independence. A community that is considered livable and inclusive of seniors with disabilities would not embrace negative perceptions but rather would look to the attitudinal, environmental and social changes needed to ensure that they can participate fully in the community.

• Impact on Individuals and Families

The impact of the increasing number of people aging with disabilities and those aging into disability is significant for individuals and families. For those individuals whose disabilities are worsening due to health conditions or whose physical or cognitive functioning is decreasing, there is an increased need for support from family, friends and other informal caregivers as well as the formal service system. For family members who offer much of the informal caregiving, this results in increased family stress. Previous research conducted by CCDS on the experiences of informal caregivers with disabilities showed that supports to caregivers with disabilities as well as care receivers were inadequate. The findings included: insufficient respite care (particularly in rural areas), insufficient home supports to both caregivers and care receivers, insufficient compensation to family caregivers, lack of accessible, affordable and flexible transportation, inaccessibility of the environment, and lack of sufficient affordable, accessible housing. In addition, non-profit organizations and agencies which support caregivers are often inadequately funded resulting in a decreased ability to provide services. As more people age, the stresses and strains on individuals, caregivers and the service system will increase unless communities take steps to engage seniors with disabilities and other key partners in developing ways that the community can be responsive to their needs.

• Research and Policy

Within the research and policy realm, “disability” and “aging” are often treated as two distinct areas. As this section has demonstrated, there are common issues that converge for the two groups which should be integrated at the policy level and at the service delivery level. There is a need to develop solutions that will serve to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, seniors, and seniors with disabilities. For example, universal design is applicable to both the aging and disability fields, and policies can be developed as a starting point for communities to address environmental aspects of livable and inclusive communities for seniors with disabilities.

Seniors and Disability Lens

Within the context of social policy and program analysis, the term “lens” refers to a tool used to assess the degree to which a policy, initiative or program is consistent with the needs of the population being studied or examined. A lens is a framework which includes a series of questions that are taken into account in the development, delivery and evaluation of policies, programs and services pertaining to a specific group. Separate lenses have been developed as they relate specifically to seniors, seniors mental health, disabilities, and inclusion; however these lenses have not been combined to assess common policies, programs, and services for seniors with disabilities. Examples of common issues include: the need for a range of affordable and accessible housing, affordable, accessible and flexible transportation, and a range of home support services. For this project, it is important that a combined seniors and disability lens is developed in order to accurately measure if a community is livable and inclusive of seniors with disabilities. In this section, the components of separate disability and seniors lenses are described, and the key elements of a combined lens are proposed.

Disability Lens

Provincial governments in British Columbia and Alberta have developed disability lenses while Manitoba is in the midst of developing its disability lens. Each lens is designed to assess the degree to which people with disabilities are included in policies, programs and services, although the elements of the various lenses differ slightly. For example, the Alberta Disability Lens (Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, 2002) is divided into three sections of questions: 1) identifying the degree of inclusiveness reflected in policies or programs; 2) addressing the homogeneity of the interests and viewpoints of children, women, and seniors with disabilities; 3) addressing employment, education, housing, transportation, and recreation/active living of persons with disabilities. The responses to the questions are rated with respect to the degree of inclusiveness for persons with disabilities and each rating leads to a strategy to improve or maintain the rating of the initiative.

Alternatively, the disability lens developed by the British Columbia government (Government of British Columbia, 2002) reflects broad principles to ensure that legislation, policy, programs and services are inclusive of persons with disabilities. The seven primary impact areas in the British Columbia Disability Lens are:

- Consultation and data collection;
- Accessibility and appropriate accommodation;
- Systemic, indirect discrimination and legal obligations;
- Economic status, education, training and employment;
- Communication;
- Safety and protection from victimization;
- Health and well-being.

The Government of Saskatchewan released a *Disability and Inclusion Framework* in June 2007. Similar to a disability lens, the Framework contains values, goals and principles; however there is a focus on the disability support service system and the impact that a disability has on a person’s ability to achieve social and economic inclusion. The Framework is intended to serve as a guide to the development of policy, programs and services that will better support and include individuals with disabilities (Government of Saskatchewan, 2007).

Seniors Lens

The National Framework on Aging (2002) created by Health Canada and the Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens (2004) developed by the British Columbia Psychogeriatric Association are examples of a seniors lens containing questions against which policies,

programs and services can be measured. The National Framework on Aging is based on a set of principles that include dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security. The questions are designed to assess the presence or absence of these principles in policies, programs and services related to seniors. Examples include:

- Does the policy/program address the diverse needs, circumstances, and aspirations of various sub-groups within the senior population (e.g. age, gender, family status, geographic location, Aboriginal status, official language minorities and ethno-cultural minorities, income status, health status, etc.)?
- Is the policy/program inclusive in nature, or does it separate and isolate seniors from the rest of society?
- Does the policy or program take into account the full costs and benefits of supporting the aspirations of society, including those of seniors? What is the cost or consequence of not responding?

In the article “Promoting Seniors Well Being: A Policy Lens”, MacCourt (2004) discusses a Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens developed by the British Columbia Psychogeriatric Health Association. This lens is an analytical tool to identify (or predict) direct or indirect negative repercussions of policies, programs and services (in place or proposed) on the mental health of all older adults. It was developed as part of a national project, “Psychosocial Approaches to the Mental Health Challenges of Late Life”, awarded to the B.C. Psychogeriatric Association by Health Canada, Population Health Fund. The Seniors Mental Health Policy Lens incorporates the perspectives of Canadian seniors about the factors influencing their mental health and reflects the values of older adults.

The lens is composed of a set of ten questions that are: 1) intended to raise user’s awareness about the factors that impact the mental health of older adults; 2) guide the analyses of policies from a seniors’ mental health perspective. The questions are based on the principles of the population health determinants (Health Canada, 2002), mental health promotion (Health Canada, 1998) and healthy aging policy (Marshall, 1994). They draw upon the values and core principles embedded in the “Guidelines for Best Practices in Elderly Mental Health Care” (B. C. Ministry of Health, 2002) and the “National Framework for Aging: A Policy Guide” (Health Canada, 1998). The Mental Health Policy Lens Questions include:

- Has the policy been developed in collaboration with those who will be most affected?
- Does the policy address the diverse needs, circumstances, and aspirations of vulnerable sub-groups within the senior population? Are any negative effects from this policy likely to be magnified for any of these groups?
- Does the policy acknowledge the multiple determinants of health?
- Does the policy consider accessibility?
- Does the policy support seniors’ social participation and relationships?
- Does the policy support seniors’ independence and self-determination?
- Does the policy support seniors’ dignity?
- Is the policy fair? Does it take into account the full costs and benefits of supporting the aspirations of seniors?
- Does the policy/program support seniors’ sense of security?
- Is consideration given to the cumulative impacts on later life of policies/programs targeted at earlier life stages? (MacCourt, 2004).

Elements of a Combined Seniors and Disability Lens Approach

A combined disability and seniors lens can serve as a tool to assist in the development of an evaluation exercise to determine the extent to which a community is livable and inclusive of seniors with disabilities by highlighting the areas to be addressed. By applying a combined seniors and disability lens, the following areas become apparent:

- Social and economic participation: Do policies, programs and services for seniors with disabilities encourage participation in paid or volunteer work within the community and address inequalities which serve as barriers to such participation?

- Community involvement including civic participation and opportunities to develop community leadership: Do seniors with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate on community committees, boards, leadership positions, etc? What barriers exist to hinder this form of participation?

- A built environment that is based on universal design principles and is accessible using universal design principles and maximizing the use of public spaces and facilities to meet a variety of needs. Are environments based on universal design principals and encourage optimum use of public spaces?

- Social and physical environments have a direct correlation to overall health, well-being and quality of life of current and future generations: Are health and well-being programs and services available to seniors with disabilities?

- Affordable and accessible housing with a range of support services included where appropriate and eligibility criteria that is flexible and inclusive of the needs of both populations: Do policies, programs and services allow for a range of affordable and accessible housing choices with program eligibility criteria which are flexible to address varying situations experienced by people with disabilities who are aging and those aging into disability?

- Affordable, accessible and flexible transportation options are available: Do policies, programs and services support a range of affordable and accessible transportation choices which are flexible to address varying situations experienced by people with disabilities who are aging and those aging into disability?

- A range of home support options and support to caregivers is available to respond to a variety of situations and with eligibility criteria which is flexible: Do policies, programs and services offer a range of affordable and accessible home support options with program eligibility criteria which are flexible to address varying situations experienced by people with disabilities who are aging and those aging into disability?

- Cultural and spiritual programs are accessible to seniors with disabilities: Are church activities, cultural events such as theatre, concerts, etc. held in locations that are accessible to seniors with disabilities? Do programs take into account the cultural diversity of the population?

Conclusion — Recommendations from CCDS Research

Roundtable discussions were held to identify the priority areas for consumers with long-term disabilities who are aging, service providers and policy makers in the fields of aging and disability. The series of roundtable discussions provided the research team with a snapshot of the current status with respect to policy, services and programs in the areas of seniors and disability and recommendations for next steps.

The results of the roundtable discussions revealed that:

- Seniors and people with disabilities fear that they will lose their independence, lose access to appropriate transportation, housing and support services, and eventually require institutional care;

- Aging with a disability is perceived as a “transition to less”;

- Due to the growing population of seniors and people with disabilities, the current public system is not equipped to meet the service demands;

- There are many good practices occurring across Canada; however the project findings highlighted where major gaps exist in relation to seniors and disability fields.

Recommendations from Roundtable Discussions

• **Develop livable and inclusive communities** through promotion of community participation and inclusion of all citizens. This approach requires the interconnection of government departments, grassroots organizations and the public to work together towards a common goal to improve the social, environmental and built environments for seniors with disabilities. Livable and inclusive communities are beneficial to all citizens.

• **Use an inclusive aging and disability lens** approach when making changes to national and provincial policy, programs and initiatives that include:

– **Poverty and Income** - There is a need for additional funding sources to assist people aging with a long-term disability to access social programs;

– **Language, Attitudes and Identity** – Due to the multi-cultural component of Canada there are many different perceptions of disability and aging. As a result, there is a need for common language and definitions when speaking about disability and aging to ensure a baseline of awareness and understanding of the issues;

– **Gender Issues** – There is a need to gain further understanding of the impact of gender and disability on senior women who, more often than men, live in poverty;

– **Disability Specific Issues** – There is a need to revise the age limits associated with eligibility criteria for programs and services as some people aging with disabilities have an accelerated aging process. In addition, there is a need for further study on the impacts of aging on people with intellectual disabilities, those aging who are deaf and the aging Aboriginal population who has a higher rate of disability and must leave their communities in order to access support services.

• **Develop national standards**, policies, frameworks and initiatives to address the changing needs of people aging with disabilities in Canada. These standards should be based on existing best practice structures and models rather than creating new standards. Many service gaps that exist in an urban setting are magnified in rural settings due to fewer resources. The standards would ensure that services would be portable/transferable between provinces and would enable people who need assistance to be eligible for basic services.

• **Develop an information and navigation system** as a single point of access to information in multiple formats with resources to navigate it (i.e. Independent Living Resource Centres and Service Canada). In order for this to be successful there must be inter-sectoral collaboration, a willingness to share information and resources, identification of common priorities, and effectively coordinated programs, services and policies.

• **Transform public transportation systems** to suit the needs of the population including the increased demand for accessible and affordable services by seniors. Public transportation in this case includes air travel, intra-inter provincial bus travel and increased transportation options available in rural areas. The transportation system needs to be designed with awareness of interconnections with housing, support services and the community as a whole.

• **Establish housing** that offers more options for accessible, visitable and affordable housing in public and private, single and multi-family housing stock. The housing needs should be designed with awareness of interconnections between transportation, support services and the community as a whole.

• **Provide support services** including formal health care such as home care and respite services and informal support, such as older parents and people with disabilities as caregivers. Additional resources such as training on emerging trends associated with aging and long-term disabilities should be available. Furthermore, there needs to be adequate funding for individuals to access assistive devices. Similar to housing and transportation, support services need to be designed with awareness of interconnections between housing, transportation and the community as a whole.

• **Build community capacity** through a public education process to raise awareness of aging and disability issues through consultations with senior's and disability organizations, academic, government and advocacy groups.

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About the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies

The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) is a consumer-directed, university-affiliated centre dedicated to research, education and knowledge mobilization on disability issues. The Centre promotes full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. CCDS is guided by the philosophies of independent living and community living, emphasizing human rights, self-determination, interdependence, equality, a cross-disability focus, and full and valued participation in the community. Members of the disability community are key participants in directing CCDS policies and activities.



PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND COMPETENCE OF FUTURE PROFESSIONALS WITH A “PERSON-PERSON” OCCUPATIONAL TYPE

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Abstract

Year in year out researchers pay more and more attention to psychological aspects of professional development of specialists with a “person-person” occupational type. This is due to constant increase in the social significance of these jobs. The paper presents the results of research aimed to determine psychological aspects of professional orientation and competence formation for future specialists with the “person-person” occupational type that can be used to improve efficiency of their professional training.

Key words: *professional development, “person-person” type occupations, students’ professional training.*

Introduction

Social and economic changes that are constantly occurring in society put forward new demands for a modern specialist personality. Abilities to be a subject of own professional development and to find solutions to social and professional issues relevant to rapidly changing reality become more and more important for them. Modern researchers in almost one voice say that the growing pace of new technologies, information “explosion” and quick information “obsolescence”, dramatic complication, automation and computerization of production processes, high likelihood of “non-standard” situations in industrial and social spheres impose new requirements for all professionals. Besides professional knowledge and skills, they should now have special abilities, skills and personal characteristics that provide flexibility and dynamism for professional behavior, creativity at professional activity performing, independence at finding and learning of new information and new professional experience. Necessity to acquire ability to make decision adequately in “non-standard” situations, at lack of time and to have skills for optimum interaction with other members of an operational process at joint work of a team is emphasized especially (Кринчик, 2005; Малхазов, 2010).

Much attention is now directed to studying of psychological aspects of professional development of specialists with “person-person” type occupations. In our view, this is because of high social significance of these occupations, which they play themselves, so to speak “in a pure form”, as well as because of the fact that they are naturally closely integrated with other types of professions. For example, a film director, an actor (creative

professions), a master, a foreman (a “person-tools” type), an employee of environmental services (a “person-nature” type), a chief accountant, a publishing house director (a “person-sign” type) and others occupations besides their primary occupational type belong also to the “person-person” type.

Trends of modern society development cause permanent increasing of “person-person” occupational type importance. It is especially true for those jobs that can transform other people personalities – teachers, trainers, psychologists, managers, executives, social workers, business coaches, etc. (Kokun & Karpoukhina, 2010; Kokun, 2011). Occupational features and requirements for specialists of such jobs have undergone significant changes over the past two decades due to the radical transformation of the social, political and economic system in the countries of the ex-Soviet Union and general globalization of world society (Zeep, 2007; Полякова, 2008).

However, there is a significant contradiction concerning training of various professions related to the “person-person” type: from the one hand, social and economic changes taking place in society lead to increased requirements for these professionals, their activity and responsibility regarding their own professional and personal development, from the other hand, such professional training remains mostly purely formal, and their professional development often occurs spontaneously (Вілюжаніна, 2006; Сургунд, 2004).

Moreover, professional selection and, especially, professional training for “person-person” type occupations were studied in many researches, but studies of further stages of specialist development for such professions were hardly ever performed (excluding some studies about teachers). Thus, consistent psychological support for all stages of professional development for “person-person” type specialists involves constant improvement of their professional skills and efficiency upon condition of continuous personal development. This provision must be based on reliable scientific results that describe psychological aspects of specialist’s activities and professional development.

Therefore, in this article we are going to present the results of our research aimed to determine the factors of professional orientation and competence formation for future specialists during their training. Main attention will be paid to future specialists of “person-person” type occupations.

Object of the research: The features and determiner’s factors of professional orientation and competence formation for future specialists.

Aim of the research: To determine the factors of professional orientation and competence formation for future specialists of “person-person” type occupations.

Participants of the research:

In general we have studied 901 undergraduate and post-graduate Russian-speaking students from 15 countries of Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia and Central Asia (234 men and 667 women). The research took place in years 2011-2012. 490 tested students were acquiring common profession of the “person-person” type (psychologists, teachers, educators, doctors, lawyers, managers, diplomats and others) or professions related with people (actors, soldiers, administrators, sales workers, hairdressers, journalists and others); 411 tested persons were from other vocational types (chemists, accountants, economists, engineers, designers, architects, critics, programmers and others). The results of students who master other occupational types were used for comparative analysis. Although the number of women participated in the study was significantly higher than the number of men, but their proportion was almost the same as for their countries, specialties elected for learning, years of learning and age.

Methods of the research

During the studies, we used our questionnaire specially designed for this stage of professional development and three psychological diagnostic methods:

- 1) the Klimov's differential diagnostic questionnaire,
- 2) the test for "Communication and organizational skills determination" (KOS-2) and
- 3) self-efficacy scale of R. Schwarzer and M. Yerusalem.

Our research was based on a psychological diagnostic approach as *the remote professional diagnostics* (Kokuy, 2010) and with the usage of diagnostic site <http://prof-diagnost.org> that we developed. This approach is a modern trend of computer psychodiagnostics and is based on Internet technologies usage. It is especially appropriate in fundamental researches, aimed at revealing general regularities and peculiarities of the phenomena studied. It allows widening the sample by quantitative, regional and professional parameters. Practical implementation of this approach is based on the usage of diagnostic Internet page specifically designed for this purpose.

Research data were processed applying methods of mathematic statistics: Descriptive statistics (mean, std. deviation, frequencies), Pearson correlation, Independent samples T-test.

Results and Discussion

General aspects of professional orientation and competence of future specialists of "person-person" occupational type

It was found out that future specialists of "person-person" occupational type practically do not have difference in professional orientation and competence depending on gender aspect, as well as a country of residence. Two thirds of future specialists intend to work in their chosen professions and have high and higher than average level of academic self-efficacy. One third of them are not sure of their choice and have inadequate levels of academic self-efficacy, they have a need in individual work.

The tested persons mainly have appropriate level of professional orientation: more than half of them have strong or very strong desire to occupy exactly the profession they are being trained for, and 80% of them have levels of learning interest from above average to very high.

We can not ignore the significant gender differences that were found out for the students mastering "person-person" profession according the Klimov's differential diagnostic questionnaire (Table 1). Thus, men show significantly higher levels of interest to "person-tools" occupations and women do to "person-art image" and "person-nature" professions, which is quite natural, but it is more important that the average levels of interest for selected "person-person" professions among tested students of different genders *differ only slightly* and are *higher* than interest for all other four occupational types.

Table 1

Gender differences for the students mastering "person-person" professions according to the Klimov's differential diagnostic questionnaire

№	Occupational type	Men (n = 123)		Women (n = 367)		p ≤
		M	σ	M	σ	
1	"Person-nature"	2,54	1,67	3,19	1,89	0,01
2	"Person-tools"	4,16	1,82	2,77	1,57	0,001
3	"Person-person"	5,77	1,60	5,38	1,66	0,1
4	"Person-sign"	3,70	1,70	3,51	1,92	—
5	"Person-art image"	3,82	1,89	5,14	1,89	0,001

Dynamics of professional orientation and competence formation for future specialists of “person-person” occupational type during training process

Revealed in our study dynamic for various indexes of testers' professional orientation and competency during profession mastering is quite interesting and, in our view, consistent, it characterizes quite clearly psychological aspects of their professional development (Table 2).

Table 2

Indexes of professional orientation and competence of future specialist with the “person-person” occupational type at various stages of professional training (on the base of questioning)

№	Indexes	Year of studying						
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI-VII	Post-gr.
1	Desire to have the chosen profession	2,83	2,62	2,46	2,49	2,27	2,74	2,95
2	Interest in learning	3,60	3,15	3,04	3,25	3,20	3,56	3,71
3	Intention to work in the chosen profession	4,07	4,00	3,57	3,59	3,63	4,04	4,29
4	Knowledge of profession conditions and aspects	3,00	3,00	3,35	3,28	3,37	3,52	3,58
5	Level of professional knowledge and abilities	2,63	2,81	3,05	3,10	3,08	3,19	3,62
6	Willingness to independent work	2,77	2,83	3,16	3,12	3,22	3,21	3,90

As for professional orientation (students' assessment of their own desire to have a chosen profession, their intention to work in it and their interest in training), we can see that it is significantly reduced from the first to third year of learning (at a confidence level $p \leq 0,01-0,001$). Then the desire to have the chosen profession even more reduced to fifth year ($p \leq 0,001$ compared to the first year), but interest in learning slightly restored. Then, during the last (sixth-seventh) years of training, all three indexes increase significantly ($p \leq 0,05-0,001$ compared to the third year), almost reaching the first year level, but not higher! But the highest level of professional orientation is fixed for post-graduate students; it surpasses not only the sixth-seventh year level, but also the first one.

Thus, the students' professional orientation during university years does not increase. It is the highest at the first year of education, when students start mastering a chosen profession. Later orientation deterioration, in our opinion, can be largely explained by inadequate education organization and quality at universities, which leads to decrease of students' motivation to learn and of their desire to have a chosen profession. Professional orientation level recovery among the students of the last university year, in our opinion, is due to not it real improvement, but the fact the best students continue learning at these years (graduate level), and worse students quit their education more early. The same can explain higher levels of professional orientation for post-graduate students who, by the way, shown results slightly higher than first-year students.

By contrast, professional competencies (self-estimation of knowledge about professional conditions and aspect, of skill levels and willingness for independent work) sharply increases from the first to third year of education (at a confidence level $p \leq 0,01-0,001$). Further, a similar trend to these indexes improvement remains; however, it is not so expressed. Again, a sharp “jump” is observed for postgraduate students ($p \leq 0,05-0,001$ compared to the third or fourth years of education). This dynamic, in our opinion, is quite natural and can be related with logical acquisition of professional competence by future specialist during training and, again, with selection of the best students to master's and postgraduate studies.

Let us next discuss the dynamics during university year of students' psychological diagnostic indexes that are important for the “person-person” occupational type-communication and organizational skills, as well as indexes of academic self-efficacy (Table 3). Interestingly, all these indexes reach the highest level at the fourth year of education. But only self-efficacy dynamic from the first to the fourth year is incremental steadily and statistically significant ($p \leq 0,05$ if the first and the fourth years are compared). This, in our opinion, is also quite natural and is related to natural increase of students' adaptability to educational conditions and requirements. As we noted above, during the same period, there is also almost the same dynamics of professional competence.

Table 3
Indicators of academic self-efficacy, communicative and organizational skills of future specialists of the “person-person” occupational type

№	Indexes	Year of study						
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI-VII	Post-gr.
1	Academic self-efficacy	30,36	31,46	31,74	32,09	30,88	31,21	31,2
2	Communicative skills	11,99	10,81	11,32	12,53	11,4	11,94	12,0
3	Organizational skills	12,99	12,46	13,65	14,06	12,97	13,63	13,88

As for development of such important for “person-person” occupational type qualities like communication and organizational skills, we can say that any incremental dynamics was not observed and their changes are not significant. This, we believe, is the result of lack of these qualities purposeful development during professional training. It can be seen as major drawback.

Professional orientation, competence and professionally important qualities of future specialists of the “person-person” occupational type compared with future specialists of other types

Comparison of obtained in our study results for professional orientation, competence and professionally important qualities of future specialists of the “person-person” occupational type with the indexes for other type future specialists has shown, in our opinion, quite interesting results. So all three indicators of professional orientation (student's self-estimation of their own desire to have a chosen profession, to have a job within the chosen profession and interest in learning) and one index of competence of future specialists with “person-person” occupational type are significantly higher

at a reliable level ($p \leq 0,05-0,001$) than those of other type future specialists (Table 4). Perhaps, this may be due to the next factors: more interesting training program for mastering “person-person” type professions, more conscious choice of profession, potentially greater earnings, presence of psychological differences between people having chosen this type of profession and individuals having chosen a profession of another type. Degree of each factor influence on the result can be estimated in further in-depth researches.

Table 4

Comparison of professional orientation and competence of future specialists with “person-person” occupational type with other type specialists

№	Index	Occupational type	n	M	σ	$p \leq$
1	Desire to have the chosen profession	person-person	490	2,63	0,96	0,001
		other	411	2,31	0,95	
2	Interest in learning	person-person	490	3,37	1,01	0,001
		other	411	3,14	1,06	
3	Intention to work in the chosen profession	person-person	490	3,91	1,03	0,05
		other	411	3,75	1,07	
4	Knowledge of profession conditions and aspects	person-person	490	3,13	0,89	0,01
		other	411	2,97	0,89	
5	Level of professional knowledge and abilities	person-person	490	2,89	0,86	–
		other	411	2,85	0,88	
6	Willingness to independent work	person-person	490	2,99	0,97	–
		other	411	2,93	1,04	

In our opinion, we obtained interesting and logical differences for indexes presented in the Klimov’s differential diagnostic questionnaire between future specialists with “person-person” occupational type and other type specialists (Table 5). Thus, future specialists with “person-person” occupational have significantly higher (at a confidence level $p \leq 0,001$) professional orientation level in comparison other type specialists not only to the “person-person” occupational type, but also to the “person-nature” type. Moreover, their average professional orientation level to the “person-person” type is significantly higher than to other types. Indexes for the “person-art image” type for two tested groups are virtually equal. A future specialists of other occupational types exceeds significantly ($p \leq 0,001$) at the professional orientation of “person-person” occupational type specialists on indexes “person-tools” and “person-signs”.

Also, in our opinion, it is natural is that future specialists with “person-person” occupational type have significantly higher (at the confidence level $p \leq 0,01-0,001$) diagnostic indexes for such professionally important skills like communication and organizational skills (Table 6). Educational self-efficiency for two compared groups does not differ.

Table 5
Differences for indexes of Klimov's differential diagnostic questionnaire shown
by future specialists of "person-person" occupational type and by other type specialists

№	Occupational type index	Occupational type	n	M	σ	$p \leq$
1	"Person-nature"	person-person	490	3,03	1,85	0,001
		other	411	2,56	1,88	
2	" Person -tools"	person-person	490	3,13	1,74	0,001
		other	411	3,58	1,77	
3	" Person-person"	person-person	490	5,48	1,65	0,001
		other	411	4,75	1,68	
4	" Person-sign"	person-person	490	3,56	1,87	0,001
		other	411	4,15	1,88	
5	" Person-art image"	person-person	490	4,81	1,97	—
		other	411	4,96	2,02	

Table 6
Indexes of educational self-efficacy, communication and organizational skills
for future specialists with the "person-person" occupational type and other types

№	Index	Occupational type	n	M	σ	$p \leq$
1	Educational self-efficacy	person-person	490	31,04	4,57	—
		other	411	30,64	4,62	
2	Communicational skills	person-person	490	11,50	4,80	0,001
		other	411	10,08	5,08	
3	Organizational skills	person-person	490	13,25	3,48	0,01
		other	411	12,50	3,91	

Relations and factors of professional orientation and competency of "person-person" occupational type specialist during professional training

Favorable and unfavorable factors for successful course of this stage of professional development of future specialists with "person-person" occupational type were determined by analyzing correlations (by Spearman) between indexes of their professional orientation and competence used in our study and indexes from questionnaires and psychological diagnostic methods that can act as such factors, as we anticipated. Table 7 shows the correlation matrix of professional orientation indexes with similar indexes.

Before going directly to the analysis of professional orientation and competence relationships and factors it should be noted that all used in our study indexes are positively linked with high significance levels, notwithstanding that correlation coefficients themselves do not have high absolute values (from 0,19 to 0,31). This is completely understandable, because professional orientation is not the only factor for successful acquisition of professional competence.

So if we take the direct correlation between most professional orientation indexes (indexes 1-3) and competency (№ 4-7) separately, we can see that their absolute values are significantly higher: from 0,42 to 0,67 between professional orientation indexes (see Table 7) and from 0,35 to 0,54 between professional competence indexes (see

Table 8). This fact just confirms validity of our questionnaire containing questions to determine levels of professional orientation and competence for future specialists.

Table 7

Correlation of professional orientation indexes for future specialists with "person-person" occupational type

№	Index	1	2	3
1	Desire to have the chosen profession	1,0	,50***	,67***
2	Interest in learning	,50***	1,0	,42***
3	Intention to work in the chosen profession	,67***	,42***	1,0
4	Knowledge of profession conditions and aspects	,24***	,31***	,26***
5	Level of professional knowledge and abilities	,19***	,22***	,22***
6	Willingness to independent work	,22***	,23***	,25***
7	Educational self-efficacy	,22***	,34***	,30***
8	Communicational skills	,16***	,26***	,09*
9	Organizational skills	,24***	,27***	,12**
10	"Person-person" type	,14**	,03	,10*
11	Preparation to lessons (hour per day)	,09*	,21***	,13**
12	Ability to work (during day)	,15**	,17***	,01
13	Ability to work (during week)	,12**	,17***	,06
14	Health	,16***	,17***	,08
15	Relationships with fellow students	,14**	,17***	,09*
16	Relationships with teachers	,23***	,33***	,19***
17	Compliance with professional requirements	,30***	,37***	,32***
18	Academic achievements	,14**	,32***	,16***

Note: 1) indexes № 1-6, 11-18 obtained with the questionnaire, № 7 – with self-efficacy scale, № 8-9 – with the method KOS-2, № 10 – with Klimov's questionnaire;

2) *** – correlation is significant at $p \leq 0,001$; ** – $p \leq 0,01$; * – $p \leq 0,05$.

We see that all three professional orientation indexes (students' self estimation of their own desire to have a chosen profession, intention to work with the chosen profession and interest in learning) are most closely (and significantly) related to tested students' self-estimation of their compatibility with requirements of the chosen profession. Also there are reliable correlations of the three indexes with student's self-estimation of relationships with teachers. But the correlation coefficient for relationships with fellow students is twice smaller. This can be regarded as a natural phenomenon, because teachers (and relationship with them) for students are more important on the way of professional training than classmates.

Also statistically significant positive correlation between professional orientation indexes and academic achievements and a time spent for lesson preparation can be viewed as commonsensical. But interest in learning stands apart, its correlation coefficient with academic achievements and a time spent for lesson preparation is two times larger than the other two orientation indexes.

We cannot overlook the fact that two orientation indexes – desire to have a chosen profession and intention to work in a chosen profession – have significant correlation

with students' self-estimation of ability to work during day and during week and their health.

It was found out also that all three professional orientation indexes significantly correlated with all indexes of used psychological diagnostic methods that, as it was expected, along with analyzed above indexes from the questionnaire are indicators of favorable and unfavorable factors for successful professional training: the level of communication and organizational skills and orientation to the "person-person" occupational type.

Let us interpret the obtained results in terms of *orientation* of established links between the indexes. In our opinion, the relation between obtained from the questionnaire professional orientation and competence indexes is *predominantly one-way impact*; the first indexes influence onto the second ones – the highest level of professional orientation leads to better competence development. Although there may also be a partial influence of *the third factor* – the presence of certain necessary for "person-person" occupational type professionally important qualities can be a cause of better professional competence development and of a higher level of orientation on profession mastering.

A sufficiently strong and statistically reliable correlation ($r = 0,22-0,37$; $p \leq 0,001$) between the diagnostic index of academic self-efficacy with all questionnaire indexes of professional orientation and competence (see Table 7 and 8) is the argument in favor of the latter assumption. Academic self-efficacy is a part of such personal feature as general self-efficacy that determines person's performance in various areas, especially at different stages of professional development for "person-person" type professions.

We believe that relations between professional orientation and students' self-estimation of compliance with professional requirements, willingness to independent professional work, relationships with teachers and fellow students, times for lesson preparations, ability to work during day and week, health are examples of mutual influence. For example, from the one hand, a higher level of students' professional orientation determines their desire to have better relations with those who can help them to master their profession – their teachers, and from the other, – good relationships with teachers enhance or preserve the high level of professional orientation.

Influence on professional orientation of such psychological diagnostic indicators as academic self-efficacy, communication and organizational skills and degree of interest to "person-person" occupations, which can be regarded as factors supporting successful training of future specialists with the "person-person" occupational type, can be described as positive *one-way influence*. Professional orientation *influence* on academic achievements, which, in our opinion, is possible to regard as one of the most important "derivatives" of orientation, can be described as *predominantly one-way influence*.

Table 8 shows correlations of professional competence indexes.

From the above two tables we can see that in comparison with the orientation indexes, professional competency indexes related more closely to academic achievements, and along with it the correlation with the time for lesson preparation is much weaker. It also confirms the validity of the questionnaire on professional

orientation and competence, because academic achievements reflect the existing level of student's professional competence in significantly greater extent and the time for lesson preparation reflects their professional orientation.

Table 8

Correlation of professional competence indexes for future specialists with the "person-person" occupational type

№	Indexes	1	2	3
1	Knowledge of profession conditions and aspects	1,00	,54***	,35***
2	Level of professional knowledge and abilities	,54***	1,00	,54***
3	Willingness to independent work	,35***	,54***	1,00
4	Educational self-efficacy	,30***	,35***	,37***
5	Communicational skills	,23***	,28***	,30***
6	Organizational skills	,21***	,30***	,27***
7	"Person-person" type	,06	,10*	,06
8	Preparation to lessons (hour per day)	,07	,10*	-,05
9	Ability to work (during day)	,07	,11***	,02
10	Ability to work (during week)	,12**	,10*	,14**
11	Health	,10*	-,02	,02
12	Relationships with classmates	,07	,15**	,18***
13	Relationships with teachers	,18***	,16***	,16***
14	Compliance with professional requirements	,30***	,26***	,22***
15	Academic achievements	,37***	,42***	,37***

Notes: 1) indexes № 1-3, 8-15 obtained with the questionnaire, № 4 – with self-efficacy scale, № 5-6 – with the method KOS-2, № 7 – with Klimov's questionnaire;
2) *** – correlation is significant at $p \leq 0,001$; ** – $p \leq 0,001$; * – $p \leq 0,05$.

Approximately the same levels have correlations with students' self-estimation of compliance with professional requirements, willingness to independent professional work, relationships with teachers and fellow students, times for lesson preparations, ability to work during day and week, health.

Professional competence index correlation with all used indexes from psychological diagnostic methods appeared to be even tighter than for professional orientation. It is completely logical, since these indexes are important indicators of professionally important features for "person-person" type specialists, development of these features, in turn, can be regarded as an integral part of professional competence.

As for above relations *orientation*, we would like to highlight the existence of *mutual influence* between professional competence and relationships with professors and classmates. As in the case of orientation, influence on professional competence of psychological diagnostic parameters as the level of educational self-efficacy, communication and organizational skills and degree of orientation to "person-person" occupational type can be regarded as *one-sided* positive impact. Professional competence impact on academic achievements and self-estimation of own abilities to profession requirements are *predominantly one-way*.

Conclusions

Obtained results show that two-thirds of future specialists with the "person-person" occupational type are going to work in their chosen professions and have high

and higher than average level of academic self-efficacy. The third of them, who are not sure of their choice and have inadequate levels of academic self-efficacy, require individual work. The tested persons mainly have appropriate level of professional orientation: more than half of them have strong or very strong desire to occupy exactly the profession they are being trained for, and 80% of them have levels of learning interest from above average to very high.

Future specialists with the “person-person” occupational type shown significant gender differences for a part of indexes of Klimov’s differential diagnostic questionnaire (men have significantly higher interest to “person-tools” and women do to “person-art image” and “person-nature” professions), but the fact is more important that the average orientation levels of the tested students with different gender to chosen “person-person” type professions *differ only slightly and are higher* than interest to all other four types of professions.

Students’ professional orientation during university studying, unfortunately, does not increase. It is the highest during the first year, when they start learning a chosen profession. It deterioration later is largely due to inadequate education organization and quality at universities, which leads to decrease of students’ motivation to learning and of students’ desire to have the chosen profession. Professional orientation level recovery occurs for students in the last year of learning, but it is not real improvement, but the fact that only the best students enter for these courses (graduate and post-graduate levels).

Unlike orientation, professional competency indexes increases sharply from the first to the third year of education. Further, the similar trend for improvement remains, however, is not so expressed. A new sharp “jump” is observed among postgraduate students. Such dynamics is quite logical and associated with professional competence acquiring by future specialists during learning process and, again, with selection of the best students for master and postgraduate studies.

All professionally important psychological diagnostic indexes reach the highest level at the fourth year of education. But among these indexes only academic self-efficacy increases constantly from the first to the fourth year of education and this increasing is statistically significant, that is due to the natural increase of students’ adaptation to training conditions and requirements. But such professionally important abilities as communication and organizational skills are hardly developed. And this is a big disadvantage of professional training.

Obtained indexes of professional orientation, competence and professionally important qualities of future specialists with the “person-person” occupational type naturally differ from that of future specialists with other occupational types. So all three orientation indexes and one competence index of future specialists with the “person-person” occupational type are much higher than those of future specialists with other occupational types. The formers exceed substantially future specialists with other occupational types according their interest not only to the “person-person” type, but also to the “person-nature” type. In addition, their average orientation to the “person-person” type is significantly higher than to other occupational types. The “person-art image” type indexes of the two groups do not differ. Future professionals with other occupational types are significantly more interested in “person-tools” and

“person-sign” types. Future specialists of the “person-person” occupational type have significantly higher diagnostic indexes for such professionally important skills like communication and organizational skills. Academic self-efficacy of two compared groups does not differ very much.

All indexes of professional orientation and competence of future specialists with the “person-person” occupational type are positively correlated with a high significance level. Moreover, the absolute values of correlations “inside” indexes of these two groups is significantly higher, which confirms the validity of the questions to determine the levels of professional orientation and competence of future specialists.

As for *orientation* of these and other significant relationships between the various indexes, the correlation type between professional orientation indexes and competence ones is *mainly one-way influence* of the formers onto the latter – a higher level of professional orientation leads to better competence acquisition. Although there may also be present *a third factor* – presence of certain professionally important for the “person-person” occupational type qualities can cause better professional competence acquisition by students and of a higher level of orientation on certain profession mastery.

Relations between professional orientation and self-competence from one hand and with students’ self-estimation of relationships with teachers and fellow students, times for lesson preparations, ability to work during day and week, health from the other can be described as *mutual influence*.

Influence of professional orientation and competence into academic achievements is *predominantly one-way*.

Influence on professional orientation of such psychological diagnostic indicators as academic self-efficacy, communication and organizational skills and degree of interest to “person-person” occupations, which can be regarded as factors supporting successful training of future specialists with the “person-person” occupational type, can be described as positive *one-way influence*.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDY QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS OF ŠIAULIAI UNIVERSITY (LITHUANIA) AND OPEN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT “UKRAINE” (UKRAINE)

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Abstract

In the article the research data on study process assessment in two Lithuanian and Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions (N = 244) have been presented. The research aim is the exploration of the assessment of students studying at Šiauliai and “Ukraine” universities about the study process. Main findings and conclusions states, that student’ of both countries Higher Education Institutions similarly assess peculiarities of the study process. Assessing organization of the study process in the aspect of e-teaching/learning technologies, it was noticed that respondents (of both universities) favourably assessed their manifestation in the study process but the obtained statistically significant differences demonstrate different levels of preparation of universities for such organisation of the study process.

Key words: *Studies in higher education institutions, study process assessment.*

Introduction

In the modern society, in the context of fast shifts in various processes, increasingly more focus is given to quality parameters, enabling not only to state the results of the process but also assess the effectiveness of their implementation. Assessment of various processes is widespread in various areas; therefore, it has acquired interbranch features and distinguishes itself by its flexibility (e.g., quality assurance and management models employed in management are also applied ensuring quality of educational processes). However, anyway, the objective to create an effective quality assurance system in higher education, corresponding and cohering with systems in other European countries, is very significant and complex (Žekevičienė, 2005). Study quality assurance models implemented in higher education institutions can distinguish themselves by their component design but particular emphasis should be placed on one of the main components which is significant to all models: the necessity of assessment of interaction between participants of the study process. Analysing researches into study quality at the national level, the necessity of such assessment is also highlighted. Students’ feedback

on various study quality aspects is researched (Alifanovienė & Jankauskaitė, 2009; Bobrova et al. 2010; Želvys, 2007), researches in university teachers' (Raišienė, 2004) stakeholders' (Pileičikienė, 2011) opinions are carried out.

Many researches distinguish "study didactics" as a significant aspect of study quality assessment, in other words, methods of learning and teaching. According to Pukelis and Pileičikienė (2006), the paradigm that is "convenient" to effectiveness of the process is the student-centred study paradigm, which emphasises that students should spend much time self-studying but the duty of the higher education institution is to ensure possibilities of such studies. Authors also emphasise the significance of such learning and teaching methods as problem-based learning, project assignments, case analysis, group works and other active methods, promoting students' autonomy.

Developing the ideas of applying such methods in the study process, the possibilities provided by e-learning/teaching are significant. Many authors (Zuzevičiūtė, 2010; Saugėnienė, 2010) offer to treat them as the teaching/learning process grounded on application of modern technologies. Currently, the manifestation of e-teaching/learning ideas, implementing distance teaching/learning, is particularly relevant. According to Valiukevičiūtė (2005), it is developed not that much as modernisation of education processes but as the means of implementing the idea of openness of learning. Exploring possibilities of applying distance teaching/learning in the context of development of continuous professional training, Teresevičienė et al. (2008) indicate that development of distance teaching/learning network, participation of scientific and study institutions in this process create conditions to implement lifelong learning principles, reduce exclusion of various residents' groups (village and city residents', residents of different social groups, etc.). Therefore, preparation of study process participants to take part in the e-teaching/learning process is also a significant "element" reflecting study quality (this is particularly actualised creating joint study programmes).

One more significant component of models of study quality assurance is internationality of the higher education institution, which is accentuated in Lithuanian national documents on education and strategic documents of Šiauliai University (International Strategy of Šiauliai University 2007-2013, Strategic Development Plan of Šiauliai University 2009-2020, etc.), both improving study quality and seeking acknowledgement of higher education at the international level and training specialists who would be competitive in Lithuanian and international labour market.

Since 2011, implementing a unanimous system of study credits (ECTS) and provisions of the Bologna process, emphasis is placed on promotion of students' and teachers' mobility, European cooperation in the quality assurance domain, enhancement of European higher education aspects, focusing on study programmes, institutional cooperation, diversity of mobility and integrated programmes of studies, mobility visits and scientific researches (Bologna declaration, 1999). Promoting interculturality of study programmes, since 2010, the programme of interculturality enhancement includes measures providing possibilities to update both on-going programmes and new joint study programmes (Jungtinių studijų programų bendrieji reikalavimai, 2010). Alongside with implementation of joint study programmes of various levels in higher education institutions (between the country's universities or faculties of universities or with other countries' higher education institutions) it is also significant to carry out surveys on opinions of study process participants on study quality. Therefore, seeking to assess possibilities of implementing joint study programmes in Lithuanian and Ukrainian higher education institutions, the research was conducted, **aiming** at exploration of the opinion of students studying at Šiauliai and "Ukraine" universities about the study process.

Research subject: students' assessment about quality of studies in higher education institutions.

Characteristics of the research process and research sample. During the research, the written survey was conducted (in the mother-tongue of participants), which consisted of 6 diagnostic blocks and 96 features. The structure of the questionnaire consisted of the instruction (instruction manual), the block of social-demographic variables (data about gender, place of residence, etc.) and the main part: the block of diagnostic variables (of the construct). This block consisted of scales for assessment of competencies of the master specialist in social sciences (social work, social rehabilitation), of current and desirable situation related to peculiarities of the study process, and of development of professional activity. Research data were processed, systematised and presented graphically employing SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Analysing data, statistical methods were applied (descriptive statistics, non-parametric Mann-Whitney test) and qualitative-interpretational methods.

The survey was attended by 242 students from Šiauliai (N – 123) and Ukraine (N – 121) higher education institutions. Demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Universities, Year of Studies and Place of Residence

	University				
	“Ukraine” University		Šiauliai University		
N	121		123		
%	49,6		50,4		
	Year of studies				
	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	
N	30	145	39	28	
%	12,4	59,9	16,1	11,6	
	Place of residence				
	Capital	City	Regional centre	Town	Village
N	99	49	27	46	23
%	40,6	20,1	11,1	18,9	9,4

Seeking to ensure reliability of the sample with regard to students' speciality, approximately similar numbers of students of similar specialities were surveyed (of social pedagogy at Šiauliai University and of social work at “Ukraine” University).

Research results. Research instrument applied for the research enabled to disclose students' opinion on various aspects of organisation and implementation of the study process. One of them is learning/teaching methods. Students' opinion in this aspect is presented in Table 2.

Analysing obtained results, reflecting assessment of methods and strategies applied in the study process of students of both countries, it was noticed that the study process was dominated by “traditional” study forms. Students of both countries confirm that teachers are more active in the study process than students both organising and implementing this process. Students are involved in this process in a fragmentary manner: they are given the role of “passive” listeners (*teachers dictate, students take lecture notes, insufficient engagement in general discussions, etc.*). It should also be noted that in the aspect of the country there are statistically significant differences between statements reflecting domination (distribution) of open teaching/learning ideas in the study process, which give a sense to the very learner's active participation in the study process. The analysis of obtained results enables to notice that students of Lithuania noted study process peculiarities grounded on namely these ideas. Students are provided with a possibility to “experience” various roles in the study process, both passive and active, enabling them to create the study process themselves, choosing study forms and strategies.

Table 2
Assessment of Learning/Teaching Methods in the Aspect of the Country

Statements	SU (per cent)	UU (per cent)	M-U	p
Studies focus on discovery of scientific, problematic, new knowledge and not on the very knowledge	43,09	47,06	6918,00	0,41
Study process is related to practical activities	65,85	63,03	6855,00	0,36
Teachers familiarise students with their or other scientists' researches and their results, organise discussions to discuss them	55,37	57,63	6817,00	0,51
Drawing up timetables, students' needs are considered	45,90	27,12	5951,00	0,02
Teachers and students cooperate	88,62	71,30	5864,00	0,01
Students' opinion and activeness are important for the majority of teachers	77,24	72,88	6572,00	0,17
During lectures teachers often apply active methods	71,54	61,02	6593,50	0,17
Course materials are delivered in a problem-based and vivid manner	59,02	48,72	6491,00	0,19
Teachers and students take part in project activities	57,38	46,61	6403,00	0,11
Teachers are ready to cooperate and consult not during the lectures (the possibility to find a tutor, be consulted individually, by e-mail, etc.)	80,17	71,19	6181,00	0,05
During lectures the majority of teachers dictate, write on the board and we take lecture notes	58,20	71,43	6587,00	0,18
Only the teacher is mainly active during the lectures	64,75	52,99	5944,00	0,02
The majority of teachers familiarise students with assessment aims and terms in advance	86,18	66,67	4920,50	0,00
Teachers provide students with the possibility to choose the form and the term of accounting	74,80	34,45	4210,00	0,00
During accounting most often all students are given the same assignments	87,70	33,61	2972,50	0,00
Preparing accounting works, students have a possibility to individually choose topics and forms, methods of performance	64,23	31,90	4589,00	0,00
Teachers and students cooperate, conducting scientific researches/disseminating them	54,10	54,62	7148,50	0,83
Knowledge acquired during lectures is related to practice	69,11	58,47	6176,00	0,03

It is also significant that the research instrument provided with a possibility to disclose both the current assessment of the study process and to "see" guidelines of organisation of the desirable (wished) study process. Differences between these assessments provide with a possibility to observe the shift of the "elements" of the study process: from the current manifestation of the feature to the desirable, the one that should be. The value of the least difference indicates high level of implementation and vice versa. Obtained differences are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
*Difference of Assessing Application of Learning/Teaching Methods in the Study Process:
 Applied Now vs. should be Applied?*

Statements	ŠU	UU
Studies focus on discovery of scientific, problematic, new knowledge and not on the very knowledge	1,55	0,53
Study process is related to practical activities	0,87	0,61
Teachers familiarise students with their or other scientists' researches and their results, organise discussions to discuss them	0,85	0,60
Drawing up timetables, students' needs are considered	1,22	1,33
Teachers and students cooperate	0,53	0,54
Students' opinion and activeness are important for the majority of teachers	0,66	0,51
During lectures teachers often apply active methods	0,73	0,68
Course materials are delivered in a problem-based and vivid manner	0,93	0,39
Teachers and students take part in project activities	0,93	0,65
Teachers are ready to cooperate and consult not during the lectures (the possibility to find a tutor, be consulted individually, by e-mail, etc.)	0,65	0,63
During lectures the majority of teachers dictate, write on the board and we take lecture notes	-0,26	0,20
Only the teacher is mainly active during the lectures	-0,25	-0,01
The majority of teachers familiarise students with assessment aims and terms in advance	0,52	0,36
Teachers provide students with the possibility to choose the form and the term of accounting	0,76	0,92
During accounting most often all students are given the same assignments	0,49	0,54
Preparing accounting works, students have a possibility to individually choose topics and forms, methods of performance	0,79	1,01
Teachers and students cooperate, conducting scientific researches/ disseminating them	0,79	0,63
Knowledge acquired during lectures is related to practice	0,87	0,68

The obtained differences demonstrate that students of both higher education institutions, assessing peculiarities of study process organisation, favourably assessed indicators of this process in the aspect of learning/teaching methods; i.e., the difference between the current and desirable study process is not particularly big. Students of Šiauliai University noted application of methods of problem-based teaching/teaching methods in the study process by the biggest difference (statements: *during studies students are taught to discover scientific, problematic, new knowledge and not the very knowledge; course materials are delivered in a problem-based and vivid manner*). Meanwhile students of "Ukraine" University noted individualisation possibilities in the study process at the higher education institution by the biggest difference (statements: *preparing accounting works, students have a possibility to individually choose topics and forms, methods of performance; drawing up timetables, students' needs are considered*). This demonstrates that the study process in higher education institutions is grounded on different paradigms: from impact to learner-centred; the study process is characterised by the mix of learning/teaching methods. This is confirmed by obtained particularly small differences, assessing statements describing the study process grounded on the impact paradigm (statements: *during lectures the majority of teachers dictate, write on the board and we take lecture notes; only the teacher is mainly active during the lectures*).

Therefore, we can notice that namely orientation of the study process to students is a priority axis of improvement of study quality in both higher education institutions.

The results of assessing study process organisation peculiarities in the aspect of application of modern technologies and participants' competencies in this area are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
*Manifestation of E-Teaching/Learning Technologies in the Study Process
in the aspect of the Country*

Statements	SU (per cent)	UU (per cent)	M-U	P
Students are provided with possibilities to hear out part of the course unit/all course unit in a distance mode	49,17	44,92	6798,00	0,57
Teachers place part of teaching materials in virtual teaching environments/on the Internet	62,81	50,41	6099, 50	0,03
Students are provided with good conditions to use computers and the Internet	78,69	65,52	5392,00	0,001
In the study process teachers use ICT, presenting / checking/assessing materials	70,83	46,55	4899,50	0,001
There are good conditions to use technical equipment (copy machines, printers, projectors, etc.)	75,41	52,14	5158,50	0,001
Students have a possibility to receive support (consultation) in the distance mode (e-mail, correspondence software, social networks, etc.)	72,13	60,68	5858,00	0,01
There is a possibility to use electronic sources (data bases, articles, etc.)	91,80	60,68	3852,00	0,001

The results demonstrate that in both universities the distance mode of study organisation is given sufficient attention: the majority of students favourably assessed statements describing it. However, almost all statements given for assessment are assessed differently with regard to the country; i.e., the statistically significant difference in this aspect was obtained. This demonstrates that preparation of universities for such organisation of the study process differs. At Šiauliai University students are familiarised with the mode of distance studies, applying virtual learning environments, already in the first year of studies. It should be noticed that students of both countries pointed out that distance teaching/learning possibilities were used only in separate study subjects and were not applied implementing all/part of the study programme. However, namely implementation of e-teaching/learning in the study process, implementing joint study programmes, could contribute to improvement of quality of studies.

Students had different opinions regarding availability of information and communication resources. Šiauliai University students assessed availability of these resources more favourably. Respondents' opinions were particularly different with regard to possibilities of using electronic sources. The majority of Šiauliai University respondents assessed these statements particularly favourably because the community of Šiauliai University has a possibility to use the most modern regional library, which is renewed in frame of The European Science Foundation and has sufficient number of computerised working places and information sources.

Comparing assessment of manifestation of e-teaching/learning in the study process, it was also noticed that students of Šiauliai University more favourably assessed teachers' competencies of applying information and communication technologies in the study process.

The latter demonstrate these possessed competencies both applying such innovative study organisation forms as distance/virtual teaching and during lectures and organising students' self-studying.

Because during the research it was sought not only to identify manifestation of e-teaching/learning ideas in the on-going process but also to assess the need of their implementation, differences between students' current and desirable study process assessments were calculated. Obtained results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Differences of Assessing Manifestation E-Teaching/Learning: Applied Now vs should be Applied

Statements	ŠU	UU
Students are provided with possibilities to hear out part of the course unit/ all course unit in a distance mode	0,93	0,66
Teachers place part of teaching materials in virtual teaching environments/ on the Internet	0,86	0,64
Students are provided with good conditions to use computers and the Internet	0,53	0,63
In the study process teachers use ICT, presenting /checking/assessing materials	0,50	0,71
There are good conditions to use technical equipment (copy machines, printers, projectors, etc.)	0,58	0,80
Students have a possibility to receive support (consultation) in distance mode (e-mail, correspondence software, social networks, etc.)	0,72	0,72
There is a possibility to use electronic sources (data bases, articles, etc.)	0,39	0,79

Obtained differences of assessments enable to notice that respondents favourably assessed manifestation of e-teaching/learning ideas in the study process; i.e., differences between manifestation of the current and desirable feature are not particularly big. Students of both countries equally evaluated possibilities to get support in the distance mode, applying modern information and communication technologies. The obtained difference demonstrates that, in their opinion, existing possibilities are insufficient. Respondents of Šiauliai University mostly missed manifestation of distance teaching/learning in the study process, namely, possibilities provided by it were assessed as particularly desirable. Meanwhile students of "Ukraine" University mostly wished improvement of existing facilities and learning resources: improvement of conditions to use technical equipment and electronic resources. This way they accentuated the necessity to improve university teachers' competencies of applying information and communication technologies.

The other field of study process organisation assessed in this research is internationality of studies and mobility of academic community at the inter-institutional and international level. The results of assessing peculiarities of the study process in the aspect of internationality are presented in Table 6.

The results of the conducted research enable to state that internationality of the study process is assessed similarly by both "Ukraine" and Šiauliai university students. The obtained percentage estimators indicate that, assessing all statements, not more than 63 per cent assess them favourably. Students' opinions differed mostly with regard to possibilities to take part in student exchange programmes ($p = 0,001$). Over 60 per cent of Šiauliai University students noted that they had studying experience in another country's higher education institution and had favourable conditions to get involved in such activities. This can be determined by differences of countries due to the geopolitical issues: Lithuania as a member state of the European Union has a developed network of mobility of academic community. It is also significant to emphasise

Table 6
Assessment of Internationality of the Study Process in the Aspect of the Country

Statements	ŠU (per cent)	UU (per cent)	M-U	P
I have experience of studying in a higher education institution abroad	63,41	36,59	6526,50	0,14
Students who wish are provided with possibilities to take part in students exchange programmes	60,3	39,7	4902,00	0,001
Lectures are often delivered by teachers from foreign countries	41,9	58,1	6426,00	0,22
The university provides with possibilities to take part in international seminars and conferences	54,5	45,5	6014,50	0,14
Students are provided with possibilities to take part in the lectures of teachers from other higher education institutions	57,00	43,00	6599,00	0,20

that students' opinion regarding teachers from other foreign countries differed. More than a half of Ukraine University students and less than a half of Šiauliai University students indicated that teachers from foreign countries often delivered lectures at their universities. Such results enable to notice that it is important for higher education institutions to take part both in academic mobility programmes and other programmes enhancing internationality (e.g., creating joint study programmes with foreign countries' higher education institutions). Assessing mobility of academic communities, Šiauliai University students more favourably assessed the process at the international level rather than at inter-institutional level, whilst "Ukraine" University respondents, vice versa. The latter indicate that conditions to take part in students' mobility programmes at the international level in the higher education institution were insufficient.

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Conclusions

1. Students of both countries similarly assess peculiarities of the study process. The majority pointed out that studies were organised applying “traditional” methods and forms: a more active teacher, the teacher chooses and tells topics and terms for accounting, there is a lack of innovative study methods which would encourage students’ activeness. Such study methods as problem-based, active teaching, e-learning are assessed as desirable by students of both higher education institutions.
2. Assessing organisation of the study process in the aspect of e-teaching/learning technologies, it was noticed that the respondents (both of Šiauliai University and “Ukraine” University) favourably assessed their manifestation in the study process but the obtained statistically significant differences demonstrate different levels of preparation of universities for such organisation of the study process. Students of Šiauliai University, who have more favourably assessed provided possibilities to use technical equipment, electronic resources (scientific data bases, publications, etc.), put more emphasis on the development of distance teaching/learning possibilities. Students of “Ukraine” University mostly highlighted improvement of conditions to use technical equipment and electronic sources and the necessity to improve competencies of applying information and communication technologies in the study process.
3. Respondents similarly assess internationality of the study process and mobility of the academic community. It must be noted that students of Šiauliai University favourably assessed on-going mobility processes of academic community (have both possibilities and experience of studying in higher education institutions of foreign countries) but unfavourably assessed their possibilities to participate in academic activities of teachers/scientists from other foreign countries (whilst students of “Ukraine” University assessed these possibilities more favourably). Such results enable to notice that improving the quality of studies, it is also necessary to implement other programmes promoting internationality (e.g., implementation of joint study programmes with higher education institutions of foreign countries, invitations of teachers/scientists from foreign countries, etc.)

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CHARACTERISTIC OF DIFFERENT COMPONENTS DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS TO PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH SOMATIC DISORDERS

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Abstract

The paper presents the main results of empirical studies aimed at determining characteristics of psychological readiness to professional activities for students with somatic defects. The study involves 238 students, 96 of them have different physical disabilities. 10 questionnaires and techniques were applied. Results are presented according to an eight-component structure of psychological readiness to professional activities proposed by the authors. The study results are presented in comparison with healthy students' results as well as in terms of certain indexes dynamics during university learning for various components of psychological readiness. The obtained results can become a basis for psychological activities aimed at such readiness formation.

Key words: *psychological readiness, professional activities, students with somatic disorders.*

Introduction

Presently professional development of persons with somatic disabilities is an actual problem for different fields of psychology. Given the urgent needs of social practice, psychological phenomena of this category of people are increasingly drawing attention of scientists and psychologists.

The main social and psychological issues that arise for individuals with somatic disabilities include: their alienation from the world, absence of demand at labor market, social isolation. As a result, there are significant difficulties in their active social life forming, low "confidence in the world", tendency to perceive social environment as hostile, a lowered level of aspiration and lowered self-estimation (Камінська, 2010; Лебедева, 2009; Томчук, Комар, & Скрипник, 2005). Modern scholars emphasize that providing high school training for students with somatic disorders is an extremely important interdisciplinary problem which solution requires combined efforts of psychologists, health workers, sociologists, social

workers, legislators, public administrators, etc. (Таланчук, Кольченко, & Нікуліна, 2004; Тищенко, 2010; Томаржевська, 2007; Хорошайло, 2008).

In particular, current scientific challenge is to develop a scientific basis for forming such students' psychological readiness for future careers. We understand psychological readiness to professional activities of students with somatic disabilities as a multi-component dynamic system, which consists of eight interrelated components (motivational, cognitive, operational, personal, evaluating, aim setting, creative, good mood mobilizing) and psychologically enables such students to perform their professional activities in the future at a certain level of efficiency (Сердюк & Петрученко, 2011).

In this paper, we present main results of our empirical research aimed at determining the characteristics of psychological readiness to professional activities for students with somatic disorders.

Method

The study involved 238 full-time students of different specialties at the University "Ukraine" (Kyiv): social work, physical rehabilitation, psychology, management and law. Among them, 96 students had various physical disabilities. Of the entire sample, 85 tested persons were enrolled at the first academic year (35 people with somatic disorders and 50 healthy ones), 78 were at their third year (31 people with somatic disorders and 47 healthy ones), 75 were at their fifth year (30 people with somatic disorders and 45 healthy ones).

10 questionnaires and techniques were used during our studies: 1) the Ehlers' test of achievement motivation (Практическая психодиагностика, 2002), 2) the questionnaire for assessment of professional motivation, 3) the research technique of significant life orientations by D. Krambo and L. Maholik adapted by D. A. Leontiev (Леонтьев, 1992), 4) the test for communication and organizational skills determination – KOZ-2 (Фетискин, Козлов & Мануйлов, 2002), 5) the self-efficacy scale of R. Schwarzer and M. Yerusalem (Шварцер, 1996), 6) the self-attitude tests of R. Pantilev and V. Stolin (Пантилеев, 1993), 7) Cattell's 16-factor personality questionnaire 16-PF (Практическая психодиагностика, 2002), 8) the questionnaire of Kellermann and Plutchik (Практическая психодиагностика, 2002), 9) modification of the Kokun's questionnaire for students (Кокун, 2010), 10) the self-actualization test of E. Shostrom (Shostrom, 1964).

Results and Discussion

Findings were made during our empirical research that allowed us, according to our developed structure of psychological readiness to profession activities for students with somatic disabilities, to define peculiarities (compared to healthy students) and quantitative diagnostic characteristics of such readiness.

The results concerning the *motivational* component of the readiness do not allow us to state clearly, in comparison with other researchers (Тищенко, 2010; Томчук, Комар, & Скрипник, 2005; Чайковський, 2006) significant lowering of a motivation level for students with somatic disabilities. For example, an "interest for learning" index is equal for both studied samples of students. Perhaps, this can be explained by the fact that in our study, in contrast to the above mentioned works, there were students with somatic disabilities from Kyiv, who, living in the capital, may have more opportunities for professional self-fulfilment than students studying at regional universities.

Index dynamics is also almost the same for both samples and close to typical dynamics described in the literature (Кокун, 2012), so for the I, III and V educational years the highest level of interest for learning is shown by the first-year students and the lowest one by the third-year students. Similarly, we also observed a significantly higher level ($p \leq 0,01-0,001$) among female students in comparison with male students.

Motivation to succeed, as a motivational index that has more general nature and does not directly describe learning motivation, was indeed significantly higher among healthy students ($p \leq 0,001$) in our study as well as in Skrypnyk's (Скрипник, 2006) work. Its average value for students with somatic disabilities equals 14,1 ($\sigma = 4,7$) and 16,2 for healthy people ($\sigma = 3,5$). There are no significant changes of this index for students of different educational years. This, in our opinion, shows that this indicator describes motivational feature as a relatively stable personal trait that is not subject to significant changes during university training.

The level of all four professional motivation components (motives of own labour, of social value of work, of self-esteem at work and of professional skills) differs significantly ($p \leq 0,01-0,001$) between healthy students and students with somatic disorders. Both samples have the most expressed index of “social significance of labour”. But it is significantly higher among healthy students (Table 1).

Table 1

Levels of professional motivation components for healthy students and students with somatic disabilities

No	Motives	Students			
		healthy		with somatic disabilities	
		M	σ	M	σ
1	Own labour	10,3	1,31	12,2	1,25
2	Social value of work	16,1	1,34	13,7	1,15
3	Self-esteem at work	14,8	1,28	11,9	1,05
4	Professional skills	6,0	1,16	9,1	0,93

Also, in comparison with students with physical disabilities, healthy students have substantially higher motives of “social significance of work” and “self-esteem at work”. The former, compared with healthy students, have more expressed motives of “own labour” and “professional skills”. Thus, social and personal motivation dominates for healthy students, but content-professional motivation is more important for students with somatic disorders. However, no significant differences are observed at the level of professional motivation component expression for students of different years of study.

As for the **cognitive** component of psychological readiness for professional work, it was found out that healthy students' self-estimation of own knowledge about profession conditions and peculiarities is nearly the same as self-estimation of students with somatic disorders, but the self-estimation of professional knowledge and skills by students with somatic disabilities is currently significantly “more modest” in comparison with healthy ones ($p \leq 0,01$). This suggests that students with somatic disabilities consider themselves much less professionally prepared for future careers.

Table 2 shows the results obtained through an additional question, which in the questionnaire version intended for students with somatic disabilities described the cognitive component of their psychological readiness to professional activities. These results indicate that universities must pay more attention to inform students with somatic disorders on possibilities to compensate for individual functional limitations during their profession performance as well as to form practical skills for such compensation.

Evolution of the students' cognitive component of psychological readiness to professional activities is positive. The self-estimation level of own knowledge about professional conditions and peculiarities and of professional knowledge and skills among both healthy students and students with physical disabilities is growing during training years, significantly rising from

the I to the V years of study ($p \leq 0,01$). The self-estimation of own knowledge about ways of individual functional limitations compensation during professional activity performance by students with somatic disabilities also tends to increase. However, it is not so pronounced and it statistically is only at the level of trend ($p \leq 0,1$).

Table 2

Students' with somatic disabilities self-estimation of knowledge about their functional limitations compensation during future professional activities

No	They know about their functional limitations compensation during future professional activities	Number
1	Nothing	-
2	Little	28%
3	About half	33%
4	A lot	34%
5	Nearly everything	5%

Table 3 shows the results for the following **operational** component indicators: a level of communication and organizational skills for both studied samples.

Table 3

Levels of communication and organizational skills of healthy students and students with somatic disabilities

No	Level	Communication skills		Organizational skills	
		healthy students	students with somatic disorders	healthy students	students with somatic disorders
1	Low	11%	16%	3%	6%
2	Lower than average	24%	55%	11%	44%
3	Average	25%	15%	32%	28%
4	High	25%	8%	36%	14%
5	The highest	14%	6%	18%	8%

Our results for the scale of communicative abilities slightly differ from the results obtained in the study of Tomarzhevskaya (Томаржевська, 2007). We also confirmed a significantly lower level of communication skills for students with somatic disabilities ($p \leq 0,001$). Similar results were obtained by Tishchenko (Тищенко, 2010). As it was found out, such correspondence is observed for the organizational skills level among healthy students and students with somatic disabilities – the latter have this level significantly lower, on average ($p \leq 0,001$).

It should also be noted that clear development of such important components of psychological readiness to professional activities as communication and organizational skills was not observed among tested students during learning process from the I to the V year ($p \geq 0,1$), which corresponds with the study of Kokun (Кокун, 2012). We agree that it is due to absence of purposeful development of these qualities during professional training and it is a big disadvantage.

Let us analyse the results obtained according to the self-efficacy scale by Schwarzer and Yerusalem (Шварцер, 1996) that characterizes such an integral indicator of the operational component of psychological readiness to future specialist's profession as self-efficacy (in this case – academic self-efficacy). Index comparison for both studied samples is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The level of academic self-efficacy for healthy students and students with somatic disabilities

No	Academic self-efficacy	Students	
		healthy	with somatic disabilities
1	Low	1%	8%
2	Lower than average	7%	18%
3	Average	30%	41%
4	Higher than average	44%	29%
5	High	18%	4%

The results indicate that the level of academic self-efficacy among students with physical disabilities is also much lower than the level among healthy students ($p \leq 0,001$). In our view, it is quite logically consistent with previous results, as, for example, communication skills, which are lower on average for students with somatic disabilities, substantially determine person's self-efficacy level in various fields. It should be noted that progressive improving of academic self-efficacy from the I to the V educational years ($p \leq 0,05$ at comparing the I and the V years) were observed in both study samples.

As in the case of the self-estimation of their professional knowledge and skills, students with somatic disabilities are much inferior to healthy students in self-estimation of readiness for independent professional work ($p \leq 0,001$). This confirms once again our above mentioned conclusion that students with somatic disabilities are significantly less likely to consider themselves professionally prepared for future careers.

Additional question to students with somatic disabilities revealed that the level of practical skills development for individual functional limitations compensation during professional activity performance is still below the level of knowledge about the ways of such compensation.

Dynamics of two above indicators are positive in both studied samples, it is evidenced by their gradual increase during training ($p \leq 0,05$ at comparing the I and the V years).

It was determined that the relationship of students with somatic disabilities with classmates and teachers are somewhat more polar than relationship of healthy students. As for readiness formation, in our view, attention should be paid to students who evaluate their relationships with classmates and teachers as "mediocre" and worse. It was found out that these students constitute more than a third of all tested persons.

We begin analysis of the *personal* component of psychological readiness with comparison of results describing surveyed students' self-attitude (Table 5).

The results from the above table show that the majority of indicators characterizing self-attitude differ significantly for healthy students and students with somatic disabilities (from $p \leq 0,05$ to $p \leq 0,001$).

Students with somatic disabilities, on average, have a significantly lower level of "integral self-attitude", which describes the cumulative level of this personal phenomenon. This indicates a much pronounced tendency among these students in comparison with healthy ones to form internal undifferentiated feeling "against" rather than "for" themselves. They have significantly lower values for such important indicators of positive self-attitude as "self-respect", "self-sympathy" and "attitude expected from others". It indicates that students with somatic disabilities have lower levels of such important personal components of psychological readiness for professional work as faith in their own strength and skills, ability to be a "master" of own life, positive self-estimation, self-approval, self-consistency, self-understanding, expectation of positive attitude to themselves from others.

Table 5

Self-attitude indicators for healthy students and students with somatic disabilities on the base of R.Pantilev and V. Stolin questionnaire (Пантильев, 1993)

No	Self-attitude scale	Students				p
		healthy		with somatic disorders		
		M	σ	M	σ	
1	Scale S (integral)	74,7	19,7	66,8	22,1	0,01
2	Scale I – self-respect	59,7	25,2	53,5	28,4	0,05
3	Scale II – self-sympathy	61,2	23,1	55,3	24,3	0,05
4	Scale III – expected attitude from others	53,5	27,2	40,6	26,9	0,01
5	Scale IV – self-interest	72,9	25,4	70,4	24,9	-
6	Scale 1 – self-confidence	55,9	25,2	49,6	23,7	0,05
7	Scale 2 – attitudes of others	56,6	27,3	45,4	26,3	0,001
8	Scale 3 – self-acceptance	68,1	22,5	60,3	25,4	0,01
9	Scale 4 – self-leadership, self-consistency	57,4	23,4	58,9	25,7	-
10	Scale 5 – self-accusation	50,1	26,4	49,9	26,7	-
11	Scale 6 – self-interest	64,3	26,4	57,7	27,8	0,05
12	Scale 7 – self-understanding	58,5	25,3	54,4	26,4	-

As for the major scales, both studied samples did not differ significantly, only by the scale IV – self-interest.

The results of seven “internal” scales developed to reveal deepness of drive to certain internal actions toward the testee’s “I” led us to the conclusion that students with somatic disabilities have significantly lower indexes on such scales as “self-confidence”, “attitude of others”, “self-acceptance”, “self-interest”.

Comparison of results characterizing significant life orientations between samples of healthy students and of students with somatic disorders is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Significant life orientations of healthy students and of students with somatic disorders, technique of D. Krambo and L. Maholik adapted by D. A. Leontiev (Леонтьев, 1992)

No	Self-attitude scales	Students				p
		healthy		with somatic disorders		
		M	σ	M	σ	
1	General indicator	111,8	26,9	92,4	19,8	0,001
2	Sub-scale 1 (purposes)	30,5	7,4	29,5	7,3	-
3	Sub-scale 2 (process)	30,5	5,9	27,9	6,5	0,001
4	Sub-scale 3 (result)	23,3	4,0	23,2	5,0	-
5	Sub-scale 4 (locus of control – I)	20,5	5,2	18,4	4,7	0,01
6	Sub-scale 5 (locus of control – life)	30,1	6,6	27,4	7,1	0,01

These data indicate presence of sufficiently expressed specific life orientations of students with physical disabilities compared to healthy ones. Thus, the first group of students has significantly lower indexes (from $p \leq 0,01$ to $p \leq 0,001$) on three subscales of the Significant life orientations test: “process of life or interest and emotional richness of life”, “locus of control-I (I am a master of my life)” and “locus of control – life, or life handling” (and a lower

general indicator as a result). At the same time, group mean indexes of the surveyed samples are virtually identical for two subscales (“purposes in life” and “life results”).

According to subscale interpretation, it indicates that students with somatic disabilities tend to perceive life process as interesting, emotionally rich and full of meaning in a lesser degree in comparison with healthy people, they are dissatisfied presently by their lives. Also they have less confidence in their ability to control events of their own life and rather believe that a human life is beyond conscious control and freedom of choice is illusory and it is pointless to guess at the future.

At the same time, students with somatic disabilities are virtually indistinguishable from healthy people as for presence of life goals in the future, that provide awareness, focus and temporal perspective for life. The same is for positive estimation of their past, sense of its productivity and meaningfulness.

Also quite typical results were obtained as for specifics of self-actualization of students with physical disabilities (Table 7).

Table 7

Self-actualization indicators of healthy students and students with somatic disabilities by Self-actualization test of E. Shostrom – SAT (Shostrom, 1964)

No	Self- actualization scales	Students				p
		healthy		with somatic disorders		
		M	σ	M	σ	
1	Time competence (Tc)	7,4	3,0	6,6	3,1	0,05
2	Support (I)	43,4	9,9	41,1	8,4	0,05
3	System of values (SAV)	11,3	3,0	10,7	3,0	0,1
4	Flexibility of behaviour (Ex)	11,5	3,6	10,6	3,1	0,05
5	Sensitivity to oneself (Fr)	6,8	2,6	6,1	2,0	0,05
6	Spontaneity (S)	7,0	2,3	6,3	2,1	0,01
7	Self-respect (Sr)	9,0	3,0	8,1	3,0	0,05
8	Self-adoption (Sa)	9,7	3,3	8,8	3,1	0,05
9	Views on human nature (Nc)	5,5	1,6	5,6	1,7	-
10	Synergy (Sy)	4,2	1,3	4,0	1,6	-
11	Acceptance of aggression (A)	7,7	2,4	7,4	2,4	-
12	Rapport capability (C)	8,1	2,8	8,0	2,5	-
13	Cognitive needs (Cog)	4,9	1,8	4,9	1,7	-
14	Creativity (Cr)	6,4	2,6	6,1	2,0	-

Students with somatic disabilities have on average significantly lower indexes than healthy students ($p \leq 0,05$) for both basic scales of the test – “time competence” and “support”. Although we can see from the table above that the absolute values of this difference is not gross and is only present as a trend. In particular, it shows that students with physical disabilities are less able to live in the present time (to experience a current life moment in its wholeness, not just as a fatal consequence of past or preparing for future “real life”), to feel the continuity of past, present and future (to see life as whole) than healthy students. These students are, on average, less independent in their actions, more subject to external influences.

Analysis of additional scales is more interesting. Thus, students with somatic disabilities have significantly lower indexes ($p \leq 0,05-0,01$) on both scales that form a “value block” – “system of values” and “flexibility of behaviour”. It means that they share in a lesser degree the values

that are inherent to a self-actualizing person and exercise lesser flexibility in implementation of their values at behaviour and interaction with others, they have lesser ability to respond quickly and adequately at changing situation. Similarly, these students have significantly lower indexes for the “senses block” scales (“Sensitivity to oneself” and “Spontaneity”) and for self-perception scales (“Self-esteem” and “Self-acceptance”). This suggests that these students are less able, to some extent, to be aware of their needs and feelings, feel and reflect on them, are less able to behave naturally and relaxed, show their emotions to others. It also shows their lesser ability to appreciate their merits and advantages, accept themselves as they are.

However, significant differences between the studied samples for three blocks and corresponding six scales: 1) “concept of man” (“views of human nature” and “synergy” scales), 2) “interpersonal sensitivity” (“acceptance of aggression” and “rapport capability” scales), 3) “attitude to knowledge” (“cognitive needs” and “creativity” scales) were not revealed.

It shows (on the base of the first block above) that students with somatic disabilities have roughly the same views on human nature, on the dichotomies of masculinity-femininity, rationality-emotionality as healthy students. They have the same capacity for holistic perception of the world and people and for understanding of unity of opposites. The second block shows that both studied samples have the same ability to accept their irritation, anger and aggression, to subject-subject communication, to establish rapidly deep and close emotionally rich human contacts. The third one shows that both samples have the same desire to acquire knowledge about the world (we will return to the latter scale – “creativity” – in more detail during analysis of a creative component of psychological readiness).

As for indexes of Cattle’s 16-factor personality questionnaire 16-PF, students with somatic disorders have almost the same levels as healthy students for the next factors: “intelligence”, “restraint”, “sensitivity” and “self-control”. This indicates that both investigated samples have no differences in quick understanding, ability to analyse situations, ability to make meaningful conclusions, intelligence, general cultural development, expressivity, sensitivity, cautiousness, responsibility, discipline, consistency in social demands compliance, controlling their emotions and caring for their reputation.

At the same time, healthy students have significantly higher levels ($p \leq 0,05-0,001$) for “emotional stability”, “courage” factors and significantly lower figures for the “assurance-anxiety” factor ($p \leq 0,001$). This suggests that students with somatic disabilities, compared with healthy ones, have the next distinctions: greater intolerance, impatience, irritability, susceptibility, tendency to anxiety, to avoiding complex issues resolving; lesser courage, vigour, activity, willingness to take risks and cooperate with strangers in unfamiliar circumstances, lesser ability to make independent, creative decisions; they are less cheerful, light-hearted, self-confident, cool-headed, calm.

It was revealed according to the Kellermann-Plutchik questionnaire (Практическая психодиагностика, 2002) that the highest intensity of psychological defences among students is observed for such mechanisms as “denial of reality”, “compensation” and “reaction formation.” Thus, the studied samples have significantly different levels for three mechanisms — “denial of reality”, “rationalization” and “reaction formation” ($p \leq 0,05-0,001$). Students with physical disabilities have higher levels for all three mechanisms.

In our opinion, it seems quite logical. After all, for a person who has physical disability, it is natural to maintain personal integrity, self-esteem, social adaptation and “deny reality” to a certain extent – with background reluctance to recognize certain facts of reality that can, if they admit, be too painful – and sink into emotionally pleasant dreams and fantasies. On the other hand such person tries to interpret certain situations rationally and depreciate needs they cannot fulfil.

The *evaluation* component of psychological readiness enabled us to see a very characteristic tendency: students with somatic disorders have significantly lower levels of self-assessment of their skill compliance with future profession requirements than healthy students ($p \leq 0,001$), which is understandable due to the presence of disorders, but at the same time, their desire to have a profession is higher than desire of healthy students ($p \leq 0,05$).

Doing result assessment we must pay attention to some students who have inadequate psychological readiness to professional activities. These are students that estimate their skills in comparison with future profession requirements as “inadequate” and their desire to have a chosen profession is “not very much” or “mediocre”.

Also, there is an alarming fact that students’ desire to have a chosen profession decreases gradually from the I to the III academic year and then to the V year (at a confidence level $p \leq 0,001$).

Indexes for the “self-esteem” factor according to Cattell’s 16-factorial personality questionnaire 16-PF (Практическая психодиагностика, 2002) are significantly higher for healthy students ($p \leq 0,001$) – respectively, $M = 5,2$ ($\sigma = 1,4$) – and $M = 4,1$ ($\sigma = 1,3$) for students with somatic disabilities.

The component of *aim setting* is defined by the index of desire to work within a chosen future profession. These indexes do not significantly differ for healthy students and for those with somatic disorders. But from the point of view of students’ psychological readiness for professional activity (in this case, as clearly insufficient), we must pay attention to one-third of students who either are not going to work in a chosen profession or have not made up their minds yet. This index decreases from the I to the III year of study ($p \leq 0,01$) and then remains the same for the V year.

We used the “developed imagination” factor from the Cattell’s 16-factor personality questionnaire 16-PF and the “creativity” scale of the Self-actualization test of E. Shostrom – SAT as indicators of the *creative* component of psychological readiness. Both of the above indexes do not differ for the studied samples of students. Average quantitative value for the “developed imagination” factor of healthy students is 5,7 ($\sigma = 1,5$), and 5,9 ($\sigma = 1,6$) for students with somatic disabilities. Indexes of the “creativity” scale for the first sample have a mean value of 6,4 ($\sigma = 2,6$), and 6,1 ($\sigma = 2,0$) for the second one. So creative orientation of students with somatic disabilities is not inferior that creative orientation of healthy ones, as it follows from the latter technique interpretation.

As for the *good mood mobilizing* component, students with somatic disabilities have such indexes as ability to work during day and week significantly less stable ($p \leq 0,001$). This indicates necessity to pay particular attention to these indexes of the good mood mobilizing component of psychological readiness for professional work at implementation of measures aimed at its formation.

These results show that students’ with somatic disabilities views about their future life in general and about professional activities are not too optimistic. Only about 20% of these students are optimists. Almost half of the surveyed students feel uncertain in their perception of future. And about a third of students feel pessimistic. It also highlights the need to pay particular attention to these indicators of the good mood mobilizing component of psychological readiness of students with physical disabilities. It should be noted that these two indicators of professional and life optimism are linked sufficiently closely for these students. So for this category of students, professional future seems almost inseparable from the future life in general.

Conclusions

The results obtained during survey allowed us to define peculiarities of students with somatic disorders (compared with healthy students) and determine quantitative diagnostic characteristics of such readiness on the base of the psychological readiness structure developed by the authors.

The results for the *motivational* component of students' psychological readiness to chosen professions demonstrate that, despite a significantly lower level of motivation to succeed among students with somatic disorders, they are not inferior in terms of common interest in learning. Social and personal motivation (self-motivation to work and social significance of labour) is dominant for healthy students, but content-professional motivation (the motives of their own labour and professional skills) is more important for students with somatic disabilities.

The peculiarities of the *cognitive* component lie in the fact that, while having almost the same level of self-assessment of their own knowledge about chosen profession conditions and peculiarities as healthy students, students with somatic disabilities are significantly less likely to consider themselves prepared for future careers (in terms of their present professional knowledge and skills). Also, these students have insufficient knowledge about how to compensate for functional limitations during future professional activity performance.

For the majority of diagnosed operational component indexes, students with somatic disabilities show much lesser results than healthy students: they have lower levels of educational self-efficacy, communication and organizational skills, self-esteem of readiness for independent professional work. Their level of practical skills to compensate for their functional limitations during performance of future professional activities is still below the level of knowledge about such compensations. Their relationships with classmates and teachers are more polar than relationships of healthy students.

As for self-attitude, which characterizes *personal* component of psychological readiness to professional activities, students with somatic disabilities have significantly lower levels of "integral self-attitude" and positive components of self-attitude – "self-esteem", "self-sympathy", "attitude expected from others," "self-confidence", "attitude of others", "self-acceptance", "self-interest". It indicates reduced levels of such important component of psychological readiness for professional work as faith in their own strength and skills, ability to be a "master" of own life, positive self-estimation, self-approval, self-consistency, self-understanding, expectation of positive attitude towards themselves from others.

In terms of significant life orientation, students with somatic disabilities tend to think of their life process as less interesting, not so emotionally rich and full of meaning than healthy students, they are characterized by dissatisfaction with their present lives. They express lesser belief into their ability to control events of own life, and rather think that human life is beyond conscious control.

Self-actualization features of such students lie in the fact that they are able somewhat lesser than healthy students to live in the present, see life as a whole. These students are, on average, less independent in their actions, more subject to external influence, in lesser extent share values that are inherent to self-actualizing personality and exercise less flexibility in implementation of these values in their behaviour and interaction with others; their abilities to respond quickly and adequately to the changing situation are lower. They are less able to be aware of their needs and feelings, behave naturally and relaxed, appreciate own merits, accept themselves as they are.

As for Cattell's personal questionnaire 16-PF, students with somatic disabilities practically do not differ from healthy ones by the indexes of acumen, ability to analyse situations, ability to make meaningful conclusions, intelligence, common culture, expressivity, sensitivity,

cautiousness, responsibility, discipline, social demand performance, emotional control and care about their reputation. Students with disorder in comparison with healthy ones are more intolerant, restless, irritable, susceptible, tend to be anxious and avoid resolving complex issues; they are less courageous, persistent, active, less willing to take risks and cooperate with strangers, they have less ability to make independent, creative decisions; they are less cheerful, confident, and cool-hearted.

Students with physical disabilities have significantly greater degree of following three psychological defence mechanisms: “denial of reality”, “rationalization” and “reaction formations”.

Study of the *evaluation* component showed a characteristic trend: students with somatic disabilities have lower levels of the “self-esteem” index by Cattell’s questionnaire and significantly lower self-estimation of their skills correspondence to future profession requirements than healthy students, which is understandable due to presence of such disorders, but at the same time their desire to have a profession is higher than desire of healthy students.

Healthy students and students with somatic disorders do not significantly differ in intention to work within chosen future profession as the index of *aim setting* component of psychological readiness for professional work shows. However, it should be noted that a significant number of tested students – a third – either are not going to work in a chosen profession or have not made up their minds yet.

Indexes of readiness *creative* component (the “developed imagination” factor by Cattell’s questionnaire and the “creativity” scale by SAT test) show that a degree of person’s creative orientation of students with somatic disabilities is not inferior to that of healthy students.

As for the *good mood mobilization* component, performance during day and week of students with somatic disorders is significantly less stable. Attitude of students with somatic disabilities to their future life in general and to professional life is not optimistic: only about 20% of them have an optimistic attitude, almost half of them mark presence of uncertainty in their future, and about a third feels pessimistic. So for this category of students professional future seems practically inseparable from the future life in general.

In addition to studied comparative features of psychological readiness to professional activities, peculiarities of individual index dynamics for various components of psychological readiness should be also taken into account during implementation of measures aimed at readiness formation among students with somatic disorders.

Thus, the highest level of interest in academic training (motivational component) is observed during the first educational year and the lowest – during the third one.

The students’ level of self-estimation of own knowledge about profession conditions and peculiarities and of present professional knowledge and skills (cognitive component) increases during training, significantly rising from the I to the V academic years. The level of self-estimation of own knowledge of ways for individual functional limitation compensation during professional activity performance also tends to increase among students with somatic disabilities, but it is not statistically significant.

Academic self-efficacy from the I to the V academic year improves progressively (operational component). Levels of readiness for independent professional work and practical skills for functional limitation compensation (students with somatic disorders) increase also.

Degree of students’ desire to have a chosen profession gradually decreases from the I to the III academic year and then to the V year (evaluative component).

Intention to work within a chosen future profession (aim setting component) decreases from the I to the III years and then remains the same till the V year.

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III. DISABILITY STUDIES

VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF PRINCIPALS OF MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

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Abstract

It is especially important to appropriately prepare students with special educational needs for labour activity. The integration of these students in vocational life is possible only through the improvement of labour education and vocational counselling. The article analyzes vocational counselling of students with special educational needs from the viewpoint of principals of mainstream schools. Their viewpoint towards vocational counselling for persons with special educational needs has been revealed; it has been analyzed how vocational counselling for students with special educational needs is provided in mainstream schools; the principals' influence on vocational counselling of students with special educational needs has been investigated.

Key words: *mainstream school, principal of mainstream school, students with special educational needs, vocational counselling.*

Introduction

Problems and relevance of the research. In mainstream school the first actual stage of getting acquainted with the choice of profession begins. The means of vocational counselling should be directed towards the increase of the variety of mainstream education that would meet various needs of person and surrounding world¹. School should as early as possible provide students with necessary information and direct their interest to a certain profession. The more attention is paid to vocational education and vocational counselling of students with special educational needs, the wider will be their possibilities to successfully integrate into social life. Baranauskienė and Valaikienė (2010) have stated that services of vocational counselling are important both for the system of education and labour market, and also for their interaction.

Nowadays not enough attention is paid to vocational counselling of students with special educational needs, teaching often does not correspond to the demands of business and labour market. In the suggestions of Lithuanian Free Market Institute on the improvement of the

¹ LLRI siūlymai dėl profesinio orientavimo, profesinio mokymo ir kai kurių Darbo biržos funkcijų įgyvendinimo kokybės ir efektyvumo gerinimo (2010).

quality and effectiveness of vocational counselling, vocational education and implementation of certain functions of Labour market (2010) it is stated that mainstream education system is not various enough in its contents and form to create an adequate worldview. Mainstream education, although becoming more various, essentially remains very standardized. Education of these students could not be restricted only to school graduation because it is very important to create conditions to choose a certain profession, to deepen knowledge and skills in extracurricular activity that gives untested opportunities for successful socialization of a young person (Baranauskienė, Valčiukienė, & Vinikaitytė, 2008). In order to identify vocational purposefulness of students with special needs it is very important to find out how vocational counselling in mainstream school is provided and school principals' viewpoint towards vocational counselling.

Aim of the research – to find out about the viewpoint of principals of mainstream schools towards vocational counselling of students with special educational needs and their influence on the activity of vocational counselling.

Object of the research – viewpoint of principals of mainstream schools towards vocational counselling of students with special educational needs.

Objectives of the research:

1. To investigate the influence of school principals on vocational counselling of students with special educational needs.
2. To reveal the viewpoint of school principals towards vocational counselling of students with special educational needs;
3. To find out how counselling of students with special educational needs is provided in mainstream schools;

Sample of the research. The sample of the respondents consists of 40 principals of mainstream schools from various towns and districts of Lithuania choosing schools by the method of convenient selection.

Methods and organization of the research. To perform the research a qualitative research method – semi-structured interview has been used. Content analysis method for non-standardized material has also been used and it was applied according to methodological substantiation described by Straus & Korbin (Страйсс & Корбин, 2001), Šaparnis (2000), Šaparnis & Merkys (2000). The data have been categorized according to semantic relations and graphically presented using Microsoft Office Excel programme. The reliability of the data is related to the results of the research of content analysis. The control of research intersubjectivity was performed applying the expert method. The expert group consisted of four persons. To perform the research the instrument adapted for the situation of Lithuania used in Leonardo Da Vinci project LLP-2dv-PRT, 2010-LT-0203 was applied. The permission to use the instrument was received from the institution that coordinated the project.

Methods of the research

1) Questionnaire (semi-structured interview). Necessary and possible questions are previewed in advance. Questions are only partially standardized. The interview creates more freedom in communication atmosphere. 2) Content analysis; 3) Graphical presentation of the data of the research has been performed using “Excel XP” programme.

Results of the research

Characteristics of research sample. In order to reveal the viewpoint of the principals of mainstream schools towards vocational counselling of students with special educational needs 40 principals from various towns and districts of Lithuania have been interviewed. When performing the research the information about the demographical situation (i.e. age, place of living, gender, type of school the principal manages) of the respondents was collected. Out

of 40, 19 were women and 21 men. The majority of the respondents live in Šiauliai town and district, the smallest number of the respondents was from Kelmė town, Klaipėda, Tauragė and Pasvalys districts. The biggest part of the respondents belongs to the age group from 50 to 55 years of age. The smallest – from 30 to 35 years of age. More detailed distribution of the respondents according to age has been presented in

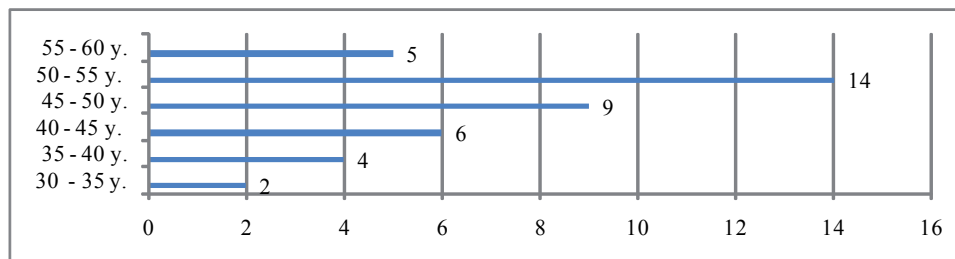


Figure 1. Distribution of the respondents according to age

The majority of the respondents are the principals of gymnasiums, the smallest part – secondary schools (Figure 2).

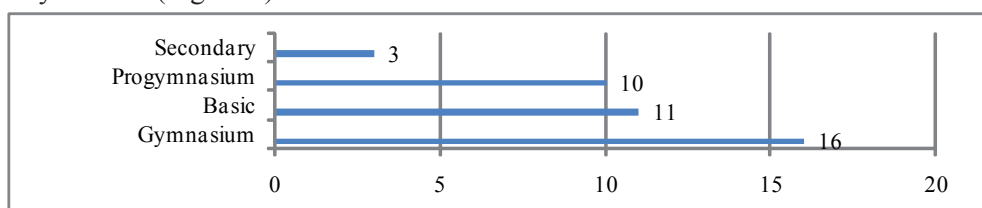


Figure 2. Distribution of the respondents according to the type of school they manage

Analysis of the viewpoint of mainstream school principals towards vocational counselling of students with special educational needs

The respondents' viewpoint towards future visions related to students with special educational needs has been investigated. **Integration into common school activity** is the biggest category that reflects positive viewpoint towards the education of students with special educational needs. Galkienė (2005), states that the concept of integrated education in mainstream school comes from the viewpoint to admit equal rights for everyone in the society. Also a big part of the respondents stated that it is obligatory to give necessary assistance to students with SEN in choosing a profession. Only a small part of the respondents stated that these students should be educated in special schools (Figure 3)

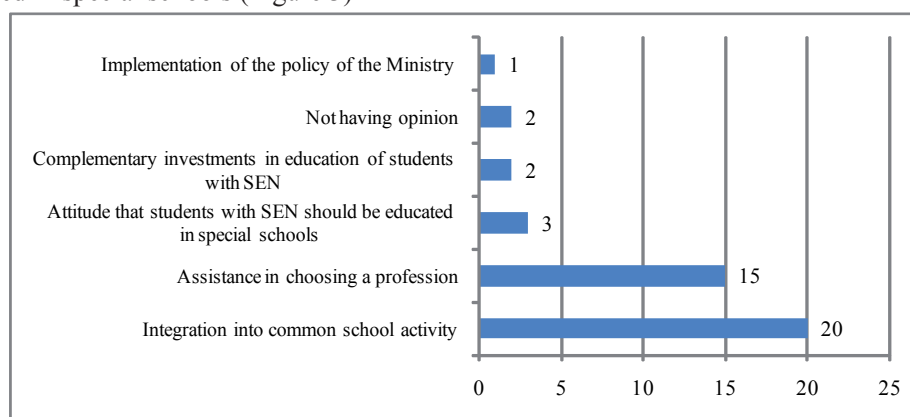


Figure 3. Visions of mainstream school principals related to students with special educational needs

Information about persons that have the biggest influence on vocational counselling at school is reflected in the category **Person responsible for vocational counselling** that consists of 8 subcategories. The results have revealed that the specialists of vocational counselling point (VCP) are the most influential persons in the issue of vocational counselling. The subcategory *Other specialists* comprises teachers of technologies, managers of non-formal department, speech therapist, subject teachers, psychologists, tutor, separate person responsible for vocational counselling, career planning group, manager of career centre (Figure 4).

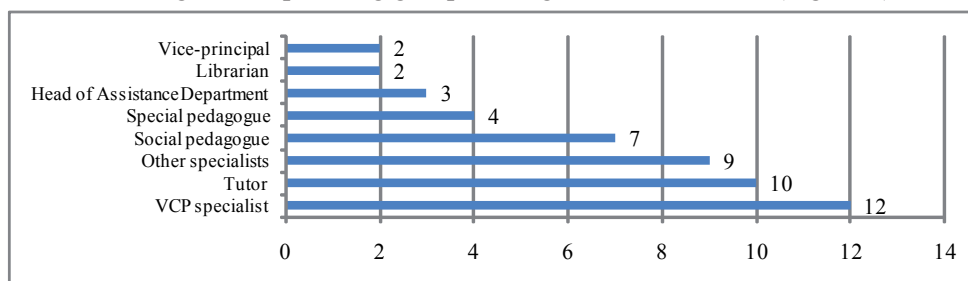


Figure 4. Responsible person having the biggest influence on vocational counselling at school

Barasnevičienė and Donielienė (2011) state that education in family forms the bases that later enable to improve possessed skills, apply them in labour market, in creating business. During the research the respondents were asked to enumerate the ways that are used involving parents in school activity. It has been found out that the best way involving parents in school life is joint activity (Figure 5). In the category **Joint activity as a form of vocational counselling** 2 subcategories have been distinguished: *Organization of joint activity of parents, children and school community* (19 statements, e.g.: The best way to involve parents – organizing out-of-lesson-time activity together with students; Organization of useful events for parents and children; Non-traditional events: round table discussions, quiz shows (parents, children, pedagogues), open lessons) and *Parents' support as a form of vocational counselling* (11 statements, e.g.: Discuss with parents on the aims of school, directions of activity; Meetings of active parents; To inform parents which of their suggestions have been accepted (motivated feedback). The answers of the first subcategory reveal that the assistance in joint events is the most appropriate way to involve parents in school activity. The second subcategory points out that it is especially important to pay attention to parents' opinion, only then it will be possible to achieve appropriate collaboration. The last category **Lack of parents' motivation**. The subcategory *Lack of parents' interest in school activity* (2 statements, e.g.: I do not know, because parents lack motivation) has been distinguished here. Only a small part of the respondents stated that practically it is not possible to get parents interested in participation in school executive activity because they are apathetic.

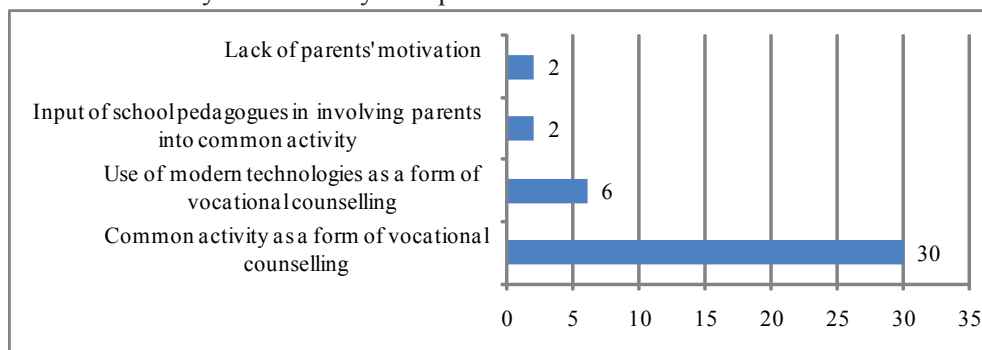


Figure 5. Ways used to involve parents in school activity

The ways how school introduces employers, press and governmental institutions with the situation of students with SEN have been investigated. In the category **Dissemination of information** the subcategory *Presenting information to mass media* has been distinguished (5 statements, e.g.: Dissemination of experience in national, regional press – the articles are written; It is published in press; We write articles, publish photographs). Mainstream school principals stated that one of the ways to introduce employers, press and governmental institutions is to present articles in mass media. They named publishing information on the internet as the second way. Their answers are reflected in the subcategory *Presenting information in virtual environment* (7 statements, e.g.: Information is presented on the website of the gymnasium; School website; There is a public school website, electronic diary). The subcategory *Meetings as a way introducing with the situation of students with SEN* (7 statements, e.g.: Meetings with employers; Conversations during meetings; During the meetings with the representatives of various professions) reflects the third way that is used to present the situation of students with SEN. Only two respondents mentioned that employers are not interested in the situation of students with SEN. More detailed information has been presented in Figure 6.

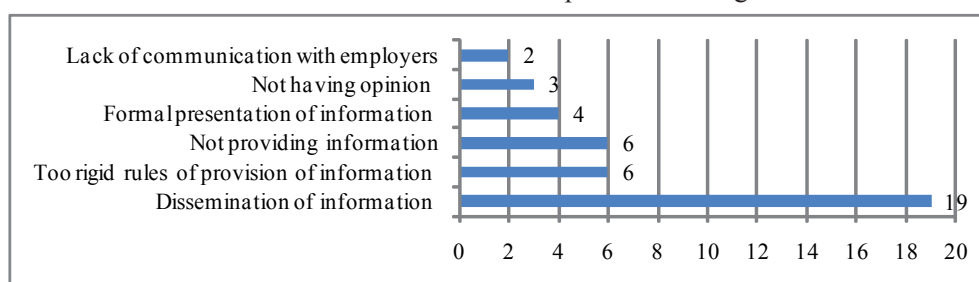


Figure 6. Ways how school introduces employers, press and governmental institutions with the situation of students with SEN

It has been investigated whether trade and industry representatives inform school staff members about rapid changes in the labour market (Figure 7). It is reflected in the category **Informing school staff members**. In this category **Informing school staff members** the subcategory *Representatives' information about the changes* has been distinguished (17 statements, e.g.: 1–2 times a year such meetings are organized; Representatives present their activity; Representatives of production sector participate in school events). It reflects school staff members' interest in changes in the labour market, collaboration with trade and industry representatives. The answers reflected in the second category **Representatives are not invited** are contrary to the aforementioned category. The subcategory *Industry and trade representatives do not visit school* (16 statements, e.g.: No, they are not invited, Separately for the staff they are not invited, Representatives are not invited) has been distinguished. A small part of the respondents stated that school staff members themselves are interested in changes.

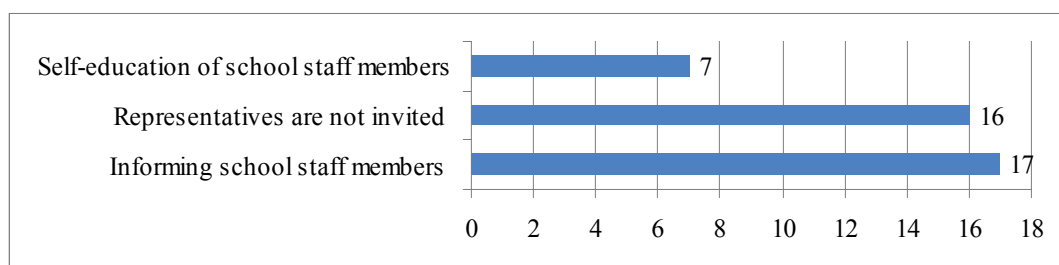


Figure 7. Information of trade and industry representatives for school staff members about rapid changes of life out of school

Having systemized the principals' answers about encouraging students for out-of-lesson-time activity 7 categories have distinguished (Figure 8): 1) Encouraging the activeness of students with SEN; 2) Creating equal conditions for out-of-lesson-time activity; 3) Activity corresponding to abilities for students with SEN; 4) Not having opinion; 5) Input of a hobby group supervisor in encouraging activeness of students; 6) Students with SEN are not encouraged for out-of-lesson-time activity; 7) Priority for studying.

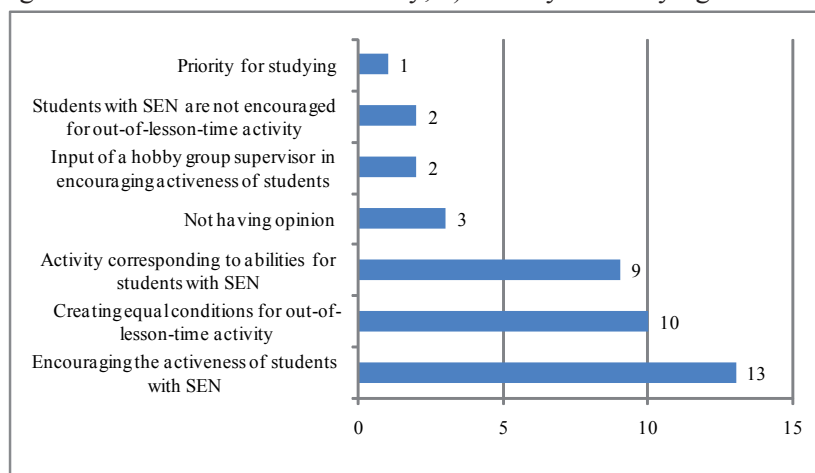


Figure 8. Encouraging the activeness of students with SEN for out-of-lesson-time activity

As it can be seen from the data of the diagram the biggest category is **Encouraging the activeness of students with SEN**. The subcategory *Ways of encouraging the activeness of students with SEN* (13 statements, e.g.: Verbal support of students; The same as with all students – with acknowledgements, prizes, trips; We encourage them verbally and with acknowledgements). The data of the researches have revealed many ways by which school staff members encourage students with SEN to participate in out-of-lesson-time activity.

In the national programme for employers' education (2007) (cit. Barasnevičienė & Donielienė, 2011) it has been emphasized that the aim of developing entrepreneurship abilities in adolescence is to help a teenager to find his/her place in the society and develop his/her abilities to effectively interact with the society. In order to systemize the answers of mainstream school principals the first category **Participation in out-of-lesson-time activity as encouragement of entrepreneurship** has been distinguished. In this category two subcategories have been distinguished. The first one – *Projects encouraging entrepreneurship* (4 statements, e.g.: School participates in various projects encouraging entrepreneurship; Students as well as teachers participate in the project of the confederation of business people and employers; At the moment the project "Toc for education", encouraging entrepreneurship is taking place) reveals that students' entrepreneurship skills are developed during projects. The second subcategory *Events for encouraging entrepreneurship* (8 statements, e.g.: Participate in entrepreneurship tournaments, business exhibitions; Students of the gymnasium participate in various events where entrepreneurship is developed; They can participate in various fairs where they present, exchange, sell their handicrafts) reveals that events also help in encouraging students' entrepreneurship. The answers of the category **Not performing entrepreneurship activity** reveal that in some schools entrepreneurship activity is not performed at all. The subcategory *Activity encouraging entrepreneurship is not performed* (10 statements, e.g.: Students do not have possibility to participate in activity encouraging entrepreneurship; At school we do not have possibility to encourage entrepreneurship; Activity encouraging entrepreneurship is not performed) has been distinguished here (Figure 9).

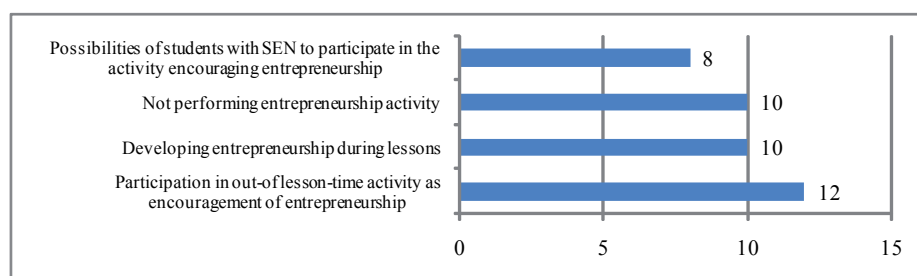


Figure 9. Possibility to participate in activity encouraging entrepreneurship

Performing the research it has been attempted to find out whether students with special educational needs have possibility to participate in conferences of practical type. The category **Conferences are not organized** gathered an especially big number of statements. The subcategory *Conferences for SEN students are not organized* (25 statements, e.g.: No, they are not organized; Not organized; No). More than a half of the respondents answered that practical conferences are not organized. More detailed information has been presented in Figure 10.

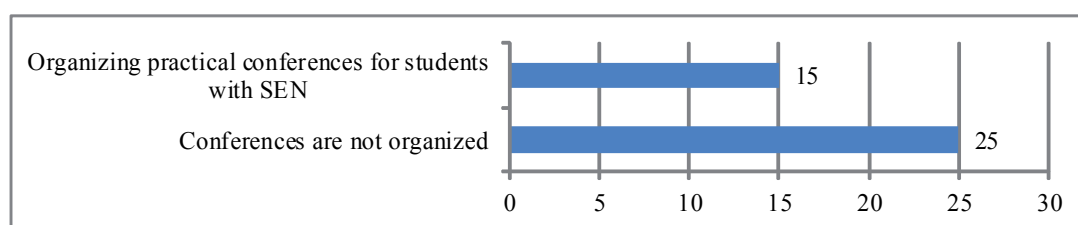


Figure 10. Organizing practical conferences for students with SEN

During the research it has been investigated what methods are used to impede the “wastage” of students (Figure 11). The biggest category is **Individual work with students**. In this category the subcategory *Individual conversations* gathers the biggest number of statements (10 statements, e.g.: There are many individual talks with students; Especially active communication with a student is needed; Individual communication is needed). In the second place there is the subcategory *Providing with universal support* (7 statements, e.g.: Explaining the situation and providing assistance (psychological, special, social); Necessary assistance and its methods are foreseen; Help to solve occurring difficulties).

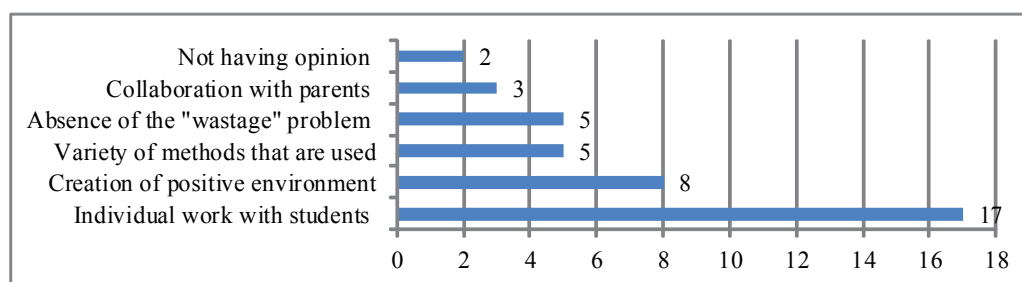


Figure 11. Methods used to impede the “wastage” of students

Organizing of vocational counselling has been investigated (Figure 12). The biggest category is **Activity of vocational counselling point** in which the subcategory *Implementation of vocational counselling by VCP specialists* (10 statements, e.g.: School provides vocational counselling with the help of VCP; This activity is organized by Career Planning Group and VCP functioning in the gymnasium; VCP work group has been formed) has been distinguished.

School principals indicated that an important role in organizing vocational counselling is played by the specialists of vocational counselling point.

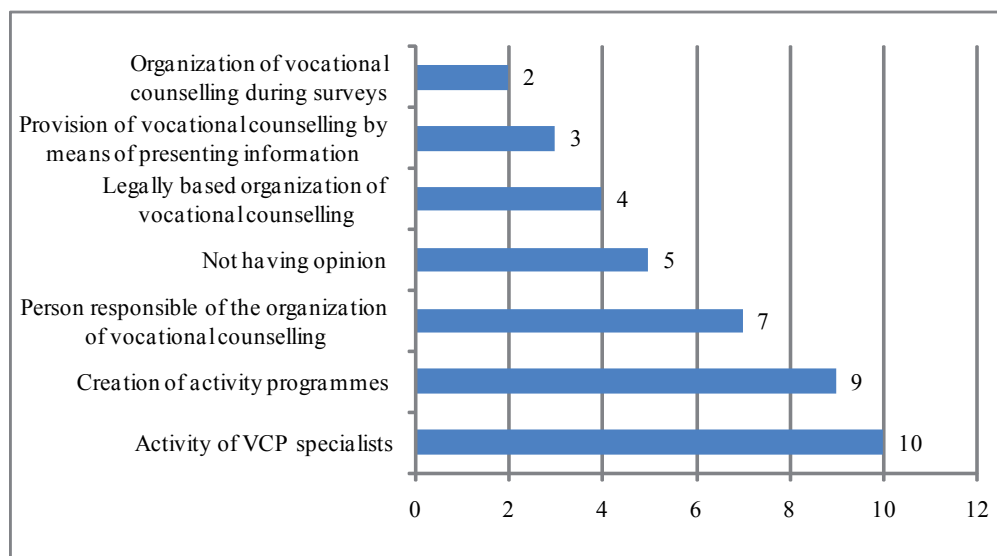


Figure 12. Organization of vocational counselling

Performing the research it has been found out what forms of vocational counselling are dominating in schools. **Meetings as a form of vocational counselling** is the biggest category where 2 subcategories have been distinguished. The first subcategory *Meetings at school* (12 statements, e.g.: Meetings with the representatives of other educational institutions are organized; Meetings with the representatives of various specialities; Meetings with business people) and the second subcategory *Meetings during trips* (5 statements, e.g.: We go to companies, institutions with students; Excursions to educational institutions and companies; Trips to profession fairs). The results of the data presented in the subcategories reveal that it is expedient to orient students towards certain professions during the meetings. Meetings with the representatives of various professions are organized both in school and out of school. According to Baranauskienė and Juodraitis (2008), family directly and indirectly contributes to the choice of profession because it is in the family where the role models are introduced, experience is accumulated and opportunities are foreseen, a certain value system is implemented. It is reflected in the category **Influence of students' parents on vocational counselling**. The subcategory *Presenting parents' professions and career* (3 statements: Parents present the experience of their career; Parents tell about their professions) reflects that one of the factors that have influence on students' choice is parents. It is their professional experience that often encourages students to choose a profession of a similar type if it suits their abilities.

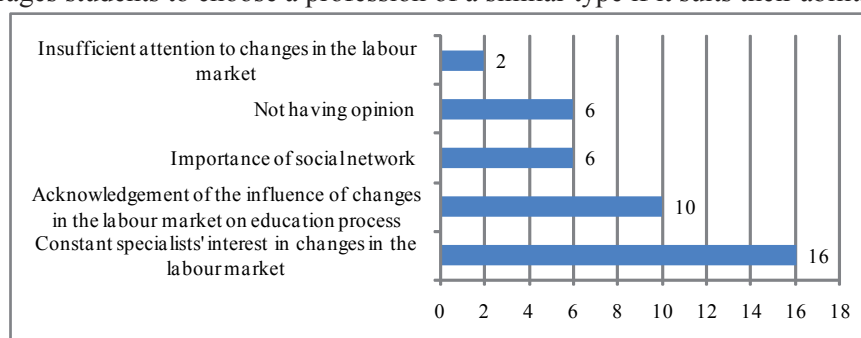


Figure 13. Variety of forms of vocational counselling

Feedback is considered as an especially important factor acknowledging the value of the process of vocational counselling. It is reflected in the first category **Emphasis on feedback** (Figure 14). In the subcategory *Students' responses on the issue of vocational counselling* (13 statements, e.g.: Students returning to the gymnasium are asked to what extent vocational counselling activity was relevant and useful; Very good acknowledgements and responses from students; Feedback, students' responses).

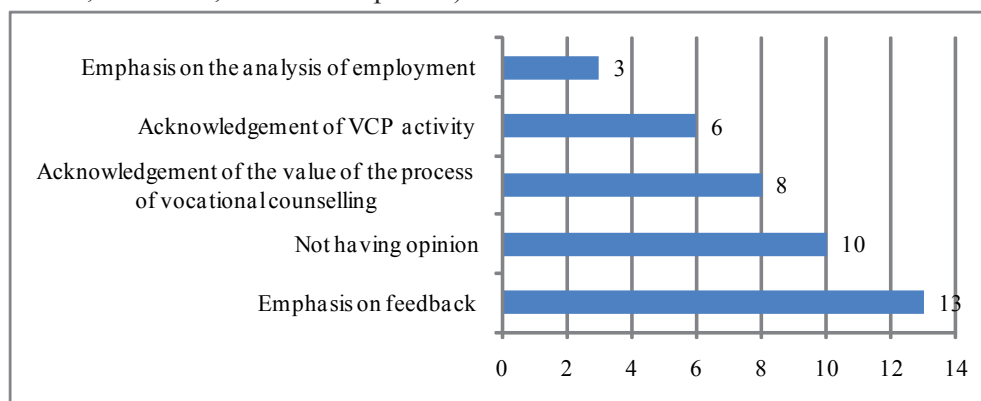


Figure 14. Acknowledgement of the value of the process of vocational counselling

Baranauskienė and Valaikiienė (2010), point out that creating and developing common system of vocational counselling of Lithuania an especially important role is given to prevocational education and provision of vocational counselling services for students of mainstream, vocational and higher schools. The authors also emphasize that the aim of these services in mainstream schools is to help students to distinguish their vocational interests and inclinations, to gain the basics of career planning and create individual education plan. Performing the research it has been attempted to find out how school creates conditions for prevocational growth. The majority of the respondents did not have any opinion on this issue. More detailed information has been presented in Figure 15.

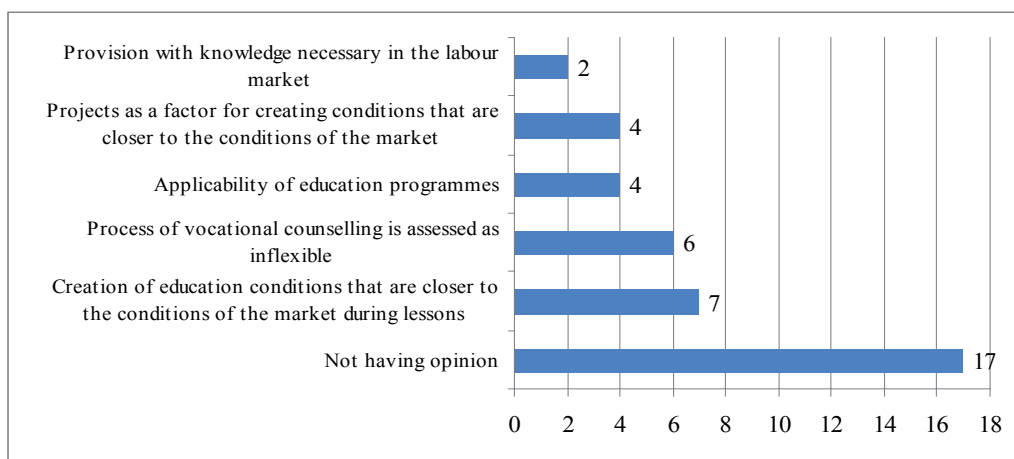


Figure 15. Creation of conditions for prevocational "growth" at school

The reaction of schools towards changes in the labour market has been investigated. From the presented data it can be seen that school principals emphasized **Constant specialists' interest in changes in the labour market**. In the subcategory *Interest and introducing newest information* (16 statements, e.g.: The very newest information is monitored and presented to

children; Career specialist monitors the changes and talk about that with children; We present useful and detailed information) it is emphasized that school staff members are intensively interested in changes that take place in the labour market. This information is constantly presented to students (Figure 16).

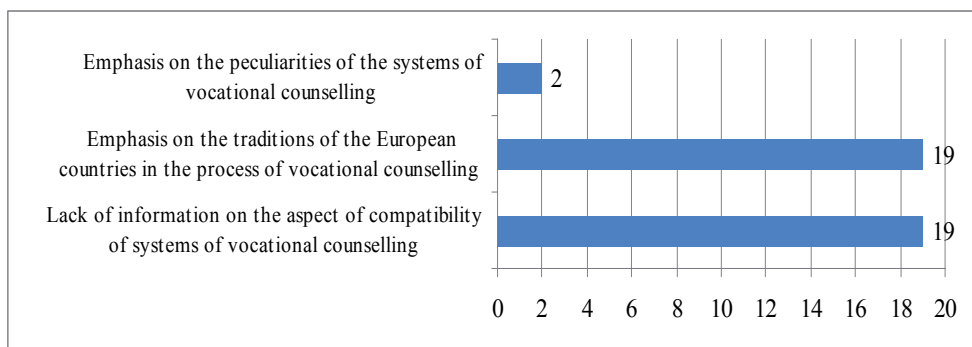


Figure 16. Reaction of school to the changes in the labour market

During the research it has been attempted to investigate the performance of the change of contents of education and forms of education management. In the category **Performance of the change of contents of education and forms of education management** the subcategory *Change of contents of education and forms of education management takes place at school* (24 statements, e.g.: Of course. It is the necessity of our times; Yes, it does; Of course, it does) dominates. More than a half of the respondents stated that at school flexible and modern adaptation of contents of education and change of forms of education management take place. It allows stating that school principals are not indifferent about changes in the labour market and innovations (Figure 17).

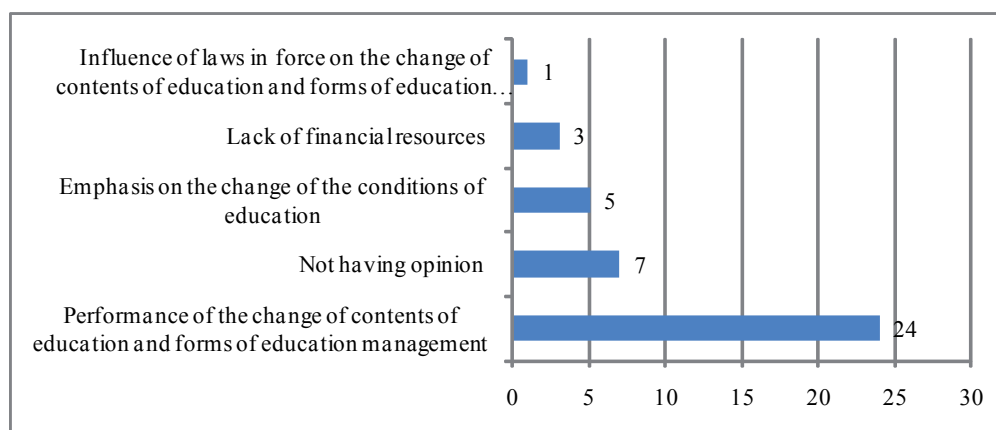


Figure 17. Performance of flexible and modern adaptation of contents of education and change of forms of education management

From the obtained data it can be seen that school principals emphasized **Creation of education conditions during the lessons that are closer to the conditions of the market** (Figure 18). In this category the subcategory *Integration of the changes of the labour market into lessons* has been distinguished (7 statements, e.g.: Relevant topics are included into lesson plans; Subjects to encourage entrepreneurship are integrated into the lessons; market changes are analyzed during class meetings and certain lessons). This category reflects that the most effective way to create education conditions that are closer to market conditions is the integration of changes of the labour market into the content of the lesson.

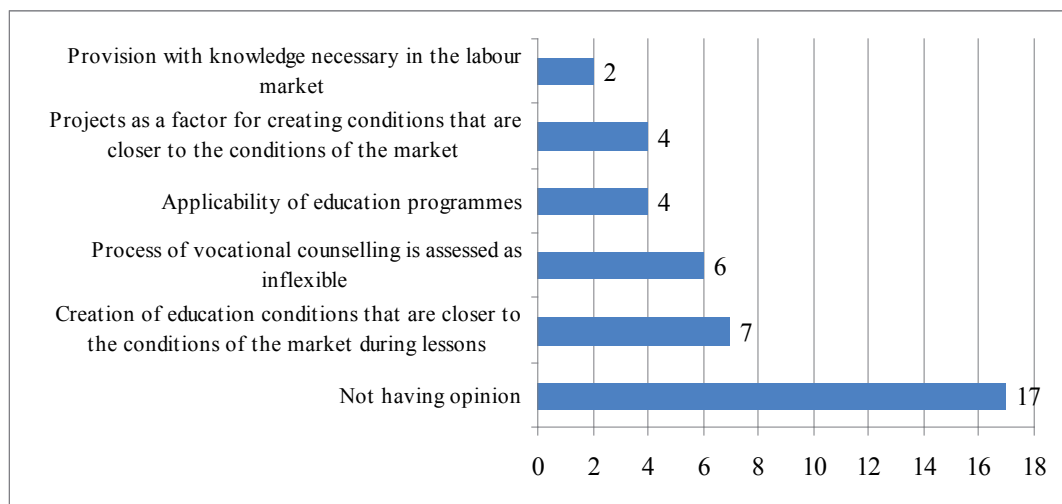


Figure 18. Creation of education conditions that are closer to the conditions of the market

During the research it has been attempted to find out principals' viewpoint towards the system of vocational counselling that is predominant in the European countries. The results of the research have shown that the majority of the respondents lack information about systems of vocational counselling of other countries. It has become distinct that some respondents purposefully are not interested in the experience of other countries counselling students on the choice of profession. It is reflected by the subcategory *Not showing interest in the experience of other countries* (19 statements, e.g.: I do not have purpose to match systems of vocational counselling; I was little interested in it; I was not interested in this issue). **Emphasis on the traditions of the European countries in the process of vocational counselling** gathered equal number of statements as the first category. The last category is **Emphasis on the peculiarities of the systems of vocational counselling**. The distinguished subcategory *Uniqueness of the systems of vocational counselling in the countries* (2 statements, e.g.: Every country/culture has a unique system) emphasizes that every country is characterized by different features characteristic only to this country in organizing vocational counselling.

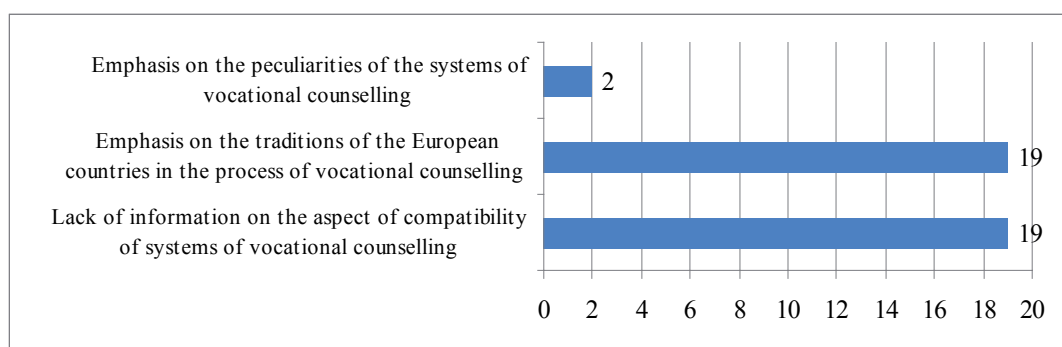


Figure 19. Compatibility of the systems of vocational counselling of students with SEN in Lithuania and other countries

Conclusions

1. The data of the research have made clear that the viewpoint of the majority of mainstream school principals towards vocational counselling of students with special educational needs is positive.

2. Vocational counselling at schools is provided with the help of vocational counselling point (VCP).

- The data of the research have revealed the forms of vocational counselling that are dominating at school: presenting information about vocational counselling, meetings at school, meetings during trips, performing tests, presenting parents' professions and career.
- During the research the problems hindering successful provision of vocational counselling have been revealed. It is lack of financial resources, lack of collaboration with potential employers, lack of parents' motivation, insufficient legal basis.
- Positive changes in the field of vocational counselling have been noticed: developing general abilities, updating education programmes, taking changes in the labour market into account during the lessons and preparing projects – thus education programmes that are closer to the conditions of the labour market are created.
- The obtained data have revealed that students especially lack opportunity to develop practical skills.

3. Although the data of the research have revealed that the viewpoint of mainstream school principals from the aspect of vocational counselling of students with SEN is positive, they do not directly participate in it and do not influence it. The role of school principals in the process of vocational counselling is only formal.

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ASPECTS OF LIFE QUALITY OF PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

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Abstract

The article presents the problems of the involvement of persons with disability into applied physical activity, indicators of physical activeness, life satisfaction and attitude towards one's disability. In the research the indicators of life quality of persons with physical disability who are involved in sports activities and who are not involved in sports activities have been compared. 111 persons with physical disability who have experienced traumas of spinal cord participated in the research.

The results of the questionnaire survey have shown that the respondents with physical disability who go in for sports feel bigger life satisfaction, assess their psychical health more favourably than those who are not involved in sports. The attitude towards one's disability among persons with disability who are involved in sports is much more favourable than among those who are not. Persons with disability who are involved in physical and sport activity tend to rely more on their strengths even when favourable conditions are not created for them. Meanwhile, the unadjusted environment more often hinders the respondents not involved in sports from feeling like an able person of full value. The indicators of life satisfaction and attitude towards one's disability among persons with disability who participate in sport activity are better than among those who do not participate.

Key words: *indicators of biosocial skills, physical capacity, sport for persons with disability, disability, person with disability, indicators of psychosocial health, socialization, and applied physical activity.*

Introduction

The system of social integration ensures equal possibilities for people with disabilities to participate in culture, sport and other areas of social life. It is already 30 years that social policy of the United Nations and the European Union has been promoting giving equal rights and possibilities to people with disabilities to participate in all areas of social life including sport activity and it denies inappropriate habitual and discriminating attitude that people with disability are patients and only medical specialists should regulate physical activity of people with disabilities.

The society members with disabilities have exceptional physical and psychological features and special needs that are revealed when people with disabilities strive for equal possibilities to participate in the areas of physical education, sport for people with disabilities, recreational and everyday physical activity. The variety of special needs is conditioned by

different kinds of disabilities (physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, etc) and the degree of the disorder of a function. Application of various means of physical, psychological and social rehabilitation and education meeting the needs for physical activity of people with disabilities is one of the tasks of applied physical activity encouraging the possibility for people with disabilities to participate in social life (social integration) and at the same time reducing the manifestations of their disability (Adomaitienė, 2003). According to Mikelkevičiūtė (2002) in improving life quality of persons with disabilities and their social integration especially much attention is paid to applied physical activity that can increase the potential of independence and positive self-evaluation of the aforementioned persons to the maximum. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that in many developed countries people with disabilities are involved to a greater and greater extent in various applied physical, sports and other recreational activities. According to Skučas (2003) applied physical activity is one of the factors of successful integration of people with disabilities in the society. The development of recreational and competitive sports of people with disabilities is an important factor of improving their life quality and physical, psychological and social welfare (Samsonienė et al., 2008; Campbell & Jones, 2002).

However, despite the promotion of the integration of people with disabilities and laws that regulate it, many people with disabilities are still segregated and have poor possibilities to participate in the society and its activity. The statistical data show that in Europe alone there are about 10 per cent of people with disabilities. These people with disabilities have the same rights as all the inhabitants. Sport and physical activity are especially important for emotional and social welfare of people with disabilities. Social problems and the problems of the integration of people with disabilities in the society, their causes and obstacles are analyzed by many world and also Lithuanian scientists (Adomaitienė, 2007; Gudonis, 2000; Ruškus, 2002; Skučas, 2006; Sherrill et al., 1998). Skučas (2003) investigated whether the exercises of applied physical and sports may physically improve the life quality of people with disabilities. However, the author treated physical activity as a means to improve biosocial skills without revealing the influence of sports on psychosocial functions. In the research on the socialization of people with disabilities in applied physical activity performed by Samsonienė et al (2008) the attempt has been made to identify the influence of the disorder of the functions of organism on the socialization of people with disabilities. The authors also oriented towards biosocial functions of people with disabilities.

Recently there have been many researches on the problems of the socialization of people with disabilities. However, there is a lack of works that deal with the influence of applied physical and sport activity on persons having movement disability in the aspect of psychosocial functions. In order to solve the problems of the socialization of persons with disabilities it is not enough to state the fact that people with disabilities are still a segregated part of the society. The problem under research is described by the essential question – *how sports activity influences the life quality of people with physical disability*. It is important to compare the indicators of life quality of persons having physical disability who are involved and who are not involved in sports, to identify what influence physical activity has on the aforementioned persons. Such research on the comparison of the indicators of life quality of persons having physical disability who are involved and who are not involved in sports would at least partially fill the lack of knowledge and information about physical activity of people with disabilities, their attitude towards disability, life satisfaction, etc., would allow revealing essential peculiarities of the influence of applied physical activity on life quality.

Object of the research – characteristics of life quality of persons having physical disability who participate and do not participate in applied physical activity.

Aim of the research – to identify and assess the peculiarities of the influence of applied physical activity to improve life quality of persons having physical disability.

Methodology and methods of the research. Methodological basis of the present quantitative research is the theory of social integration of people with disabilities through applied physical activity. It has been referred to the precondition that the participation of persons with physical disability in applied sports or physical activity has positive influence not only on biosocial but also on psychosocial functions of the aforementioned persons.

To perform empirical research quantitative method of questionnaire survey has been chosen. The research questionnaire has been created referring to the methods of previous researches on the socialization of people with disabilities (Skučas, 2003) and adapting the questionnaire by Bagdonienė (2007).

The questionnaire consists of 84 questions, out of which 81 are of closed type and 3 of open type. The questionnaire is divided into 6 blocks (Table 1).

Table 1
Blocks of research instruments?

Diagnostic block	Diagnostic constructs
Demographical questions	The block consists of 10 questions: gender, age, family status, place of living, occupation, income and education
Physical activeness	The block consists of 6 questions: the purpose of this questionnaire block is to state the respondents' physical capacity (frequency of trainings, kinds of sports cultivated, duration of involvement into sports and sport achievements).
Life satisfaction	With the help of this block that consists of rank scales it has been attempted to examine psychoemotional state of the respondents and factors causing tension. The block consists of 18 questions.
Attitude towards one's disability	The aim of the block is to find out how the respondents perceive their disability. The block consists of 28 questions.
Social agents	With the help of this block it is attempted to examine who gave the most valuable information to the respondents about the forms and ways of the socialization. The block consists of 6 questions.
Sport in your life	The block consists of 16 questions that are meant to examine how much the respondents know about kinds of sport for people with disabilities, the reasons why they do not resolve to involve in sports and whether they are satisfied with the promotion of sports for people with disabilities in mass media.

A very important feature of the questionnaire is that the questions have been oriented not only towards the assessment of the present state but also towards the needs, in other words, the necessity and purposefulness of changes.

Šiauliai town sports club for people with disabilities "Entuziastas" (the instructor Mindaugas Jackevičius), the Lithuanian Paraplegic Association (the president Juozas Bernatavičius) helped to organize the questionnaire survey. The majority of the respondents were surveyed in the Centre of Landscape Therapy and Recreation under the Lithuanian Paraplegic Association in Monciškės, the part of the participants of the research were surveyed in the sports festival for people with disabilities of Šiauliai Region that took place in Šiauliai.

150 questionnaires have been distributed, 116 have returned, 111 have been selected as suitable for the objectives of the research; several questionnaires (5 in total) have been rejected because many unanswered questions in them have been encountered.

Statistical methods (analysis of percentage, means and frequencies, chi square, non-parametrical Mann-Whitney U test) have been applied for data processing. Empirical data have been processed and graphically formatted using SPSS (Statistical Packet for Social Sciences 11.0) and Microsoft Excel.

In order to find out the peculiarities of the impact of applied physical and sports activity to improve the life quality of persons having physical disability, the respondents have been divided into two groups:

1. The group of the respondents – *involved in sports* – consists of persons participating in applied sports activity of various level, from the elite sportspeople and organized sportspeople with disabilities who in organized manner and systematically train and participate in the club competitions, represent the club in national sport events for people with disabilities (Campbell & Jones, 2002) to those who are involved in sports inactively or with recreational goals, who are involved in sports irregularly, represent their sports club and are mostly involved in sports as recreation – a form of spending leisure time (Campbell & Jones, 2002).

2. The group of respondents – *not involved in sports* – consists of persons who do not participate at all in applied physical activity of any level.

Characteristics of the respondents

Out of all the respondents 60,4% participated in applied sport activity. A little less than a half of all the respondents (39,6%) stated that they were not involved in sports. Among the men there were 73,2% of those who are involved in sports and only 26,8% stated they are not involved in any applied sport or physical activity. The number of women involved in sports was much smaller, only 37% of all the women who participated in the research were involved in sports.

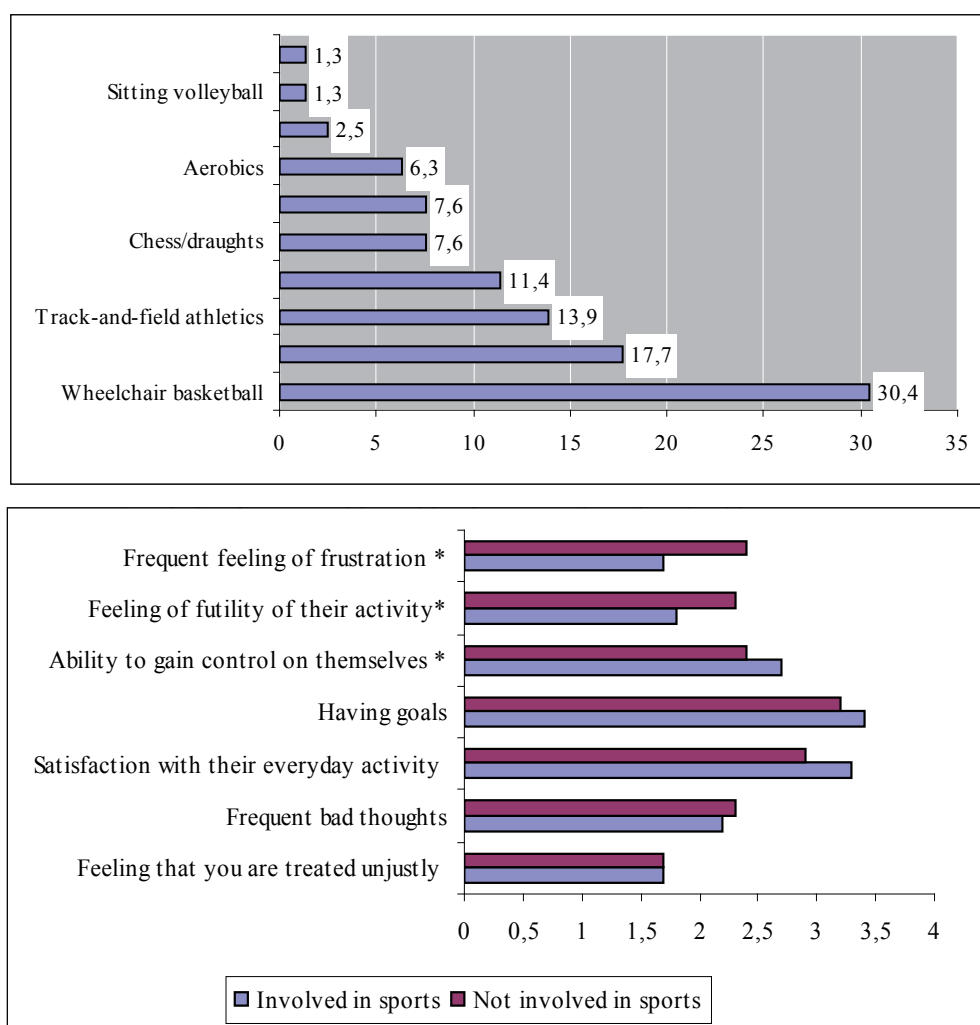
The respondents who participated in the research were from 14 to 77 years of age. The majority (N = 37) of them were in their midlife (25-35 years). There were only 9 senior persons among the respondents (58 and more years).

As it has been expected children and teenagers (14-24 years) were the most active in sports, even 91,3% of the respondents of this age are involved in sports. The number of the respondents involved in sports was also big (even 70%) in the age group of 36-46. It has been noticed that the respondents of senior (47-57 years) and elderly (58 and more years) age are rarely involved in sports. In the age group of 47-57 years 33,3% are involved in sports, in the group of elderly people only 22,2% are involved in sports. It is possible to make a presumption that applied physical and sports activity is not sufficiently applied in gerontology.

Out of all the respondents involved in sports (Figure 1) that participated in the research almost one third (30,4%) is basketball players. The number of the representatives of individual kinds of sport was a little smaller, for example: swimmers (17,7%), track-and-field athletes (13,9%) and weightlifters (11,4%). Although the influence of exercise on socialization is under the doubt, however, it is supposed that regular exercise may improve psychophysical state, therefore, the participation in kinesitherapy sessions (exercise) was also included into the answers to this question, consequently 7,6% of the respondents are regularly involved in it. The number of chess players and draughts players is also the same. The smallest part of people with disabilities involved in sports consisted of shooters (2,5%), Boccia players (1,3%) and volleyball players (1,3%).

Analysis of the results of research

The results of the research have shown that the indicators of the factors causing tension of the majority of people with disability involved in sports were smaller than of those who are not involved in sports (Figure 2). People with disability involved in sports are much more rarely ($p = 0,015$) dependent on others, they are much more rarely troubled by stresses ($p = 0,019$), they experienced fewer ailments ($p = 0,03$). The tension in personal relations was also statistically significantly different among those involved and not involved in sports ($p = 0,037$). The respondents not involved in sports more often stated that friends cause them tension ($p = 0,04$).



The level of tension is assessed by points from 1 to 4. * p – statistical significance of difference. Chosen threshold of statistical significance: $p < 0,05$.

Figure 2. Psychical health of people with disabilities involved and not involved in sports, in points

The investigation of peculiarities of life satisfaction of persons having physical disability has revealed that the respondents involved in sports assess their mental health more favourably than those who are not involved in sports (Table 2). Physically active respondents much more rarely experience the feeling of frustration ($p = 0,006$) or futility of activity ($p = 0,044$) also the aforementioned persons more often ($p = 0,047$) state being able to gain control on themselves than people with disabilities who are not involved in sports. Moreover, the indicators of factors causing tension among the respondents involved in sports were lower ($p < 0,05$) than among those who are not involved. Consequently, having generalized the obtained data it is possible to state that the respondents with physical disability who are involved in sports are more satisfied with their lives than those who are not involved in sports.

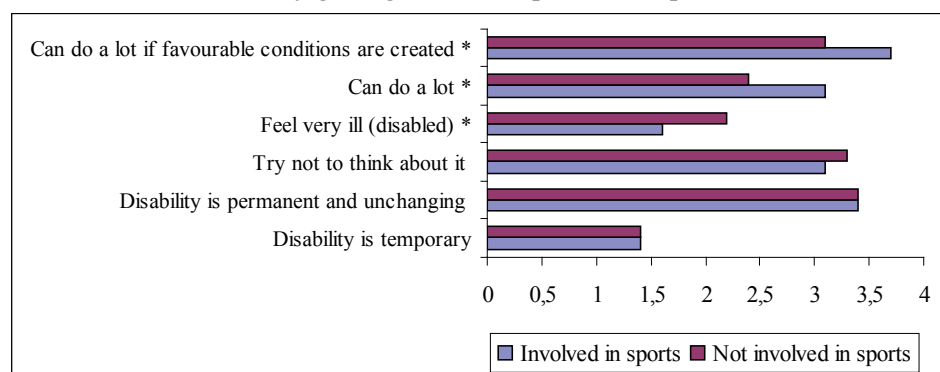
Table 2
Factors causing tension, in points

Factors causing tension	Not involved in sports	Involved in sports	<i>p</i> *
Life conditions	2,9	3,0	0,909
Financial problems	2,9	2,9	0,855
Negative attitude of the people round about	3,1	3,2	0,245
Adjustment of environment and accommodation	2,7	2,7	0,973
Family problems	3,1	3,3	0,109
Problems of personal relations	3,0	3,4	0,037
Friends	3,3	3,5	0,04
Ailments	2,7	3,1	0,03
Problems of occupation and employment	3,2	3	0,198
Stresses in general	2,8	3,1	0,019
Dependency on others	2,6	3,1	0,015

* *p* – statistical significance of difference. Chosen threshold of statistical significance: $p < 0,05$.

Much bigger number ($p = 0,005$) of people with disabilities not involved in sports than of those who are involved in sports stated that they feel actually ill (disabled) and that they would not be able to do anything even if all favourable conditions were created for them (Figure 3). In order to find out the peculiarities of the attitude of the respondents involved and not involved in sports the participants were asked what hinders them from feeling as an able person. Persons with disabilities both involved and not involved in sports pointed out unadjusted environment, not created possibility to use public transport and inaccessible work environment as the biggest obstacles. Inaccessible education was of least importance for the attitude towards their disability among people with disabilities involved and not involved in sports.

People involved and not involved in sports activities differently assessed only one aspect hindering from feeling as a person of full value: possibilities to use transport are not created. Much more often ($p = 0,044$) people with disabilities not involved in sports stated that unadjusted public transport hinders them from feeling like a person of full value. It may be supposed that people with disabilities involved in sports more often drive their own car or they overcome obstacles more easily getting on and off public transport.



Note: The level of tension was assessed in points from 1 to 4. * *p* – statistical significance of difference. Chosen threshold of statistical significance: $p < 0,05$.

Figure 3. Indicators of the attitude towards their disability of people with disability involved and not involved in sports, in points

In order to reveal the respondents' attitude towards their disability they have been asked what reactions are typical to them when they face negative attitude towards a person with disability. It has been noticed that people with disability who are not involved in sports react a little more (p – statistically insignificant) aggressively to the glances of passers-by than those who are involved in sports. The latter respondents stated that most often they try not to pay any attention to it (Table 3).

Table 3

Reaction when facing the others' negative attitude towards a person with disability, in points

Reaction when facing the others' negative attitude	General mean of assessment	Not involved in sports	Involved in sports	P^*
Behave aggressively	1,7	1,9	1,6	0,314
Try not to pay attention to it	3,2	3,1	3,2	0,565
Try not to show anger	2,8	2,8	2,8	0,917

* p – statistical significance of difference. Chosen threshold of statistical significance: $p < 0,05$.

The results of the research have shown that persons with disability both involved and not involved in sports would prefer to communicate both with people without disability and people with disability (Table 4). The respondents would least prefer to socialize in a separate group of people with different disabilities. Much more often ($p = 0,049$) persons with disability involved in sports would like to socialize in a separate group of people with disabilities having the same disability as they do rather than persons with disability who are not involved in sports.

Table 4

Groups of people persons with physical disability would tend to communicate with, in points

Groups of people	General mean of assessment	Not involved in sports	Involved in sports	P^*
People with disabilities	3,5	3,3	3,5	0,225
People without disabilities	3,4	3,2	3,5	0,139
Group of people with disability together with people without disability	3,3	3,2	3,4	0,304
Separate group of people with disability where all the persons have the same disability	3,0	2,7	3,1	0,049
Separate group of people with disability where the persons have different disabilities	2,6	2,5	2,8	0,189

* p – statistical significance of difference. Chosen threshold of statistical significance: $p < 0,05$.

The data of the investigation of the factors conditioning the decision to get involved in sports (Figure 4) have shown that many (35,9%) respondents are involved in sports because they want to spend their leisure time with other friends with disabilities during trainings. 19,8% stated that they were encouraged by other friends with disabilities involved in sports. The wish to win (15,3%) was also important factor and motivating to get involved in sports. The example of famous sportspeople (7,6%) and teachers (9,2%) were indicated as least motivating factor by the respondents. Therefore, during the research it has become clear that appropriate motivation to get involved in sports at school is important for people during all their lives even after they experience the trauma of spinal cord. As the most important factor that conditioned the participation of the respondents in sports or physical activity the people with disability themselves pointed out the wish to spend leisure time with friends.

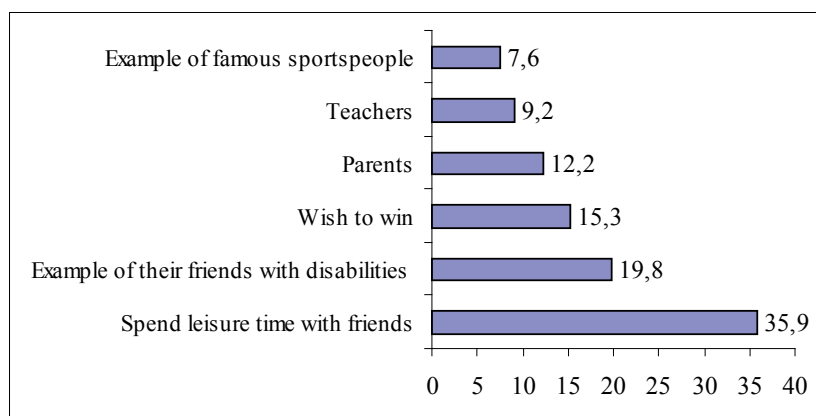


Figure 4. Factors that have encouraged people with disabilities to get involved in sports, per cent

The main obstacles hindering people with disability from participation in sports activity have been presented in Table 5. The results of the research have shown that almost all obstacles presented in the questionnaire have been evaluated differently by those involved and not involved in sports. To involve in applied sports or physical activity for people with disability not involved in sports was difficult mostly because of the lack of perception of usefulness of sports, insufficient financing of sportspeople, lack of information about sports for people with disabilities. People with disability not involved in sports indicated that one of the most important obstacles to successfully involve in sports is distrust in their strengths. The respondents involved in sports indicated insufficient financing of sportspeople with disabilities as the main obstacle hindering from continuing their sports career. It should be noted that people with disability involved in sports are not hindered by lack of self-motivation, lack of support from close people, they also perfectly perceive the usefulness obtained from sports.

Table 5

Obstacles hindering people with disabilities from starting or continuing sports activity, in points

Obstacles	Not involved in sports	Involved in sports	<i>P</i> *
Unadjusted sports basis.	2,8	2,4	0,001
Lack of sports equipment.	3,5	2,6	0,000
Lack of support from close people.	3,3	1,7	0,000
Lack of self-motivation.	2,8	1,4	0,000
Distrust in their strengths.	3,8	2,9	0,000
Not perceiving the usefulness of sports.	3,9	2,3	0,000
Lack of financial support.	3,8	3,8	0,753
Lack of information about sports for people with disabilities.	3,8	3,3	0,096

* *p* – statistical significance of difference. Chosen threshold of statistical significance: $p < 0,05$ The level of the significance of obstacles has been assessed by points: 1 – insignificant obstacle, 5 – very significant obstacle.

The research has revealed that people with disabilities rather rarely have possibility to participate in sports together with people without disability (Figure 5). Only 13,4% of all the respondents with disability involved in sports have possibility to participate in sports together with people without disability and only 22,4% of the respondents stated that they have such a

possibility quite often. The majority of the respondents (40,3%) participate in sports together with people without disability only sometimes, and the part (23,9%) of people with disability stated that they never participate in sports together with people without disability. The previous research (Skučas, 2003) has shown that people with disability would like people without disability to also involve in their sports (especially of recreational level).

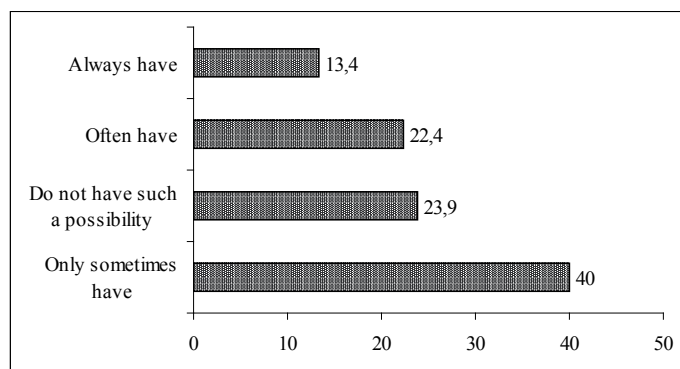


Figure 5. Possibility of sportspeople having physical disability to participate in sports together with sportspeople without disability, per cent

Although the usefulness of applied physical activity for biosocial functions of persons having physical disability is often accentuated, it is evident that aforementioned activity have positive influence on psychosocial functions of people with disability, too.

Conclusions

1. The results of the research have revealed that the number of people with disability involved in sports is larger by one-third than of those who are not involved. The most popular kind of sports among people with disabilities is basketball. This kind of sports is chosen by about 30 % of the respondents involved in sports.
2. The respondents with physical disability involved in sports are more satisfied with their lives than those who are not involved. Physically active respondents assess their mental health more favourably, moreover, the respondents involved in sports have lower indicators of factors causing stress than those who are not involved.
3. The attitude towards their disability of people with disabilities that are involved in sports is much more favourable than of those who are not involved. People with disabilities participating in physical activity tend to rely on their strengths to a greater extent, even when favourable conditions are not created for them. Meanwhile, in case of the respondents not involved in sports unadjusted environment more often hinders from feeling like an able person of full value.
4. Both groups of the respondents pointed out another person with disability as the most important agent of socialization. However, people with disabilities both involved and not involved in sports differently assessed the institutions that helped them to socialize. The respondents involved in sports favourably evaluated the information given by many institutions, meanwhile those not involved in sports restricted themselves with the information received in treatment institution or active rehabilitation centre.
5. People with disabilities themselves pointed out the wish to spend leisure time with friends as the most important factor that conditioned the respondents' participation in sports or physical activity. As the main reason of not involving into applied physical activity people with disability indicated lack of perception of the usefulness of sports.

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IMPORTANCE OF UNIFIED PEDAGOGICAL PROCESS IN DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH LANGUAGE DISORDERS

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Abstract

The importance of unified pedagogical process in development of communicative competence is analysed in this article. Necessity for synergy between learning process and extra-curricular activities is emphasized. The article focuses on adolescents with language disorders whose insufficiently developed language impedes the development of communicative competence and constitutes a menace to socialization in the future. The research data have been analysed and processed by SPSS program and AQUAD 6 software.

Key words: *adolescents with language disorders, communicative competence, unified pedagogical process, extra-curricular activities.*

Introduction

Educated and competent people, who are able to use existent knowledge and are ready for further development, are needed for living in a society of knowledge. It also includes the idea about perfection and progressive changes. Wherewith the role of education increases and the approach based on competence and results is emphasized.

Many competences listed in the European Reference Framework (European Reference Framework, 2007), for example, communication in the native language, digital skills, social and civic skills, are not conceivable without the communicative competence. It was defined by many authors: Chomsky (1987), Canale and Swain (1980), Edeirs (1997), Maslo and Tišla (2005), etc. Successful socialization is not conceivable without the communicative competence. Accordingly, special attention should be paid to its development in the pedagogical process.

The article focuses on adolescents with language disorders. Due to language disorders, secondary interferences have arisen in the field of cognition, behaviour and communication (Tūbele, 2006; Корнев, 2001; Игнатъева, 2005). Insufficiently developed language impedes the development of communicative competence and socialization as a whole: these adolescents find it difficult to maintain positive interpersonal relationships (Reed, 2004), because they are unable to adjust their way of communication to the needs of partners, making discussion

and interpretation difficult (Novak, 2002), they are often characterized by a specific bodily behaviour, problems of self-confidence and self-assessment (Kauliņa & Tūbele, 2011; Reed, 2004), they often feel rejected and lonely (Трофимова et al., 2006; Novak, 2002).

Since studying itself is a communicative action, a deliberate, open dialogue, a discussion between teachers and students about goals of learning, a choice of means, nature of cooperation according to individual interests, needs, opportunities (Žogla, 2001), it is important to find a way to develop the communicative competence of adolescents with language disorders (hereinafter – ALD) in the pedagogical process (in a unified training and educational work), considering their age characteristics and individual needs. It is very difficult, almost impossible, to develop all the competencies set in the curriculum during the lessons. That is why it is important to continue it during the extra-curricular activities (Carrol & Purdie, 2007). This is also referable to the development of ALD communicative competence.

The aim of the research is to consider how the unified pedagogical process promotes the development of ALD communicative competence.

Methods: observation of scientific literature, questionnaires and literary creation works; analysis of data using SPSS program and AQUAD 6 software

Theoretical background of the research

Learning is an admission of participation in social situations where everyone is accepted as a participant, knowledge and skills are acquired and the growth process of competencies is observed (Pawlowsky, 2003). It is a cyclical process that results in a basis for further development (Zimmerman, 2002). It is necessary to create conditions in which an adolescent not only learns the academic content, but is also offered a variety of communicative situations and new communicative partners are involved. It should be a co-operation between two subjects (a student and a teacher) where ALD themselves run their own development in diverse ways, but a teacher is a supporter, an assistant, a coach. The process would result not only in acquiring all the subjects, skills and abilities specified in the curricular standards, but also ALD language would be corrected and their communicative competence would be developed. Thus, it is not enough when planning covers only one subject or matter. Aims of teaching, learning and correction will be achieved only if the correction work will be performed continuously throughout the pedagogical process.

Kornetov (1997) categorized the main positions of humanitarian approach in the following way:

- creation of emotionally stimulating environment for learning where student's initiative is in the centre of attention;
- the role of a teacher as an adviser who is always ready to help and provide knowledge;
- creation of real cognitive alternatives according to each student's needs;
- encouragement of self-realization;
- usage of educational programs for maximum development of student's creativity;
- cancellation of grades.

The author considers that the teacher, working with ALD and implementing these approaches, faces the following primary challenges:

- ALD shows "operation – technical" intellectual passivity (Шилова, 2005), when there is indifference to spiritual work, priority is given to the templates, reproductive activity. The primary task appears from this – to create a stimulating environment for mental activity and promote the development of own-initiative on this basis;
- emotional unstableness, exhaustion of mental processes, lack of ambition (Трофимова et al., 2006; Бородулина, 2004) affects students' self-control; ALD cannot cooperate in the long term without supervision. The next task appears from this – to offer flexible

and not dispiriting types of activities that would promote students' self-development and carry out functions of supervision at the same time. It would help teachers to diagnose when and what kind of help student needs.

During the lessons consummation of objectives and targets is based on the principles established by the didactics that focuses on solving specific tasks and problems, and acquiring knowledge in a planned, institutionalized process of teaching and learning (Gudjons, 1998). It persistently improves and makes the pedagogical process more effective for achieving educational, developing and educational aims. The article talks about ALD teaching and learning, which is focused on the development of communicative competence and integrity, representing the essence of pedagogical activity. The approach is based on competence and educational results (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; O'Dwyer, 2006) when:

- the conditions for language usage in multiple, real communication situations are provided;
- the teacher organizes the pedagogical process paying attention to ALD actions and needs, and organizing activities where knowledge and skills are acquired and the attitude is developed;
- the teacher provides support for ALD by giving an option to solve problems by themselves;
- the need is created for ALD to acquire skills of managing their own learning process and active participation in the group work.

From the aspect of communicative competence development, the author prefers the approach of active learning – learning by doing. It expresses as a practical activity where new knowledge and practical skills are based on success and mistakes. Learning is social in its essence. It is an interpersonal activity, characterized by communication and cooperation (Illeris, 1999/2007). Kafki (1998) calls it an amateur activity when students learn by themselves, rather than are taught by a teacher. Representatives of constructivist theory (Piažē, 2002; Выготский, 1999, etc.) recognize that learning is a process of construction that is based on experience and social environment, and development takes place in interaction. A person, who learns, designs and develops new knowledge by upholding and developing it gradually on the knowledge that already exists.

It is the very difficult to achieve development of all the skills set in curriculum. It is important to continue learning in extra-curricular activities (Carrol & Purdue, 2007). Synergy between the learning process during lessons and extra-curricular activities is a topical issue (Mahoney, 2000; Kaufman & Gabler, 2004; Caldwell & Smith, 2005; Moriani et al., 2006; Carrol & Purdue, 2007; Pimapunsri et al., 2010).

Extra-curricular activities promote the transition from formal to informal learning, the importance of which in the personal development is often underestimated (Lieģeniece, 2002). Informal education is focused on the participation of each member, adapted to their needs and interests, directed on problems met in real life, and promotes the independence of persons involved in the educational process (Spronk, 1999). It is in keeping with today's educational tasks, because there are more and more discussions about synergy between learning process during lessons and extra-curricular activities. It is emphasized that pedagogically organized extra-curricular activities are highly structured actions which encourage mastering the needed skills for sustainability (Caldwell & Smith, 2005).

Analysing the importance of extra-curricular activities for personality development, it is emphasized that they promote the rise educational accomplishments and the level of interpersonal competence, contribute to the formation of critical thinking and development of personal and social maturity, socialization, increase motivation for learning, encourage self-development, which also includes self-control, implementing different strategies for identifying

and achieving targets. They also reduce the gap between knowledge acquired at school and real life (Pimapunsri et al., 2010; Carrol & Purdue, 2007; Moriani et al., 2006; Caldwell & Smith, 2005; Kaufman & Gabler, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2003; Mahoney, 2000; Spronk, 1999). Personality features mentioned before are essential for successful communication. This suggests that common requirements and purposeful educational and correctional work through the whole pedagogical process are necessary for the development of ALD communicative competence: skills, acquired during the learning process, are strengthened and improved according to the specificity of extra-curricular activities that increase experience and gradually establish as a competence.

Organization of extra-curricular activities for the development of communicative competence is theoretically based on Jane M. Novak's (Novak, 2002) statement about skills that adolescents with language disorders should improve. They are as follows:

- skills of positive thinking (real examples of others should be used; how people face difficulties and overcome them);
- skills of solving problems (problem identification, searching for possible solutions, consideration of positive and negative facts, decision making, explanation and evaluation of the chosen solution);
- adoption of prospect or role-play (acting like another person, behave accordingly and then discuss why exactly those and not the other movements or expressions were chosen; the development of empathy is promoted in such way);
- expression of emotions (to help understand emotions and talk about them);
- self-observation and monitoring (ALD should be able to look at themselves from the other side and notice when some result is achieved; receiving a false self-assessment, there should be explanation about objections; it will help adolescents make a better self-assessment in the future).

During extra-curricular activities, we should help ALD to believe in themselves. Formation of "I can" awareness should be facilitated because it will prepare them for the adult life by promoting the formation of competence and accountability. It is necessary to offer activities in which ALD, according to their level of language development, could improve and consolidate the skills acquired in curriculum, develop their communicative competence in different situations and realize themselves as communication partners.

Context of the Research

The research was carried out in a special school where students with severe language disorders learn. It was established in the previous researches that the educational process in a special school is organized in a relatively closed environment, so-called microenvironment. The interactions ALD – teacher (in the figure – T), ALD – support staff (in the figure SS), ALD – other ALD (see Figure1) take place according to the aspect of communicative competence development.

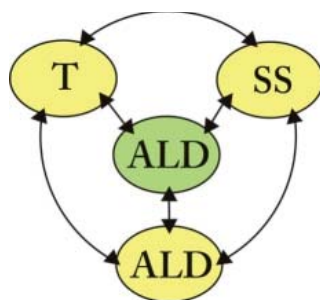


Figure 1. ALD communication during the pedagogical process in a microenvironment

Such cooperation ensures mastering the curriculum, language correction, support to ALD, mutual interaction in the school; however, from the point of development of communicative competence, organization of the pedagogical process holds the development down. Even with the diversification of communicative situations, the same communication partners are involved in them. A model of communicative competence development has been devised and approved for enlargement of ALD contact opportunities, development of communicative competence and getting more experience (see Figure 2). Communication is organized in micro and macro environment.

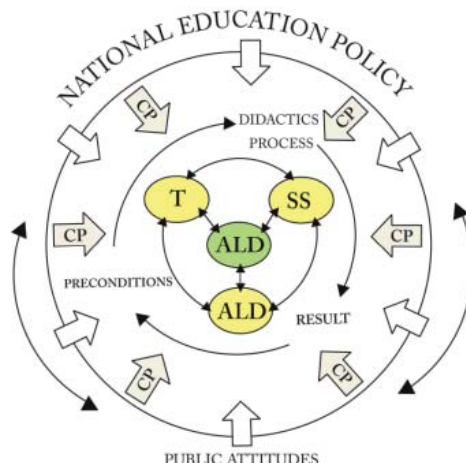


Figure 2. The model of communicative competence development (Ušča et al., 2012)

Attention in organizing the pedagogical process is paid to the development of communicative competence; the synergy between mastering the curriculum during the educational process and extra-curricular activities is ensured. As a result, communicative competence is continually developing; it has a cyclical nature that characterizes the transition to higher levels.

Form 5 (8 students) was selected for the research. The choice was based on the fact that students have just started the primary school, the collective is not homogeneous, and there are differences depending on the entering the school, conclusion of speech therapy, side diagnosis and family status that might affect the development of ALD communicative competence.

Organizing extra-curricular activities, the experience of putting linguistic skills acquired in lessons into practice was gained. That promotes ALD self-awareness as a communication partner. Lessons for creative thinking development using Bono (2009) and Fisher (2005) statements were organized within the research framework. Students learned to create a notice board, were involved in a recitation contest. Language afternoon, excursions to various museums and other places were organized. ALD were involved in workshop activities outside the school, composed theatrical productions that were performed in other schools, old people's home, recreation centre, and were involved in elaboration of various projects related to language development.

Participants of the research

The research was carried out from September 2008 till May 2011, in a special school where students with severe language disorders learn. Both classroom and extra-curricular activities were planned as actions promoting the development of ALD communicative competence. Three measurements were carried out; evaluation criteria of ALD communicative

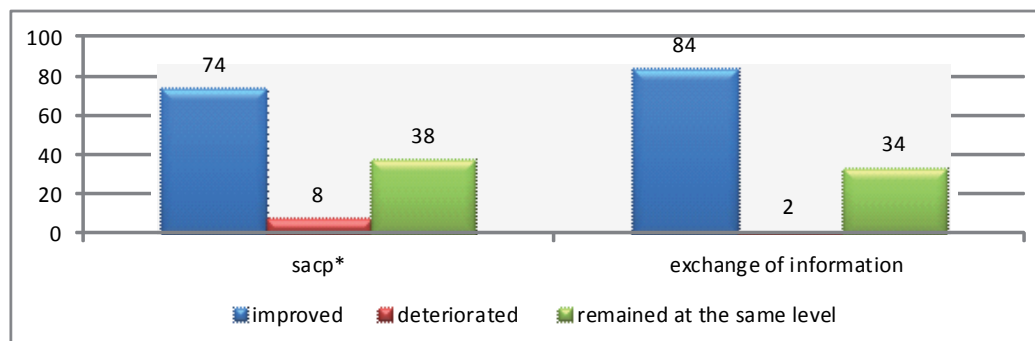
competence were **awareness of themselves as communication partners** (indicators: cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, empathy) and **the quality of information** (indicators: the ability to express themselves orally and on paper, the ability to use a computer, the ability to get information, the ability to express an opinion). So the base is students' activity after the exchange of information and self-awareness as a communication partner. Activity is the intensity of an action which is characterized by significant signs of activity: negative, passive presence, situational activity, activity in a familiar environment, stable activity. Activity indicates the level of communicative competence – the higher is the intensity of activity, the higher is the level of communicative competence.

Data of the quantitative analysis were obtained through questionnaires. Triangulation was used – obtaining information from three different sources – the respondent's self-evaluation and the assessment of two experts – a teacher of the Latvian language and school's psychologist. Questionnaires took place at the same group of ALD and experts (three times: academic years 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11). The data gained at each stage of the research were coded for processing by SPSS 17.0 program.

ALD creative works were used for the qualitative analysis. Works were coded according to the developed code system and analysed using AQUAD 6 program. Particular correlation between the meta codes and the multiple codes and the frequency of their usage depending on the profile codes was defined on each stage of the research.

Research results and their interpretation

Results of the respondents' questionnaire were processed using SPSS program, using the Wilcoxon test, and indicated the statistically most significant change ($p = 0.000$) in the evaluation of information exchange and self-awareness as a communication partner and positive dynamics of the development (see Figure 3).



sacp – self-awareness as a communication partner
 $n = 120$

Figure 3. Changes of information and self-awareness as a communication partner (Wilcoxon test)

In most cases, evaluation of information exchange ($n = 84$) and self-awareness as a communication partner ($n = 74$) has improved. The case analysis shows that the reason for deterioration is a severe operation, leading to further ALD health deterioration that left an impact on the development of communicative competence.

Wilcoxon test results show positive changes in the evaluation of communicative competence: a statistically significant change is for the tolerance ($p = 0.007$) and empathy ($p = 0.002$), other indicators show the statistically most significant differences ($p \leq 0.001$). The case analysis shows that a positive development dominates and only one student has a negative

rank in some parameters which is connected to a severe side diagnosis and general health deterioration. The author considers that even in cases where the ranking remained at the same level, the development dynamics had a positive trend, because the subjectivity was included in the results of questionnaire, thus ALD evaluated themselves or were evaluated by the experts in accordance with the requirements of a higher class.

ALD works, made during participation in various extra-curricular literary creation activities (contests, literary creative club, a newspaper), were analysed using AQUAD 6 program. The analysis of correlation found between the meta code of information exchange (“inform”) and the meta code of self-awareness as a communication partner (“sacp”) shows that the number of correlation increases with every academic year. Since there were found correlations between self-awareness as a communication partner and exchange of information by AQUAD 6 program – the growing awareness of themselves as communication partners, ALD are paying more attention to information and improving its quality in the end: in the 1st measurement a correlation between “sacp” and “inform” were found in 6 cases, in the 2nd measurement – in 24 cases, in the 3rd measurement – in 31 cases. This suggests that during extra-curricular activities, enriching the personal communicative experience and self-awareness of themselves as communication partners, ALD also strengthen and improve linguistic knowledge acquired during lessons and necessary for the qualitative exchange of information.

For a better understanding of the situation, multiple codes were also analysed by AQUAD 6 program. Comparing the codes' frequency in three measurements (see Figure 4), it is concluded that the frequency of all codes has increased, indicating rise of the communicative competence level. In addition, in the 3rd measurement the code describing skills to obtain information (“sk_obt_inf”) appeared (5 times) that was not recorded in the previous measurements.

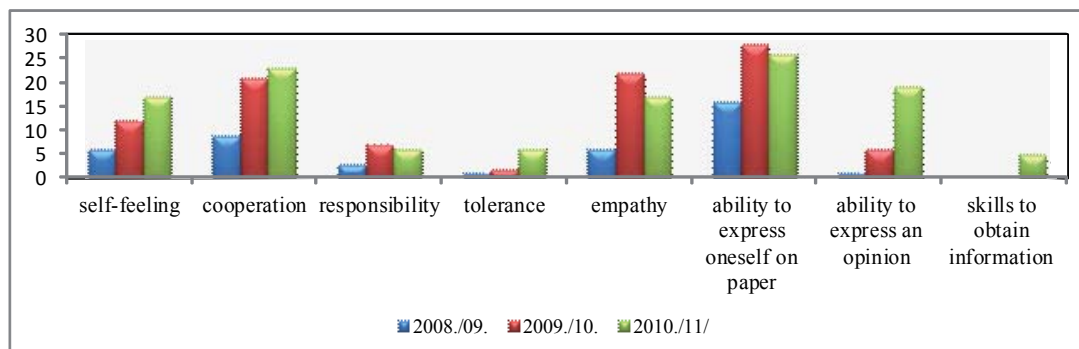


Figure 4. Frequency of multiple codes in ALD creative works

The results of qualitative analysis were processed by SPSS 17.0. program for generalizing them later by AQUAD 6 program. The results of Friedman test showed that there are statistically most significant differences ($p \leq 0.001$) between the meta codes at the beginning and at the end of the research. Statistically significant differences are observed in three values: tolerance ($p = 0.022$), ability to express oneself on paper ($p = 0.019$) and ability to express an opinion ($p = 0.021$).

Conclusions

1. It is impossible to make a successful development of ALD communicative competence just during lessons. Pedagogical process should be continued also in extra-curricular activities.
2. Common requirements and purposeful educational and correctional work through the whole pedagogical process are necessary for the development of ALD communicative

competence because the skills, acquired during the learning process, are strengthened and improved with extra-curricular activities. This increases experience and gradually establishes itself as a competence. This is confirmed by the correlations (found by AQUAD 6 program) between self-awareness as a communication partner and exchange of information – the more the awareness of themselves as communication partners is growing, the more ALD are paying attention to information and its quality is improving in the end: in the 1st measurement a correlation between “sacp” and “inform” was found in 6 cases, in the 2nd measurement – in 24 cases, in the 3rd measurement – in 31 cases.

3. In accordance with the criteria and indicators, the analysis of the questionnaire data suggests the following:
 - there are statistically the most significant differences ($p = 0.000$) in assessments and a positive dynamics of the criteria is seen – in most cases the evaluation of information exchange ($n = 84$) and self-awareness as a communication partner ($n = 74$) has improved;
 - there is a statistically significant change for tolerance ($p = 0.007$) and empathy ($p = 0.002$) in the evaluation of communicative competence, other indicators show statistically most significant differences ($p \leq 0.001$).
4. Skilfully organized educational process that focuses on the diverse variety of communication situations, promotes the development of ALD communicative competence.

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INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES INTO SCHOOL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

The article describes and defines socio-educational conditions of the integration of children with disabilities into school community. Appropriate integration may help to successfully solve social and education problems of children with disabilities, as well as achieve their equal rights and possibilities to participate in school community. The article theoretically presents the results of the research of socio-educational conditions of integrating children with disabilities into school community.

Key words: *integration, school community, children with disabilities, socio-educational conditions.*

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. Recently Lithuania has been actively discussing issues concerned with the integration of children with disabilities into school community. There are frequent arguments that integrated education of children with disabilities can ruin what has been created in the country in a number of years. However, the advocates of the integration of people with disabilities, Algėnaitė (2003) and Migaliova (2004) believe that such integration may help to successfully solve social and education problems of children with disabilities, as well as achieve their equal rights and possibilities to participate in school community. The Law of the Republic of Lithuania of 1991 on Social Integration of People with Disabilities defines the right of children with disabilities to be educated in educational institutions; however, it is obvious that not all educational establishments are adapted to accept children with disabilities, and thus, are not prepared to provide quality education to these children. Pursuing to integrate children with disabilities into school community successfully, it is essential to primarily change the attitude of the society, and educators in particular, towards persons with disabilities.

The integration of children with disabilities into school community may occur after evaluating and determining their social and educational needs, which is impossible without cooperation and collaboration of all members of school community: children, parents and teachers (Ruškus, 2002). According to professor Ruškus (2001), education of children is conducted following different programmes, employing methods of differentiation and individualization, encouraging the relations of mutual support in the classroom, differentiating the assessment of the achievement of children with special needs, as well as creating the

atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration among all community members in the process of integrated education. Although the ideas of social and educational integration are being developed in school communities, children with disabilities are still subject to negative assessment.

The aim of the article is to describe and define socio-educational conditions of the integration of children with disabilities into school community.

Hence, the following **objectives** are raised:

1. to identify and analyse socio-educational conditions of the integration of children with disabilities into school community;
2. to present the results of the research of socio-educational conditions of integrating children with disabilities into school community.

Problem of the research. Social discourse of people with disabilities has not been sufficiently explored in Lithuania. The problems and needs of children with disabilities have received more attention recently; however, their integration into school community has not been much discussed yet. This issue is of significance for school communities; therefore, the following problem-based questions are raised in the article:

1) Which characteristics, features and traits are attributed to the integration of children with disabilities into school community?

2) What socio-educational conditions contribute to the integration into school community?

Research methods: scientific literature analysis; quantitative research employing questionnaires; qualitative research and its content analysis.

Theoretical assumptions on integrating a child with disability into school community

Conditions of integrating children with disabilities into school community. The integration of children with disabilities into school community demands a variety of organizational means; therefore, it is important to consider the state of health, family needs, as well as mental and physical capabilities of every child. Gailienė (1997) maintains that specialists, who deal with the problems of children with disabilities, tend to focus on their basic needs: material well-being, arrangement of the surrounding environment, possibilities of mobility, etc. Great attention is attached to their physical health and medical rehabilitation; however, in the light of numerous problems, little attention is paid to their emotional state, creation of favourable psychological climate, and the development of social abilities. Therefore, it is essential to consider not only physical, but also functional, social and public aspects of integrating people with disabilities into school community.

Physical integration involves the arrangement of such physical environment, which would contain no obstacles for people with disabilities to satisfy their basic needs. Functional integration covers well-being of people with disabilities in the surrounding environment and society. The social aspect of integration aims at forming a positive attitude towards people with disabilities, as well as developing their social skills. The fourth aspect of integration – public – focuses on cherishing the socio-cultural integrity of the personality and their value system, guaranteeing their successful integration into social life and performance of social roles.

The integration of children with disabilities into school community demands willingness of all teachers and school specialists, as well as parents and other family members to cooperate and encourage the child's integration. The cooperation of teachers, specialists, parents and classmates will improve the speed and quality of the integration of children with disabilities. Such cooperation involves mutual sharing of knowledge, skills and experience. One of its main concerns is to understand what and how much parents and specialists have in common, as well as how much they have to learn from each other (Ališauskienė & Miltenienė, 2004). According to the authors, it is specialists' responsibility to help the families to achieve their goals.

Topping and Maloney (2005) state that parents often express a negative attitude towards the integration of children with disabilities into school community and society, as they have doubts regarding the provision of sufficient assistance and the danger of being outcast and abused. The conducted research has revealed that parents often refer to painful experiences and negative reactions of the society with reference to a child with disability, have doubts about the sufficiency of school resources to accept and integrate a child with disability into school community, as well as protect them from being abused by other children. Topping and Maloney (2005) believe that parents should establish close relations with school teachers and specialists, who would provide them with pedagogical and psychological information on the behaviour with a child with disability in the family, to make the process of integration more effective.

The most important reasons inhibiting the integrated education of a child include a disorderly educational base, teachers' incompetence, poor quality of the teaching process, and unreadiness of the society to accept people with mental disorders into community. School leaders tend to accept children with special needs to comprehensive schools with the aim of increasing the number of schoolchildren rather than the idea of integrated education. They are not concerned with the satisfaction of their special needs, i.e. the adjustment of the environment and teaching aids, as well as employment of relevant specialists and teacher assistants. Most comprehensive schools integrating children with disabilities into their community meet a number of problems (Galkienė, 2005), which are presented in the model of integrating children with disabilities into school community (Figure 1).

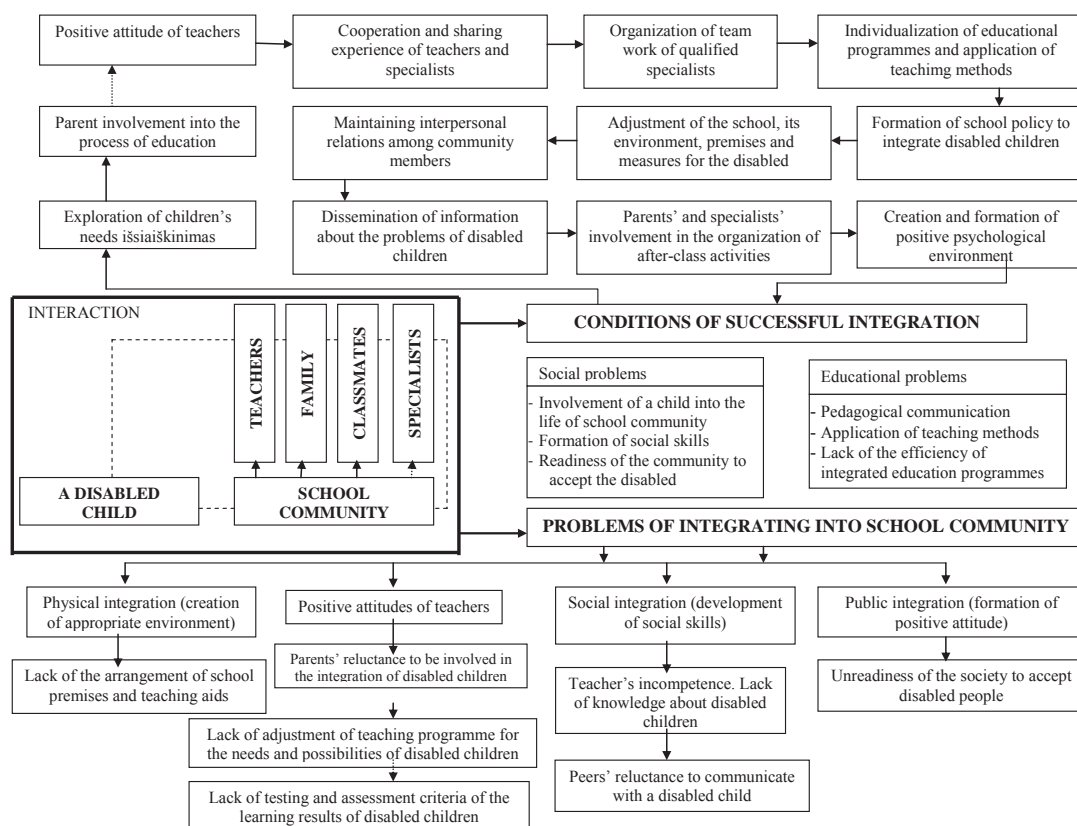


Figure 1. Model of integrating disabled children into school community

The goal of teachers and specialists is to convince school community that children with disabilities are equal members of the community, though they need special attention. It is important to prepare these children for independent life and develop their personalities with reference to their special needs.

The effective interrelationship between a teacher and a child with disability is often inhibited by preconceived negative attitudes of the teacher. Following them, the teacher creates an image of a child and is unable to see his/her progress and positive achievements. This results in the destruction of self-confidence and inner world of the child. Therefore, it is extremely important to teach pedagogical communication to pre- (and in-) service teachers. If teachers are not prepared to communicate with children with disabilities or have insufficient knowledge and experience, they will be able to neither manage children or their socio-psychological processes nor integrate children with disabilities into school community (Ambrulaitis, 2005). The conducted research has shown that the positive approach of teachers contributes to successful integration of children with disabilities into school community. The positive attitude of teachers and society helps to develop successful interrelations and education strategies of people with disabilities, as well as to create an appropriate environment for their integration. According to Ušėckienė (2002), all the mentioned factors reduce a child's disability on the social level, broaden the space of his/her activity, as well as encourage confidence in oneself and the society.

Ambrukaitis (2005) states that more than a third of teachers acknowledge having insufficient practical experience and knowledge to select appropriate tasks for children with special needs, guarantee their psychological and physical safety in the classroom, record the changes of their achievements, evaluate their learning difficulties, as well as apply theoretical knowledge in pedagogical work.

Having summarized the aspects of integrating a child with disability into school community, a model has been designed, which distinguishes the following conditions of successful integration: parent involvement into the process of education, adjustment of school environment for people with disabilities, the formation of school policy aiming to integrate children with disabilities, individualization of educational programmes and teaching methods, cooperation and sharing experience of teachers and specialists. A significant role in the process of successful integration is attached to the interaction, cooperation and problem-solving by all community members.

Methodology and organization of the research of socio-educational conditions of integrating children with disabilities into school community.

Characteristics of the research sample. The sample population included learners and teachers of schools in city N, where 20% of schoolchildren have a disability. The sample have been selected with the aim to validate the research, collect the most precise data, as well as to find out current situation and socio-educational conditions of the integration of children with disabilities into school community.

50 questionnaires were distributed to the teachers of school N, 45 of which were returned (90%). Class 7a were given a task to write a composition on one of the following topics: "Life Disadvantaged", "Do All Children Have a Happy Childhood?", "Children with Disabilities among Us", and "Let's Not Lose Our Heart".

Organization of the research. The empirical research was conducted in March – April in 2010 at a secondary school of city N. Firstly, contacts were established with the administration, and an official permission to conduct the research was obtained. Respondents were informed about the goals of the research, the guarantees of anonymity, as well as the instructions of filling in the questionnaires. While conducting the qualitative research, a discussion on the disability was organized during a class of the Lithuanian language, which was followed by a written composition on one of the above-mentioned topics.

Research ethics. The goal of the research and the instructions of filling in the questionnaire were delivered to the respondents in a clear and understandable way. The research participants were given a right to choose whether to participate in the research or not. The accomplishment of the research was grounded on the principles of goodwill, respect of one's dignity and justice.

Quantitative and qualitative research analysis was selected to verify the goal of the research, which was organized in the form of a questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions: 4 demographic questions revealing characteristics of respondents, i.e. their age, gender, experience of pedagogical work and qualification; and 15 closed-ended questions reflecting the aspects of integrating children with disabilities into school community.

Results of the research of integrating children with disabilities into school community

Characteristics of respondents. The results of the conducted quantitative research showed that the age of the greater part of research participants ranged from 51 or more (33.30%) to 41-50 years (33.30%). The age groups of 31-40 and 26-30 constituted 20% and 13.30% of all the respondents respectively. It is noteworthy that 93.3% of all participants were female, and only 6.7% were male.

The qualification and pedagogical experience of the respondents are directly related to their professional practical experience, which influences their pedagogical activity and results of integrating children with disabilities into school community; therefore, the respondents were asked to define their qualification and scope of pedagogical activity. The questionnaire revealed that 36.70% of all participants had the qualification of a senior teacher, 30% of a teacher-methodologist, and 20% indicated having the qualification category of a teacher. Teachers-experts, special pedagogues, social pedagogues and speech therapists constituted 3.30% each.

The data of the questionnaire revealed that 56.70% of the teachers had more than 20 years of pedagogical experience, 16.70% indicated having 15 to 20 years of experience, 10% declared having 10-15 years of experience, and 10% claimed having 5-10 years of pedagogical experience. Only 6.70% of research participants had the experience of less than 5 years.

Hence, it is possible to state that the research involved highly-qualified teachers and specialists with extensive experience of pedagogical work, who initiated, organized and implemented the integration of children with disabilities into school community.

Readiness of school community to integrate children with disabilities into the community

The research aimed at revealing the aspects of readiness for the integration of children with disabilities into school community, its related problems, as well as creation of the possibilities and conditions for positive integration. With this reference, the analysis of the research data was divided into three sections, which reflected the problem areas of the integration of children with disabilities into school community, and the current situation at the investigated school.

Methods of collecting information on the integration of children with disabilities. The results of the questionnaire showed that the greater part of the respondents obtained information about schoolchildren with disabilities in qualification development courses (70%), consultations with the special pedagogue working at school (63.30%), as well as self-dependent reading of scientific literature and consultations with members of the commission for special education (46.70% respectively). The necessary information on the integration of people with disabilities was provided in the seminars arranged at school (50% of the respondents). It appeared that the special course delivered at a higher school did not provide

with the necessary knowledge on the integration and education of children with disabilities (36.70% of respondents).

Thus, it is possible to conclude that teachers obtained information about the education of children with disabilities and their integration into school community through the participation in qualification development courses, consultations with special pedagogues and self-dependent studies of scientific literature.

Shortage of the data on children with disabilities. The respondents noted that they missed (50%) or partly missed (43.30%) skills of communicating with children with disabilities. Most respondents thought that they partly missed information about the teaching methods (66.70%), and the arrangement of programmes for the integration of children with disabilities (60%). 56.70% of respondents stated that they had rather insufficient abilities to control their emotions and the same percentage of the respondents declared lacking the abilities of involving parents into the process of integration. 10% of teachers stated that they lacked, and 53.30% maintained that partly lack psychological knowledge. 23.30% of respondents believed that they lacked sufficient information, and 50% claimed that they obtain only partial information about the criteria of assessing children with disabilities.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the teachers in the investigated school mostly lacked knowledge and skills of communicating with children with disabilities, the criteria of assessing their activity, teaching methods and arrangement of educational programmes for people with disabilities. Most respondents lacked the abilities to control their emotions.

Respondents' attitude towards the possibility of integrating children with certain disorders into school community. The questionnaire revealed the teachers' opinion about which children with disabilities might be integrated into school community. The obtained results showed that most teachers would recommend integrating children with mental (33.30%), speech and communication (16.70%) disorders, underdevelopment of cognitive processes (10%) and emotional, behavioural and social development (10%) disorders. 23.30% of respondents believed that no children with disabilities should be integrated into school community.

Hence, it is possible to draw a conclusion that children with mental, speech and communication disorders could be integrated into school community. Unfortunately, a relatively big part of teachers totally disagreed with the integration of children with disabilities into school community.

Creation of favourable environment. The greater part of the respondents noted that children with disabilities should be educated in comprehensive school together with healthy children and systematically receive special support (36.70%). 30% of all the respondents maintained that their education could be carried out in comprehensive school in special groups, whereas 26.70% thought that these children should be educated in special institutions. Only 3.30% of teachers indicated that children with disabilities should be educated in day centres or at home.

Thus, it is claimed that most of the respondents were in favour of the integration of children with disabilities into comprehensive schools in joint or special classes.

Adjustment of the physical school environment for children with disabilities. The research attempted to find out whether the school under investigation provided favourable conditions for people with disabilities. The teachers were given a question regarding the adjustment of the physical environment of the school (toilets, staircases and desks) for the children with disabilities. 63.30% of the respondents noted that the school was not well-adjusted, whereas 23.30% claimed that the physical environment of the school was adjusted only in part.

Efficiency of educational aids in integrating children with disabilities. The teachers were asked about the efficiency of the teaching aids used for children with disabilities pursuing to integrate them into school community. The results proved that the applied teaching aids were efficient (23.30%) or efficient in part (66.70%).

Parents' support in integrating children with disabilities into school community.

According to the teachers, parents took part (33.30%) or partially participated (36.70%) in assessing children's special needs, demonstrated interest (26.70%) or showed partial interest (53.30%) in the process of children's education, as well as regularly (30%) or partly (46.70%) consulted with the teachers. The obtained results revealed negative aspects of the integration of children with disabilities into school community in terms of parents' full or partial reluctance with reference to their children achieving the same results (43.30% and 40% respectively), in providing proposals on the improvement of the educational process (36.70%) or they performed the mentioned functions only in part (33.30%). 43.30% of the respondents noted that parents participate in school life only in part, whereas 33.30% maintained that parents avoided participating in school life at all. 36.70% of teachers indicated that parents did not provide any proposals or provided partial suggestions (the same percentage of the respondents) regarding the possibilities of alternative education or encouragement of new initiatives.

In conclusion, the teachers claimed that parents supported the integration of children with disabilities only in part through the participation in the assessment of children's special needs, showing interest in their education, and attending consultations with the teachers. The research revealed that parents did not demonstrate any activeness in participating in the life of school community, providing proposals regarding the improvement of the education and integration of children with disabilities.

Positive influence of school community on a child with disability. Most respondents stated that the integration of children with disabilities into school community increased communication possibilities and helped to avoid the feeling of being outcast (73.30%), developed tolerance in healthy children (73.30%), provided possibilities to adapt to the life in real society (70%), helped to perceive different life experiences (66.70%), as well as enhanced equal rights and possibilities of all members of the society (63.30%). 60% of the respondents agreed or partly agreed (36.70%) with the statement that the integration of a child with disability into school community provides him/her with the possibilities of overall education and satisfaction of his/her basic needs (53.30% and 40% respectively).

Summarizing the research results on the readiness of school community to integrate children with disabilities, it is possible to state that most of the teachers approved of the integration of children with mental, speech and communication disorders into comprehensive schools in joint or special classes. The teachers highlighted several problems related to the integration of children with disabilities into school community: they indicated the lack of skills and knowledge of communicating to children with disabilities, selecting appropriate criteria of the assessing their activity, selecting appropriate teaching methods, as well as arranging educational programmes for them. Pursuing to gain more knowledge on the education and integration of children with disabilities in school community, the teachers most often improved their qualification, consulted with pedagogues of special education and read scientific literature self-dependently. It is noteworthy that despite the application of effective means of integrating children with disabilities, the physical environment of the school did not comply with their needs. The research results disclosed that the integration of children with disabilities into school community enhanced the possibilities of communication, created favourable conditions to holistic education of children with disabilities, as well as satisfied their basic needs. However, the teachers missed parents' activeness in participating in the life of school community, rendering proposals regarding the improvement of the process of education and integration of children with disabilities.

Respondents' attitude towards current processes of integrating children with disabilities at school. Respondents totally (46.70%) or partly (33.30%) approved of the statements that school staff paid considerable attention towards the organization of integrated

education. 46.70% of the respondents noted that school staff held a favourable attitude to the integration of children with disabilities; the same percentage approved of it partly; 36.70% claimed that the administration of the school searched (or searched in part) for the funds to adjust the institution to the integration of people with disabilities and to obtain special aids for their education. Moreover, most of the respondents fully or partly approved of the statements that the issues concerning the integration of people with disabilities were frequently discussed in parents' meetings (40% and 43.30% respectively), and indicated that children with disabilities were involved (33.30%) or partly involved (50%) into after-class activities.

Reasons inhibiting the integration of children with disabilities. The teachers noted that the integration of children with disabilities was in part inhibited by the stereotypical negative attitude of some teachers towards the education of children with disabilities at comprehensive schools (66.70%), the lack of knowledge about integrated education (60%), as well as parents' negative approach towards children with disabilities being educated at comprehensive schools (46.70%). However, the research results revealed that although the school provided with sufficient consultations of specialists (speech therapist, special pedagogue and psychologist) (60%), there was shortage of literature on the integration of children with disabilities (46.70%).

It is possible to conclude that teachers having participated in the research maintain that the successful integration of children with disabilities into school community was inhibited by the negative attitude of teachers and parents of children with disabilities, as well as shortage of information on the integration of people with disabilities. Nevertheless, the number of specialists consulting on the discussed issues was sufficient at the school.

The research results also revealed that successful integration of children with disabilities into school community was totally or partly inhibited by the lack of the adjustment of the school physical environment (33.30% and 66.70%), complicated working conditions following several adapted and regular programmes (46.70%), as well as extensive work load, which prohibited from sparing sufficient amount of time for individual work with people with disabilities (53.30% and 43.30% respectively). Peer abuse was identified as a condition inhibiting the integration of people with disabilities into school community by 40% of teachers. The lack of experience of integrating people with disabilities was indicated as a factor of partial suppression of the efficiency of integration by 63.30% of the respondents.

Problems faced by teachers while integrating children with disabilities into school community. The conducted research showed that most of the respondents felt relative indifference of the school community (73.30%), relatively negative attitude of the members of school community (56.70%); 43.30% noted that they were unable or unwilling to involve parents into the process of education, whereas 53.30% of the respondents expressed the same opinion in part.

According to the teachers, the problems related to the readiness of school specialists to integrate children with disabilities into school community did not occur (66.70%); on the other hand, 53.30% stated that such a team did not exist at all. Among other problems, they mentioned lack of support from professionals of special education (50%), and inefficiency of educational programmes (36.70%). The shortage of funds was identified by 33.30% of the respondents; however, the same percentage of the respondents stated that the discussed problem was not faced in the investigated school.

The research revealed that the teachers, who participated in the process of integrating children with disabilities into school community, faced such problems as being unable to involve parents into the process of education, indifference prevailing in the school community as well as the negative attitude of its members. However, it appeared that the investigated school had a team of specialists dealing with the integration processes and solving the incurred problems.

Problems of parent communication. Most of the respondents partly agreed with the statement that parents raised unrealistic expectations and requirements (60%); they were unwilling to cooperate and share information (50%), considered the child's disorder in an obsessive or indifferent way (50%), as well as were unwilling to regard and follow recommendations (46.70%). 33.30% of the teachers noted that there was no continuity of child education at home; 40% partly supported the statement.

Summarizing the problems of the integration of children with disabilities into school community, it is possible to state that its success was inhibited by the negative attitudes of teachers and parents of the children with disabilities, the shortage of knowledge about integrated education; teachers' inability to involve parents into the process of education, as well as unsuitability of the physical environment of the school. Among other important problems of children's with disabilities integration defined were complicated working conditions following several adapted and regular teaching programmes, and the related shortage of time to work with children with disabilities individually. The research results also disclosed problems related to parents' involvement in the process of integrating children with disabilities. It appeared that parents raised unrealistic expectations and requirements, showed reluctance to communicate and share information, as well as perceived their child's disability inadequately.

However, the obtained data revealed some positive aspects of integrating children with disabilities in the investigated school: there existed an organized team of specialists dealing with integration processes and the related problems; the teaching and administrative staff took an active part in the process of integrating children with disabilities into the school community, searched for the funds to adjust the school premises and accumulate appropriate teaching aids, as well as attempted to involve children with disabilities into after-class activities.

Socio-educational conditions of successful integration of children with disabilities at school. The research results showed that most of the respondents approved of the statements defining such conditions of successful integration as the work of the special pedagogue with a child with disability (90%), favourable psychological environment in the classroom (86.70%), regular consultations with specialists (80%), child education following a special programme and course-books (80%), as well as individual work of the class teacher with a child with disability (66.70%). Most of the teachers believed that the success of the integration of children with disabilities would be enhanced by teacher-parent cooperation (93.30%), readiness of the school to accept children with disabilities into its community 93.30%); more consideration, tolerance and friendship received from peers (93.30%), arrangement of appropriate conditions for children's education (adjustment of the physical environment, preparation of teaching aids and programmes, etc.) (83.30%).

Summarizing the teachers' opinion about the socio-educational conditions of the successful integration of children with disabilities in the investigated school, it is possible to claim that successful integration of people with disabilities into school community necessitated for both physical possibilities, such as adjustment of the premises, psychological climate, teachers' and classmates' tolerance, willingness to help, as well as close cooperation of teachers and parents.

Analysis of the qualitative research – children's compositions

Opinion of healthy children about integration of people with disabilities. Qualitative content analysis is important in conducting research, which helps for the respondents to express their opinion and to highlight the relevant problems and conditions. Open-ended questions permit understanding of their interests and relations to the analysed phenomenon, as well as deeper involvement into the essence of the explored issue. Therefore, it was attempted to avoid preconceived definitions and descriptions while accomplishing content analysis of the current research. The current research follows the conception of qualitative content analysis:

the content analysis is based on a systematic implementation of stages – 1) multiple reading of the text; 2) definition of the manifested categories and subcategories, and their validation by the abstracts from the text; 3) interpretation of the categories and subcategories (Žydzūnaitė, 2003). Qualitative content analysis includes the text, “obtained” using various techniques, e.g. interview or non-standard open-ended questions (Žydzūnaitė, 2003). The material of the current qualitative content analysis includes the texts of critical reflection.

Compositions written by children on a selected topic referring to children with disabilities were interpreted using (qualitative) content analysis. Having analysed the obtained data, four categories were distinguished, which defined individual interaction of the research participants with people with disabilities. The distinguished categories – *implicitly expressed positive feelings and observations; recognition of a child with disability without giving him/her assistance; tolerance, willingness to help and positive evaluation*, as well as *dissatisfaction and discomfort in communication* – were further subdivided into subcategories, which reflected the aspects of the informants’ attitudes and opinions about children with disabilities, as well as feelings they experienced when interacting with people with disabilities.

Having analysed the compositions, the category *implicitly expressed positive feelings and observations* was distinguished, which had three subcategories: observation, neutral position and the subcategory of sympathy and compassion. *The subcategory of observation* reflected learners’ disposition to observe and analyse people with disabilities, as well as draw own conclusions, demonstrating the evaluation of disability as a phenomenon. The analysis revealed that learners, when observing people around them, mostly recognized the “healthy and good ones”, and were reluctant to see “the different ones or ones with disabilities”. This approved of the negative approach towards people with disabilities established in the society. The informants had an image of people with disabilities as “sad and angry” due to their physical, sight and other disorders. They were surprised “by women in wheelchairs, who were smartly dressed, neatly combed and wearing make-up”. Hence, it is possible to conclude that such an image of a person with disability occurred due to the exclusion of people with disabilities from the society, and lack of information or insufficient information about the routine, social life, well-being and possibilities of socialization of the different ones. The informants noticed negative behaviour of some mothers, who “neglected their child or were ashamed of him/her after realizing that he/she was mentally handicapped or deaf on one ear”. Such behaviour of adults forms negative attitude of the maturing personality towards human disabilities, as the child starts assuming disability as something shameful and controversial to the established norms, and believes that the different ones should be isolated from the society.

The subcategory of neutral position revealed that some informants had no opinion about children with disabilities and obtained information about them from other people: “The speech therapist Lisa <...> told that people seeing a child with disability in a wheelchair in the street start looking at him/her and whisper.” This quotation demonstrated that adults tended to distinguish the particularity of people with disabilities and spread the negative attitude of the society, which affected the child’s understanding and behaviour when meeting a person with disability in the street.

The distinguished *subcategory of sympathy and compassion* disclosed experiences and feelings of the research participants, which were invoked by the communication with or observation of people with disabilities. They referred to children with disabilities as unhappy and stated that the latter were “separated from them spiritually”. This statement proved of the wide gap between healthy and handicapped children, the lack of tolerance and mutual understanding, as well as the feeling of estrangement. Schoolchildren, who attended school with children with disabilities, understood and noticed people’s “disgust and detestation”; they referred to parents having abandoned their children as “heartless”; however, at the same

time they declared that it was not “children’s with disabilities fault” that they were different. This showed that the integration of people with disabilities into school community developed tolerance to the different ones, helped the healthy children become more sensitive, and encouraged them to establish tantamount relationships.

The analysis of learners’ compositions helped to distinguish the second category – *recognition of a child with disability without giving him/her assistance*. Two subcategories were also determined: *distinction of a child with disability from others* and *noticing support provided to people with disabilities*. Two opinions of informants were singled out; however, neither of them revealed a clear personal position when speaking about people with disabilities. One of the informants stated: “Two pupils with disabilities have been accepted to our school. Their peers do not realize yet that they are different, but when they grow up, they will realize the difference and can start nicknaming and abusing them.” The statement proved that there was no distinction and discomfort when communicating to a person with disability in the respondent’s environment, people with disabilities were not isolated; however, in the course of time healthy children might become like most of the society – cruel and indifferent, and they might feel ashamed to communicate with classmates with disabilities. Nevertheless, the author of the composition did not show his/her own relationship with peers with disabilities. Another respondent provided a rather different observation: “There are people in the world, who are very kind-hearted; they are, first of all, teachers, educators and others, who work, teach and try to help people with disabilities to love, understand, sympathize and take care of themselves”. This attitude demonstrated that people with disabilities should be cared about and their social skills developed by specialists, characterized by such qualities as kindness and commitment.

The attitudes and opinions of schoolchildren towards people with disabilities helped to distinguish the third category, namely *tolerance, willingness to help and positive evaluation*. Three subcategories were identified: *support, tolerance* and *joy*.

The subcategory – support for a person with disability – highlighted the understanding of most of the research participants about the aim and meaning of their communication with people with disabilities. According to the research participants, “children with disabilities are more sensitive, therefore, they need more care and concern”, “we should not push them aside, but rather use our all possibilities to help them”. Thus, the research revealed the understanding that children with disabilities were weaker, experienced difficulties in accomplishing certain functions and tasks; therefore, they needed more help, which was the responsibility of healthy children. The research participants ascribed support for people with disabilities to their duties and goals: “If I have a possibility, I will devote myself to such children when I grow up.”

The second subcategory – *tolerance* – revealed respondents’ position to accept children with disabilities as equal, communicate and behave with them on an equal level, as well as “learn from them to feel happy with what they have, to become more careful and hard-working.” When communicating with or observing children with disabilities, some learners noticed that “one should not talk to them in a special or comforting way”, “they are interested in the same things as I am”. Hence, the social integration of people with disabilities helped to understand that they did not need comfort or sympathy; they wanted to lead full-fledged lives like others. One of the respondents wrote: “They are disadvantaged, and they cannot be abused as you never know what might happen to you.” This opinion disclosed the idea that no person could be protected from an accident and become handicapped; therefore, it was not right to mock or express hatred to the different ones.

One more important aspect of the attitude towards people with disabilities is distinguished in the article, which is referred to as the subcategory of *joy*. This conception refers to positive emotions, which were experienced by the respondents after encountering and communicating to a child with disability.

Having analysed the compositions, it turned out that joy was not among the most expressed emotions. Only several research participants expressed their happiness to learn in the school, which integrated and educated people with disabilities, as in “it is pleasant to make others happy”. This shows that communication to the different ones provides with the possibilities to experience positive emotions, create a warm atmosphere in the community, and feel joy not only when giving to others, but also receiving and learning from others “to be happy with what God has given to you – health and parents”.

One more category, reflecting the learners’ negative attitude towards people with disabilities, has been distinguished in the current article, namely *dissatisfaction and discomfort in communication*. This category has been subdivided into the subcategories *exclusion* and *fear*. The subcategory of *exclusion* reflects the negative attitude towards people with disabilities, or their observation how people with disabilities are accepted and evaluated in the society: “I think that the mother, who raises such a child, should let him/her to a special school”, or “I have noticed that when a person with disability gets on the bus, everybody stares at him/her and are repulsed by accidental touching with him/her”. The quotations indicate that not all children are tolerant and able to accept a different person into their environment. It conforms to the opinion established in the society that people with disabilities should be excluded from other people and attended in special care homes. Some learners, who participated in the research, stated that “A person with disability feels uncomfortable and secluded from the world. They are often regarded as mentally handicapped by other people.” The above quotations once again confirm the society’s opinion that a person with disability is outcast from social and public life, is unable to think and behave in the same way as other people do, and incompetent to perform any activity. The second subcategory – *fear* – reveals a topical problem of the integration of people with disabilities into social life and school community. Such statements as “we are afraid of these children, as we have been told that they are aggressive”, and “I felt afraid when I went there” highlight another type of the negative attitude towards people with disabilities: the feeling of fear when talking about the phenomenon of disability, since the negative approach is formed not due to one’s personal experience, but following stories, which are often unjustified. Such a negative attitude towards people with disabilities can be related to the shortage of information about the social life and needs of people with disabilities, their possibilities to integrate into the society, as well as communication with them.

Summarizing the obtained results of content analysis, it is possible to state that the distinguished four categories – implicitly expressed positive feelings and observations; recognition of people with disabilities child without giving him/her assistance; tolerance, willingness to help and positive evaluation, as well as dissatisfaction and discomfort in communication – define the learners’ different positions and individual relationships with people with disabilities. The obtained results showed that healthy children tended to observe the environment and people with disabilities, record the behaviour and attitudes of adults and peers, as well as develop their individual approach towards disability, which was mostly reflected by compassion. The content analysis determined the greater part of schoolchildren, who attended school with people with disabilities, were tolerant and forbearing for the weaker ones and were ready to give them support. The feelings of discomfort and fear are not frequently observed in the learners’ compositions; therefore, it is possible to state that the integration of people with disabilities into school community helps to change the negative attitudes established in the society, as well as develop their tolerance and understanding.

Conclusions

1. School community is composed of schoolchildren, teachers, parents and other groups of people positively related to the school. It is united by common values and goals, which are achieved through the teaching process, common events, trips and other activities, as well as common life of all school members. The success of the integration of children with disabilities into school community depends on both the development of cognitive abilities and social education. Positive psychological climate in the classroom, child education following special education programmes and course books, the class teacher's individual work with people with disabilities, teacher-parent cooperation in the teaching process, as well as favourable learning conditions are the main features of the integration of children with disabilities into school community.
2. Summarizing the aspects of integrating people with disabilities into school community, a model of integration of people with disabilities has been designed. The following conditions of successful integration have been distinguished: parent involvement into educational process, adjustment of school environment for people with disabilities, formation of school policy aiming to integrate children with disabilities, individualization of educational programmes and adjustment of teaching methods, as well as teachers' cooperation and sharing experience with specialists.
3. The integration of children with disabilities into school community enhances possibilities of communication, develops tolerance of healthy children, creates possibilities for people with disabilities to adapt to the real life of the society, as well as provides with favourable conditions for overall education and satisfaction of basic needs of people with disabilities. Most teachers, who participated in the research, approve of the integration of children with mental, speech and communication disorders into comprehensive schools in joint and special classes. Pursuing to obtain more information about the education and integration of children with disabilities into school community, teachers improve their qualification, consult with teachers of special education and study scientific literature self-dependently. A team of specialists has been formed in the investigated school that helps to implement the processes of integration and solve the related problems. The teaching and administrative staff is actively involved in the process of integrating people with disabilities, search for the funds to adjust the institution to the integration of people with disabilities and to obtain special aids for their education, as well as make attempts to integrate people with disabilities into after-class activity. Successful integration of people with disabilities into school community necessitates for both physical possibilities like the adjusted premises, favourable psychological climate, teachers' and peers' tolerance and willingness to help, as well as close cooperation of teachers and parents.

The research results have also highlighted the problems related to parents' participation in the process of integrating children with disabilities. It has turned out that parents raise unrealistic expectations and requirements, are reluctant to cooperate and share information, perceive the child's disability inadequately, as well as are rather passive in participating in the activity of the school community, giving proposals on the ways of improving the integration and education of children with disabilities. The problems faced by teachers while integrating children with disabilities include the lack of knowledge and skills about the communication with people with disabilities, the choice of criteria to assess their achievement, as well as design of educational programmes for people with disabilities. Among other important problems of children's with disabilities integration distinguished are complicated working conditions following several adapted and regular teaching programmes, and the shortage of time to work with children with disabilities individually. Moreover, the obtained results have revealed that healthy children tend to observe the environment and people with disabilities,

record the behaviour and attitudes of adults and peers, as well as develop their individual approach towards disability, which is mostly reflected by compassion. Content analysis of compositions determined the greater part of schoolchildren, who attend school with people with disabilities, are tolerant and forbearing for the weaker ones and are ready to give them support. The integration of people with disabilities into school community helps to change the negative attitudes established in the society, as well as develop tolerance and understanding.

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IV. PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION

ART BASED VOLUNTEERING POSSIBILITIES: VIEWPOINT OF THE TRAINERS



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Abstract

The article presents the results based on the research performed according to the EU Grundtvig project Empowering volunteering in socially disadvantaged groups of adult learning (No. LLP-GRU-MP-2011_LT-00089) in 5 different European countries and Turkey as well. The role of volunteering is described as a two side activity having influence on trainers and volunteers expanding their social experience and knowledge of social inclusion of groups who are at social risk. The results prove that new kind of knowledge and relationship has changed significantly in the process of adult education. Increasing of two side personal motivation in education process has been set up as well.

Key words: *adult education, volunteering, art education.*

Introduction

During the last decades the necessity of life long learning and adult education has become obvious in the EU countries as well due to rapid changes in demographic, economic and cultural situation. It forms new societal attitudes, new methods and organization of this process in the aspects of life long learning. Volunteering could be one of effective activities solving problems of people who are at social risk involving them into active societal participation. Volunteering is a great way to use one's skills to help others, and at the same time learn something new which may lead to a qualification.

Volunteering based on art education is a relatively new human service profession in the field of social integration. Through participation in the creating art and reflecting on the art process people can experience increased awareness of self and others, can better cope with distressing symptoms, stress, and traumatic experiences, enhance cognitive abilities and enjoy the life-enhancing process during making the art (Art Therapy – History & Philosophy, 2011). Social benefits of art based education helps to provide an opportunity for people to socialize as well as provide a safe outlet for self-expression and to recognize that their feelings and problems are not unique (Malchiodi, 2003). Volunteering facilitates exploration, observing and trying to understand an inner change, that is why in many cases specialists of

certain volunteering area use art based education as assessment and evaluation of emotional, cognitive, and developmental conditions, it also facilitates communication abilities, changes in interaction problems. Volunteering in adults' education as unenforced participation of both sides is determined by activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing new social role, self-perception that leads to the more active social participation. Volunteering is considered as an activity, intended to improve human life quality; to serve the society through one's own interests, personal skills or learning, which in return produces sense of personal self-realization and satisfaction. Volunteering as a phenomenon is described as a certain pattern of human behaviour that is closely connected with environment, personal characteristics and experience, empathy and goes as a two side process. Volunteers can use different tools to interpret behaviours and develop interventions and strategies. Many volunteers are specifically trained in the areas they work: education, medicine, rescue, and sports, prevention of abuse and domestic violence, etc.

It means that volunteering is a process that needs deep understanding of situation, perfect knowledge in special area and trainings to manage increasing movement toward volunteering professionalization. Volunteers often go through training, and this gives them the chance to gain knowledge and skills that can then be used to help find a job, or simply enjoy the pleasure of learning (Vassiliou, 2012).

The types of learning that occur in volunteer settings cross the spectrum of adult learning and include the following: instrumental learning, problem solving, experiential learning, empowerment, formal education and training, informal and incidental learning, and self-directed learning projects (Kerka, 1998). Because much of volunteers' learning occurs beyond managerial control, volunteer managers may need to focus on how their organizational culture supports learning. Volunteering holds great potential for adult learning, even if the connections are not always explicit and provide greater recognition and support for informal learning by increasing individuals' capacity for critical reflection, enabling them to recognize and document their volunteer activities as learning experiences.

Object of the research: trainers' viewpoint on the art based volunteering possibilities

Aims of the research:

1. To review theoretical issues on the volunteering process using art based education activities;
2. To describe subjective attitudes on the input on art based education in the volunteering process.
3. To reveal possible outcomes of practical implementation of art based education in volunteering process.

Participants of the research: International group – 11 persons from 4 EU and 1 Turkey institutions working in organizing volunteering activities for social risk persons directed to their social involvement and integration.

Methodology and methods of the research

The research based on the empowerment theory derived that refers to a process by which people, organizations, and communities gain power to master their problems and participate in the societal processes of their communities and employing institutions (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Empowerment theorists share an idea that the influence that powers relationships can have chance to resist and initiate structural change in social system, because changes occur when there are enough people to create a collective action only. It is recognized that collective action starts and is maintained through the development and change of individual awareness. Any collective action is growing out from living experiences shared and finally it is addressed to solve common social problem; in this case one can talk about raising critical consciousness (Konrath, Fuhrel-Forbis, Lou, & Brown, 2012). Volunteering activities based on the person's or

group's empowerment solve these goals with the sense of self-value and confidence of different societal groups that need outside support. Volunteering could be based and usually performed through non-formal education activities: it is any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of teachers to particular population groups (Fox & Goodheart, 2001). Non-formal education is common for lifelong learning process in which every person gains knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and produces it into the environment. In other words, art based education in volunteering is very close to what some people define as "experiential learning".

Paradigm of qualitative research was used in the collecting of empiric data. The method of structured interview was chosen to reveal trainers' viewpoint on the art based volunteering possibilities. The data was processed by logic analysis aiming to reveal completeness while revealing certain assessment criteria. Describing the criteria and understanding peculiarities of the analysed phenomenon were defined according to the theoretical analysis and grouped into the 3 semantic blocks: Subjective feelings while participating in volunteering activities; Subjective viewpoint on the art based volunteering; Outcomes of practical implementation of art based education in volunteering process.

Assurance of reliability of data

Bearing in mind that results of the qualitative research often leave some doubts concerning reliability of data and validity of conclusions, in order to validate research results, 5 experts were asked to evaluate the results of the research. They not only got acquainted with the results of a particular research, but they are active participants of volunteering in non-governmental organizations, leaders of volunteer groups. Remarks of experts and additional information provided by them were helpful in drawing final generalisations and conclusions.

Participants of the research: 11 participants from Šiauliai University (Lithuania), Fepamuc Guadalajara (Spain), Contempla Trilhos (Portugal), Tecnopras s.a.s (Italy) and Şişli Technical and Vocational High School (Turkey) took place in the research. All institutions have experience and are working in the preparation of volunteers for the work with the adults groups who are at social risk.

Proceedings of the research

The research took place in 2011 June to 2012 June during 2 meetings of project partners. During the workshops (art based activities – shooting short movies and decoupage) the participants were asked to express some everyday life situations. Specially trained volunteers (persons, who are preparing others for the volunteer work with socially disadvantaged groups and are active in volunteering using art based education methods) lead the sessions. Duration of one session was about 3 hours.

Results of the research on trainers' viewpoint on the art based volunteering possibilities

It is important to know for the trainers of volunteers how people feel themselves attending art based education volunteering activities. Some considerations on this point could be useful trying to understand environmental input and personal perception of ongoing activities that actually are directed to the raising of person's self-confidence through art based education. The trainees of volunteers were offered to take part in art based education session and to reflect their feelings and usefulness of such performances. The aim of the presented material is not to discuss applied methods of art based education (shooting short movies and decoupage), that is why the methods as possible forms of adult education have not been analyzed. The goal of this study is to reveal trainees' view point on activities that are applied during volunteering process.

Table 1
Subjective feelings participating in volunteering activities

Category	Affirmation	Number of affirmations
Novelty	"very interesting and new thing"; "lots of ideas from different point of view"; "was very interesting and new thing for us".	3
Intercultural viewpoint	"it was the point of all — not for the one country"; "succeed in involving all the participants"; "gives me message about cultural values and ethic" "this is very important for me and for international group";	4
Usefulness	"very useful and we worked very purposefully"; "the activity was very very interesting"; "it was very productive";	3
Creativity	"we quickly found the way how to do something"; "first of all we realized the idea"; "most difficult point was to crystallize the idea"; "different persons created different subjects"; "some experience that learners would do in a real learning situation".	5
Organization issues	"we were given very clear instructions about the workshop"; "it was really team work"; "to teach how to work in a team", "how to do group work which is very important for voluntary work"; "especially very useful to have the work groups"; activities were very dynamic and well structured"; "all details have been thought well"; "application of the method is the best way to learn a method".	8

Five categories reflecting experience of participants (see Table 1) have been revealed. The most of them indicated *organization issues* of the sessions (8 affirmations). It was mentioned that clearness of instructions, group work, teaching methods are important for successful volunteering. The largest number of indicators in this category reflects the subjective experience of the participants: most of them are working in the organizing and management of volunteering, so these aspects are important for them.

Category of *creativity* in art based education sessions was the second large group (5 statements) that was indicated by the participants of the research. Possibility to choose the mode of expression of their own problem/situation activates person to think more deeply and at the same time feel safe and indefeasible by environmental factors (social control, societal stereotypes, etc.). The participants mentioned that it is important to understand and realize ideas quickly and easily, because people are not going to feel pressure or tension during their voluntary participation.

As a special outcome of the research the category of *intercultural viewpoint* (4 statements) in volunteering based on art education could be mentioned. It is a result of international group that took place in the research activity. However, from the scientific point of view it is new possibilities in organizing volunteering in the field of social integration and tolerance development. Getting the world closer, the national, economic, cultural, and religious diversity press to search ways of helping understand and accept otherness, of enlarging the sense of truth, of developing empathy in wider context. These considerations are proved by saying: "it was the point of all – not for the one country"; "gives me message about cultural values and ethic", etc.

Defined categories of *novelty* and *usefulness* were the smallest ones (each has 3 affirmations). Participants indicated new things, ideas that they had experienced during art based education sessions. It means that novelty is an important aspect in volunteering activities, as well, because it motivates participants to attend sessions, to learn new things about already known types of activities, to apply them in everyday life. The category of novelty is closely

connected with the category of *usefulness* and this was proved by statements: *very useful, purposeful; interesting, productive*. It means that volunteering activities at the same time must be useful and meaningful for participants and especially talking about persons who are at social risk group.

Defined categories of subjective feeling during participation in art based volunteer activities show that it is a two side process involving target groups and volunteer in the common emotional area. The volunteers must recognize and reflect situation which forms new kind of knowledge, skills, or relationship.

Each person working as a volunteer in adult education has his/her subjective point of view to the responsibility, methods, forms, place, intensity of the process in which different types of people are involved.

Volunteering using art based education requires specific trainings and knowledge in order to solve problems in which target group appears. The attempt has been made to realize what is important for volunteers implementing educational process and what aspects in art based education could be improved. It is important for self-evaluation for further activities, and for designing final goals of volunteer work.

Table 2
Subjective view point on the art based volunteering

Category	Affirmation	Number of affirmations
Innovation	<i>"it is very innovative"; "very innovative"; "and this is an integration and implementation at the same time"; "it puts together both methods: movie and drama somehow"; "in volunteering I have never heard about such method";</i>	5
Reflection	<i>"during the session I think all troubles, all problems go away"; "all your thoughts are to verify some decisions and at the same time find the decision"; "it looks like you got the solution but really the all team and all groups help you to do this"; "it is a tool that gives us a perception"; "the most precise and direct tool for explaining your thoughts", "can use this in your personal life to find some solutions with the help of others"</i>	6
Attractiveness	<i>"it very attractive because it is not difficult to manage"; "it also make people work together easily";</i>	2
Interaction	<i>"this is a kind of integration"; "in a very informal way we can get the message to the group and get some tools how to put in practice this so important thing"; "you have very creative environment"; "can use body language and go to somewhere even if we don't speak the same language"</i>	4

Art based education is rather well known form in volunteering, but for the volunteers who are starting their work it could be a challenge. Even for specially trained volunteers work with adults requires experience. The most meaningful thing in subjective viewpoint on the art based volunteering among participants (see Table 2) of the research is possibility for *reflection* (6 statements). It was revealed that during activities participants really get more concentrated to their inner world, feel some relief, others indicate verification of decisions, sense of community. As an important experience perception has been mentioned. It means that proper methods in volunteering can support person's inner changes and social maturity.

Innovations is the significant aspect in participants' subjective viewpoint on the art based volunteering (5 statements). The moment of integrity in art based education let volunteers apply more flexible activities, choose and combine different theoretical and methodological

viewpoints *“this is an integration and implementation at the same time”; “it puts together both methods: movie and drama somehow”*. It shows that innovations must be constantly involved or renewed organizing volunteering with socially disadvantaged groups to motivate them and to keep interest in activities.

Interaction (4 statements) during volunteering is probably one of the most discussed values. In the current study the meaning of traditional interaction between participants was extended with new meanings. Participants say that interaction serves not only as a communication satisfying factor, but it could form new processes, as well. Interaction was named as a tool of integration; interaction as a mean of creativity; interaction as a practice, etc. It shows that interaction as one of the essential meanings in volunteering still plays a significant and multifunctional role. Subjective viewpoint on the input of art based volunteering include four categories (innovation, reflection, attractiveness, interaction) that reflect trainers' professional and social experience.

Discussing participants' subjective viewpoints on volunteering applying art based education it is important to reveal what possibilities they see for practical implementation of activity that needs special art trainings.

Table 3

Outcomes of practical implementation of art based education in volunteering process

Category	Affirmation	Number of affirmations
Identification of difficulties	<i>“I think it will be very difficult to do this”; “we have no experience”; “some ethic things just to involve them”; “I’m not experienced in participating in this kind of workshops”; “some technical issues are necessary for this kind of activities”, “just some basic information”;</i>	6
Versatility of method	<i>“kind of education activities”; “such activities and techniques have allowed us to participate no matter how much English we can speak”; “it has been very interesting from educational point of view as well”; “it is very interesting, useful in voluntary work”; “we’ll use it definitely”; “interesting tool to make them engaged and some different things”; “this method is an attractive method”; “this type of activity could be used in all phases of education not just for voluntary activities”; “it can also be used for counselling in education”; “so, as an educational tool, it can be used in our schools or anywhere else”; “useful in teaching people”; “these activities beyond the language”;</i>	13
Social maturity and problem solving	<i>“art activities are very useful to improve transferable skills and soft skills”; “at first we thought we don’t know how to do it, and the results were very beautiful and fashionable style”; “it is really nice for them to have something that is productive”; “it is really good”; “good impression from these activities”; “explaining behaviours or problem solving”; “you show a problem and possible solutions”; “using short movies that is like giving an example of real life, but not just explaining in words”; “is more impressive than just listening to it”;</i>	14
Social participation	<i>“people, who even do not know each other well, can participate”, “can allow these people integrate themselves in a common activity”; “found them useful for the population we have”; “feel closer, and it is a way to encourage, make a contact with people”; “we develop a group and so in that way we can use it”; “learners should learn by doing and experiencing them”; “I’ve been motivated to start an activity in a group”;</i>	7

Analyzing the results of the research data it could be mentioned that interview block concerning possible outcomes of volunteering based on art education, the activity of participants, was the highest one. Finally, four main categories were defined. The most significant outcome applying art based education in volunteering is *social maturity* of target group (14 statements). Organizing activities, volunteers point out the significance of learning to cope with conflicts, to solve behavioural problems, to find optimal solutions that are most motivating and encouraging a person. Transfer of soft and general skills of target group is indicated as a possible outcome of volunteering. It means that volunteering presents not only the continuous process but at the same time it is oriented toward person's socialization.

In the analysis of the research data concerning possibilities of practical implementation of art based education in volunteering process five categories were defined (see Table 3). *Versatility of methods* (13 statements) used in sessions was mentioned as one of important categories and as art based education outcome in volunteering. It means that art based education being not strongly defined as a didactic method, combines a lot of elements that are attractive for non-formal activity and at the same time effective in solving problems of people who are at social risk.

Identification of difficulties (6 statements) during the volunteering was mentioned. It may happen with members of target group and with volunteers, as well. In the first case, it could be a new suppressing activity for persons making them feel inadequate and the difficulties that could appear for volunteers might be provoked by the lack of experience in the work with adults or insufficient training. It presupposes the idea, that such situations sometimes occur and it could have negative influence realizing common goals in volunteering.

The category of *social participation* was defined as an outcome of volunteering (7 statements). The experience gained in art based education activities helps volunteers to assess a stimulus to be more active (through recognition of person's value and uniqueness), to make a new contacts, to express themselves and present themselves for the wider audience ("feel closer, and it is a way to encourage, make a contact with people"). Through volunteering activities problems of integration into community could be solved, as well ("allow these people to integrate themselves in a common activity"). The results show that volunteers are orientated to positive outcomes of their work and volunteering being the form of non-formal education implements wide range of socioeducational goals.

Generalizing the results of the research some **conclusions** could be drawn out:

1. Volunteering based on art education is a relatively new human service profession in the field of social integration. Through participation in the creating art and reflecting on the art process people can experience increased awareness of self and others, can better cope with distressing symptoms, stress, and traumatic experiences, enhance cognitive abilities and enjoy the life-enhancing process during making the art.
2. Defined categories of subjective feeling (novelty, intercultural viewpoint, usefulness, creativity, organization issues) during participation in art based volunteer activities shows that it is a two side process involving target groups and volunteers in the common emotional area. The volunteers must recognize and reflect the situation which forms new kind of knowledge, skills, or relationship. It shows that interaction as one of the essential meanings in volunteering still plays a significant and multifunctional role. Subjective viewpoint on the input of art based volunteering include four categories (innovation, reflection, attractiveness, interaction) that reflect trainers' professional and social experience.

3. Analyzing the results of the research data it could be mentioned that interview block concerning possible outcomes of volunteering based on art education, the activity of participants, was the highest one. The results show that volunteers are orientated to positive outcomes of their work and volunteering being the form of non-formal education implements wide range of socioeducational goals.

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STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE IN ASSESSING THE EXPRESSION OF SOCIAL SKILLS OF A PERSON WITH MODERATE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

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Abstract

The article contains case study of social skills of the moderately intellectually disabled person. This study complied with the view that social skills are a complex construct, which consists of integrating and complementary structural components, such as: 1) interaction skills; 2) communication skills; 3) participation skills; 4) emotional skills; and 5) social cognition skills; and each of these social skills' structural components is constituted of complexes of social abilities. When identifying the social skills of a person with moderate intellectual disability, the concept of strengths perspective has been observed. Strengths perspective emphasizes the child's capabilities (strengths), rather than the child's inability. Scientific research problem could be defined in the following questions: what kind of social skills expression do the family members and pedagogues of a moderately intellectually disabled person notice? What strengths (available social skills) and problem areas do they identify?

Key words: *social skills, strength perspective, case study, a person with moderate intellectual disability.*

Introduction

Problem and relevance of the research. The abundance of social skills research indicates a great interest in this problem of the scientists from all countries; however, these researches do not explain the structural peculiarities of social skills in essence. Social skills are the presumption of successful personal socialization and harmonious existence in a social group; they create opportunities for an individual to act effectively in a social environment (Gedvilienė & Baužienė, 2008; Osit, 2008), to communicate avoiding conflicts and maintaining good mutual relations (Brodeski & Hembrought, 2007; Church et al., 2003; Sukhodolsky & Butter, 2007); to express oneself and understand others (Colombero, 2004; Kaffemanienė & Čegyčė, 2006).

A complexity of socialization of mentally retarded individuals is explainable by the lack of social skills. A lot of authors noticed that children with moderate mental retardation distinguish in their inability to create and maintain relations with peers or other individuals;

inadequate behaviour and expression of emotions; they have difficulties in expressing wishes, adaptation in social environments; those children experience a need for social communication and they have a poor societal support due to their inadequate behaviour; they may feel rejected, socially isolated, and more lonely than peers of a typical development (Bauminger & Kasari, 2000), even if they attend mainstream schools (Chamberlain, 2001). According to Ailey (2003) and Gervogianienė (1999), the majority of mentally retarded children are unable to find friends, make friendships; they mark in a behaviour, which is annoying and repelling; due to the unacceptable behaviour, peers tend to avoid them and exclude from common activities.

The most important objective of education of mentally retarded school children should be development of social rather than academic skills (communication, behaviour, independence, orientation in social environment) (Gevogianienė, 1999; Ruškus, 2002, etc.), taking into consideration the existent individual abilities. However, the problem is the lack of not only a scientific agreement on the conception and structure of social skills concept, but also the focused social skills research and education methods. Scientists, who were analysing social skills in mentally retarded individuals, often accentuate the inabilities and failures of the latter, and only in rare cases describe the social skills that these individuals may possess. Specialists in educational practice (psychologists, pedagogues), also more often mark negative characteristics when assessing the development of these schoolchildren, and almost never characterize the abilities they have, or positive educational perspectives. From our point of view, mentally retarded individuals, as any other, have individual abilities and potentials that are important for socialization; it is essential to rest on the abilities (strengths), as a resource, in pursuance of helping them effectively develop the lacking social skills.

Scientific research problem could be defined in the following questions: what kind of social skills expression do the family members and pedagogues of a person with moderate intellectual disability notice? What strengths (available social skills) and problem areas do they identify?

Research object – expression of social skills of a person with moderate intellectual disability.

Research objective – with reference to the data of case study, to reveal the available social skills (strengths) and problem areas of a person with moderate intellectual disability.

Research methodology and methods. In this research, a viewpoint that social skills are a construct of complex structure, constituted of mutually integrated and complementary structural components, is being assumed: 1) interaction skills; 2) communication skills; 3) participation skills; 4) emotional skills; and 5) social cognition skills. Each of these social skills' structural components is constituted of respective complexes of social abilities, which are linked in tight system relations (Jurevičienė, Kaffemanienė & Ruškus, 2012).

When identifying social skills of a person with moderate intellectual disability, *strengths perspective* (Saleebey, 1997, 2001) is being emphasized, i.e. a conception, according to which people have many various strengths (resources) – capacities, abilities, experiences, qualities, and roles, by which the quality of social functioning of a person is described (Saleebey, 1997; Weick et al., 1989); the most important strength of an individual – their ability to grow and change (Early & GlenMaye, 2000). *Strengths perspective* accentuates person's possibilities (strengths), and not inabilities or family problems (Weick & Chamberlain, 1997), and expresses an attitude towards the pupil as a person able to realise their strengths and needs, and actively participate while solving actual own life problems. This perspective is based on an assumption that it is not necessary to understand a problem in order to solve it (Waller, 2006), individual's abilities and strengths are gathered, ideas of growth and development are joined in pursuance of improving the life quality, so it is necessary to develop problem solving skills, and the ability to cope with stress and difficulties (Heinonen & Spearman, 2001). When applying this

theoretical perspective, the focus is given to the cooperation and partnership between a pupil and pedagogue, where the most important role of an educator is to help the pupil actualise available abilities (strengths), motivate the pupil's activity and responsibility for the results of their actions. Besides, the education based on the strengths perspective takes place while cooperating with different systems (the pupils themselves, their families, schools, etc.), each of which is treated as an education/al resource (Weick & Chamberlain, 1997). People's internal and external resources (abilities, strengths; wellbeing, unity, growth, development of support, and the life quality ideas are combined) are used in order to reach four goals: 1) to grow as a personality; 2) to improve the quality of one's life; 3) to develop one's problem solving skills; and 4) to cope with stress and misfortunes (Heinonen & Spearman, 2001).

According to Cowger (1997), it is important to talk with pupils themselves and their family members when assessing their strengths (to figure out, how they got along so far; what they want). Besides, strengths can be identified in other ways as well (e.g., through observation), making efforts to best comprehend the present situation; "perceiving one does not know the upper limits of ability to grow and change and seriously considering the individual's, group's, and society's expectations" (Saleebey, 1997).

Research methods. Attempting to answer the research problem questions, qualitative research methods are chosen (case study: observation, interview). *Case study method* – is a process of systematic information selection about a specific person, social environment, event, or a group, by which it is aimed to figure out how it operates or functions (Berg, 2001); it is a thorough exploration of a single case of some social phenomenon (Babbie, 2004), in pursuance of understanding the interaction with important circumstances (Stake, 2000). In this research, the expression of a person's social skills is revealed using a *case study method*, combining it with an *interview* and *content analysis* of the *observation* data. The research data is selected using methods of *observation* and focused *semi-structured interview*; and methods of qualitative data analysis is *content analysis* of observation texts and interview protocols.

Direct observation method is applied, with which we attempted to gather data about the social skills' expression of a schoolgirl with moderate mental retardation in various environments (observation was carried out at school, in family, shopping, etc.) and while interacting with various persons (mother, sister, grandmother, peers, familiar and unfamiliar adults, pedagogues). Observation data was gathered in a chronological order in 5 minutes interval recording the order of events and manifestations of schoolgirl's skills in various situations.

Formulation of interview questions. Considering the research objective, the following general question for parents and pedagogues is formulated: *Which social skills of a moderately mentally retarded child do parents and pedagogues notice (in the family, group of peers, school, and etc.)?* A question for the participant herself: *How does she feel at home, at school? How does she spend her spare time? What hobbies does she have? etc.*

When submitting the interview, questions about the ways and areas of social skills expression had to be specified. The following narrower interview questions were formulated: *What communication abilities does K. possess? How does she interact with a) family members? b) pedagogues? c) peers? What ways of social communication (language, mimics, gestures, etc.) does she use? How does she express her emotions? How does she recognise the emotions of others and how does she react? How does she solve conflicts? etc.* The sequence of questions depended on the course of conversation, and the content of the research participant.

Research duration: 6 observation sessions lasting 2 hours (or 840 min) were carried out. Average duration of an individual interview – approximately 45 minutes.

Research sample. A person with moderate intellectual disability (21-year-old schoolgirl, K.) is chosen for the case analysis; she attends a class of work education in special school.

The pupil distinguishes in low capacity for learning, inability to apply the acquired experiences in analogous situations, unfocused orientation activity, and poor self-control basics. Her language underdevelopment is of second degree. Due to the impaired coordination of movements, she is unable to timely perform self-handling actions. She gets dressed on her own. Expresses her discontent in negativism, impulsiveness; she is aggressive with peers, dissatisfied, envious, and aims to harm¹. Family members (mother, sister, and grandmother of the pupil), pedagogues (class teacher, class supervisor), i.e. individuals, who have a direct educational relation with the monitored pupil, participated in the examination of the moderately mentally retarded schoolgirl's social skills².

Research Results

Interaction skills (interaction management and control abilities). *Interaction skills* manifest in the impact of the communicators on one another; they consist of both the management of one's own behaviour and abilities to manage and control the interaction of others with you (e.g., ability to resist the negative effect, etc.).

Considering the interview data, towards the annoying situations, criticism, and comments K. rather often reacts in a retreat, turning away, and oppositional reactions (talking back, sometimes with aggression), or laughs, which is inadequate to the situation:

*[Once K. heard me talking to another teacher about her inappropriate behaviour, and started to cry, rub her eyes, murmur: "Well fine, I will continue not to listen," and began hitting herself on the face (K.M.) / I told the class supervisor that she did not listen to me, so she grumbled a lot and called me a denunciator, did not eat her breakfast, was kicking the door, and could not be controlled (K.A.) / During a task, K. jostled with a boy, so she slammed the door and went to her group (K.A.)]*³.

When criticized she acts inappropriately and laughs:

[Mother seeing K. hit the little chicken asks why she behaves this way. K. replies that she is not hitting it, she only wanted to try. Mother disciplines her. K. starts to laugh loudly.]

Apparently, a girl is unable to manage interactions, when she is being laughed at.

[One of the girls said that K. could not be a teacher, because she does not know how to count. Then K. got angry and ran away from the playground, sat on a bench and sadly watched the girls (K.A.) / Took a rag and went to clean the dust. But when she entered the boys' room, they started to make fun of her. She threw the rag and shouted that she was not going to clean anymore (K.A.)].

Anxiety or avoidance of contacts with strangers manifest (Leffert, Siperstein & Millikan, 2000; Ronen, 2005):

[While in the bus, acquaintances of the mother come, greet, and start talking. They ask K. how she is doing. She turns her eyes away and responses silently that she is fine. Then they ask her, where they are going. K. turns towards the window and does not respond to the question. / K. is standing near the fence watching the neighbour. The neighbour greets her, K. averts her eyes and walks away].

Communication skills. When describing the communication abilities (ability to pay attention to other person, to listen to others, understand, sympathise, participate in experiences of other people, etc.) Gervogianienė (1999) noted that these abilities exceed the limits of the basic communication actions. According to the authors, not only verbal and nonverbal actions, and their adequacy are typical for the ability to communicate, but also the *need to communicate, sociability, sense of empathy, flexibility, and ability to solve conflicts*.

¹ Findings of the Pedagogical-Psychological Service (PPS).

² Principle of anonymity is being followed, therefore, names of parents, pedagogues, and children are not mentioned, as well as, the school title; only abbreviations are recorded, which have nothing in common with the actual names, sometimes only the gender is noted.

³ Here and further in the text, in square brackets, fragments from observation protocols are presented.

Verbal contact and communication abilities. Communication skills are firstly associated with the *abilities to initiate and maintain verbal and nonverbal contact* (Bellack et al., 2004; Canney & Byrne, 2006; Gervogianienė, 1999, etc.).

The research revealed K.'s ability to initiate communication using verbal means. She often initiates the verbal contact, especially with the persons she fancies:

[She is the first to rush to the guests, greet them, and ask about the purpose of their visit (K.M.) / Another class supervisor entered our class, so K. immediately asked her name, and kept on asking various questions as long as she was in the class (K.A.)].

[In the bus, a girl sat next to K. K. started asking, "What is your name? <...> How old are you? <...> Are you going to the garden?" etc.).]

The girl is happy, when invited to communicate:

[During the break, a teacher asks K. to go for a walk together. K. rejoices and walks hand in hand with the teacher for the entire break, smiles to everyone, and keeps repeating that she loves her teacher].

On the other hand, observations revealed the participant's tendency to "communicate" with surrounding things, animals, "talk to herself."

[Closes the door and starts to lay the bed (laughing, clapping), and says, "I slept well," asks the dog, "How did you sleep, Nerius?" She answers herself, "Good, I'm proud of you." Laughs // Takes a rake and starts raking leaves, says, "When will you stop falling, I am sick of raking you," drops the rake, claps, and starts laughing. // Starts putting the stones back into the bottle, and one falls on the ground. K. laughs and says, "Well you, slob, where did you fall?" claps and laughs. // She finds the missing one, "Oh, here you are," claps, smiles, puts on the cap on the pen and places it into the handbag. // Comes into the kitchen and sharpens the pencil, saying, "Why do you keep breaking, huh?"]

The observation data confirmed the research findings of Matson, Cooper, et al. (2006); the authors described that priorities of the moderately mentally retarded individuals are given to things, not people. Apparently, this can be explained in a way that things cannot cause negative emotions, because no feedback is received (no problems or conflicts arise), therefore, as observation material proved, when communicating with surrounding things, positive emotions are dominant. On the one hand, such "communication" with things shows research participant's infantilism or exclusion from social environment; however, it can also be assessed as a strength, potential for the development of social relations, taking advantage of her inclination to communicate, even if it is with things.

Interpersonal relations maintenance abilities. The girl has a great need to communicate; however, sometimes she marks with a wearisome endeavour to draw attention to herself, and when fails, behaves aggressively:

[When walking, she constantly kicks the corner of the wall. Mother invites her to come closer, sit and watch TV. K. refuses. Then mother suggests to put puzzles together or find some other activity. K. says that nobody makes friends with her and starts biting her own hand and scratching her face. / Mother is watching TV, sister is knitting, grandmother is sleeping. K. is rapidly walking through the rooms from corner to corner, complaining loudly that nobody communicates with her. // K. runs into the playground, meets a friend there and asks her, if she has seen her sharpener. The friend says she has not, K. starts shouting that she is lying and requests her to show the pockets. The friend does not want to show her pockets, then K. runs towards her and sticks her hands into the girl's pockets. When she finds nothing, says, "Good for you, you didn't take it." The girl says she is no longer a friend of K. and runs away].

Social expressiveness, according to Malinauskas (2004), manifests in verbal expressiveness, oratory abilities; and *social sensitivity* – ability to understand (decode) verbal signals; on the other hand, social expressiveness manifests in ability to follow social norms that

regulate behaviour. Social expressiveness abilities of the observed, manifests in expression of care, saying compliments:

[When friends come to me, the door always opens and K. asks, whether we want coffee. If we respond positively, she makes it and we drink it together (S.) / Often says that I look pretty (K.M.)].

Flexibility, adaptability, conflict solving abilities. Social adaptability helps to create and maintain interrelations, choose behaviour that is adequate to the situation, and effectively solve problems (Samašonok et al., 2010).

Experiences difficulties when choosing appropriate behaviour, and reacts angrily when disciplined:

[I told her off and noted that she will leave the hall, if she keeps on clapping and making noise. Then K. started to clap even harder, fell on the floor and after several minutes started to scratch her face (K.M.) / She feels comfortable being dirty and sitting at the table without washing her hands (Mč.). // [Once K. went to the bathroom to wash on her own, and brush her teeth. I asked her to reduce the water stream a little bit; so she responded angrily, whether she has to be dirty (M.)].

Cannot apologize when being incorrect, often blames the others:

[K. hinders a plate on the table and pours out the soup. Straight ahead she blames her sister that she rocked the table and therefore the soup got spilled.].

Finds it difficult to express her opinion during a conflict:

[K. was sitting on the lounge chair. A. entered the group and kicked at her leg saying, "Go to your room." K. began scratching her face and crying (K.A.)].

Besides, it was noticed that the monitored girl has her own behavioural strategies in conflict situations. For example, when the girl is too enthusiastic, she looks for mother for compassion or calms down with food (can eat endlessly):

[Mother repeatedly asks K. to calm down, lifts her from the ground, starts to caress her, console, asks not to be nervous, wipes her tears, and tidies the girl's clothes. Pours soup and asks to eat. K. calms down a bit and is silent. Mother once again offers her food. K. starts eating.] // [The girl was angry for some reason. I offered her some gooseberries. So she ate all of the gooseberries from the gooseberry-bush (M.)].

Sometimes in conflict situations she gets confused, tensed, reacts in an aggressive behaviour, and withdraws:

[Once during an activity, K. jostled with one boy, so K. slammed the doors and walked away (K.A.)].

Participation skills. In this research, the concept of *participation skills* is chosen in order to accentuate the social aspect of participation and the expression of skills needed for the participation in some activity: sense of initiative, acknowledgement of individual and group differences and similarities (Goleman, 2001); ability to join the group activity; render offers; be interested in how others progress to perform tasks; offer help; share available means; allow others to express their opinion; consult others without undervaluing other people (Elliot, Malecki & Demaray, 2001; Raudeliūnaitė & Paigozina, 2009; Zins, Weissbert, Wang et al., 2004).

It was noticed that K. is eager to participate in peer activities:

[When my friends come, she always finds the reason to enter my room. We invite her, so she comes right away (S.)].

Is able to take initiative, offer help:

[K. asks, whether chicken need their water to be changed. Mother says that she can change it. K. runs, takes a cup, scoops the clean water from the bucket, and pours it to chicken. // K. approaches her mother and says she will help her wash the clothes. Mother agrees. K. is very pleased and starts jumping, saying "Ok, I will certainly help." The girl laughs, washes her hands and starts sorting clothes according to their colours].

However, in collective activities she participates only briefly, quickly gets upset, withdraws, and observes the peers from the distance:

[Tells her friends that she does not want to play anymore, but rather will go collect apples. Goes to the apple tree, takes an apple from the ground, cleans the apple, and eats. Watches the girls].

Participates in peer activity, if she is prompted with food, presents:

[Teacher explains the task that schoolchildren will have to accomplish. K. looks through the window, examines her fingers. Teacher notices and says she will treat the children, who accomplish the task, with apples. K.'s attention is drawn; she calms down, and starts working.]
// Guests arrived to school. K. told she did not want to see anyone. One of the children saw through the window that the guests brought boxes. Children guessed those were the presents. K. jumped saying, "I will also go to the hall" (K.M.).

When taking part in an activity, she regards only her wishes, does not consider the situation:

[Once we were working outdoors and I asked her to bring the bucket for trash, and she replied, "What, am I a servant to you?" (Moč.) / if you ask her something, she always feels offended, saying, "You are scolding me again." Regards only her wishes, if she thinks of something herself (M.).]

Is unable to work independently, however, does not want to accept and use the help from the surroundings:

[Would not find, walk back without us (M.) // If you ask her to bring something, she will walk away and will not return (Mč.) / I say: "Let's go, I will show you." She responds, "I know. No need to explain it to me (K.A.).]

Other scientists gathered similar data, as well (Carter et al., 2005; Haskett & Willoughby, 2006).

Emotional skills manifest in two ways – on the one hand, they help people to understand themselves, their emotions, control themselves when communicating and participating in collective activities; on the other hand, emotional skills help to understand the partners of communication or joined activity.

Emotional sensitivity and expressiveness – ones of the essential communication abilities. According to Malinauskas (2004), emotional skills enrich and enliven the verbal and nonverbal communication. The author states that *emotional expressiveness* belongs to the area of nonverbal information transference and covers not only the ability to express the need for communication, attitude towards communication, but also shows the individual's ability to express emotions in a manner, which is understandable and acceptable to others. *Emotional sensitivity* refers to the recognition of others' emotions, and *emotional control* – ability to control and regulate one's emotional states and their nonverbal expression, as well as, the ability to hide emotional state, and avoid a spontaneous burst of emotions (Malinauskas, 2004).

Interview data indicate that the schoolgirl is able to understand others' emotions that are visibly expressed, reacts adequately to a cry, and is able to express sympathy. Understands if someone is hurt, and reacts empathically:

[I came to work with an aching back, so K. asked, what was that caused me the pain. I told that it was my back. So the girl replied, "You'd better sit down, I will bring things you need" (K.A.).]

Emotional expressiveness manifests in the girl's ability to sympathise, solace:

[When father died, K. embraced me and said she is also sorry for him, and started crying (S.). // Her roommate was sick. K. went to the medical aid post, called the nurse, brought a cup of tea that was left after the supper. Sat on the bed, stroke her head, saying, "Poor you, you are ill" (K.M.).]

Especially willingly sympathises the other in need, if she is in a good mood:

[When she is in a good mood, she understands that a friend is in pain. She brings her a glass of water, cuddles, and acts as a smart girl (K.A.).]

K. adequately reacts to surprises that she finds them pleasing (smiles, claps). Is happy, when receives presents:

[During her birthday, I gave K. coloured pencils and colouring book: she was extremely happy to receive a present, showed everyone what she got, clapped, and laughed. This lasted about two hours, until her mother told her to go and colour the book. She did as was told, but continued to laugh for a long time (S.). // [K. was sitting at the window and waiting for her mother. When she saw her coming, she started clapping and jumping (K.M.).]

Reacts lively to stimuli:

[Mother compliments the girl. K. starts clapping and smiling. / She is happy when finds out about a trip, is eager and acts from inertia: pulls all her clothes from the wardrobe and asks, "Shall I wear these pants?" Drops them on the floor. Pulls other clothes from the wardrobe and asks again, "Shall I wear this shirt?", etc.].

Is able to describe what she likes:

[Enjoys playing with a doll (K.) / Likes little stones (K.) / Being in a canteen (K.).]

Self-regulation. In changed situations, the research participant shows anxiety applying verbal means and body language:

["You are not my teacher," says K. to the already leaving student <...> Next morning, when K. saw a student entering the class, she began to laugh, became fidgety. Crouched when sat down at the table.].

The girl distinguishes in impulsivity, spontaneity:

[We were raking leaves in the yard, and she suddenly dropped the rake and started to kick flowers (Mč.);]

uncontrollable fury (Sigafoos, O'Reilly, Seely-York, et al., 2004), inability to control her emotions:

[K. sister enters the kitchen and says that K. has taken her notebook. K. stands up and starts shouting at the sister that she did not take any notebook, that she lost it. Sister continues to dispute. Then K. falls on the ground and starts biting her arms, scratching her face, hitting the head on the floor, and screams that her sister is a liar and she has not taken any of her things. // When I came to work, I found K. crying. I asked her to calm down, but she started to stamp her feet on the floor; scratch her face, rub her eyes, and attack the children (K.M.) // K. was punished for inappropriate words and we have not taken her outside, so she started pounding and kicking the doors, swearing. It was difficult to control her emotions until I told her that she would not get her dinner (K.A.).]

Statements made by Emerson and Hatton (2007), Sevcik, Ronski and Adamson (2004), which implied that different behavioural and emotional disorders may be typical to mentally retarded persons, were confirmed; the disorders manifest by:

- Self-injure, stereotypical movements (Dekker & Koot, 2003; Dykens, 2000; Rojahn et al., 2001; Noll & Barrett, 2004; Symons et al., 2005):

[If attitude towards her is negative, she harms herself (M.) // A boy hit K. on her shoulder. The girl ran into the playroom, sat on the ground and started beating the floor with her hands, swaying, and hitting the head on the bed. She was scattering herself for about an hour, scratching her face, and sending out anyone who entered the room (K.A.)] [Starts to hit herself on the face / Sat on the floor and began beating the floor with her hands, swaying, hitting her head on the bed. // Starts kicking the bucket / Stamps her feet / Scratches her face].

- Mood change (Lancioni & O'Reilly, 2001; deRuiter, Dekker, Verhulst et al., 2007):

[K. starts biting her hand and scratching her face. Mother tells her to calm down and offers some apples. K. agrees. Eats the apples. Sits on the sofa and stares at one point. Begins watching television. Starts laughing together with the others].

Social cognition skills. Social cognition skills undoubtedly condition the quality of person's social functioning (firstly, communication, participation in activities). The basis for them is the knowledge (cognitive level) of social norms that regulate the behaviour. Practical level of social cognition skills – *social sensibility* – helps to decode social signals (*perception of social signals*), assess the situation (*social situation assessment abilities*), by comparing it to the knowledge about social norms (*social norms recognition abilities*), as well as, to make decisions about behaviours that are acceptable to the situation, or solve problems when needed (*decision making abilities*). *Social sensitivity* – ability to understand (decode) verbal signals, identify and follow social norms, which regulate acceptable social behaviour (Malinauskas, 2004), – as well as, *problem-solving* are related to cognitive abilities. The basis for social sensitivity is the awareness skills about the communication situation being correspondent to social norms, which cover the recognition and assessment of partners' and one's own emotional state, behaviour, and communication situation. Both, knowledge of social norms, and the practical orientation towards the social norms in various situations require a high-level social and emotional intellect.

When examining *social sensitivity abilities*, it was noticed that K. most often does not react to the requests, verbal instructions of the adults, does not obey, and so everything has to be repeated several times:

[Sees a ladybird. Takes it. Mother asks to put it back. K. squeezes her, claps and laughs. I ask her why she behaved this way. K. does not respond. // *If she is busy with her matters, you can shout, call, but you will not get her attention (M.)*].

However, sometimes she obeys to a stricter word, or stare:

[*Once I was doing my homework, and she was sitting behind me and mumbling about her going outside, picking apples, and said she would bring me some, so I turned around and looked at her. She said, "Fine, fine, R., I will not disturb you anymore, do your homework."* (S.)].

Decision-making abilities, orientation in complex situations. Some difficulties exist when making a decision:

[*I told her to go for a walk. And without any thought I told her to go along the fence. So she went alongside the entire length of the fence and stopped. She stood there for a long time (M.)*]; and difficulties in following social norms (behavioural rules):

[In the playground, K. asks a friend about her missing pencil-sharpener. When the latter told she had not seen it, K. argues that she is lying and orders to show her the pockets. The friend refuses to do so, then K. puts her own hands into the girl's pockets.] [*She knew that I made a pie for guests. We went outside, and she ate it all (M.)* // [*We were going to town by bus, and an old lady accidentally fell on the ground while getting on the bus. It was so funny for K. that she started laughing out loud. I could not calm her down. The more I tried to soothe her, the merrier it was for her (M.)*].

Such behaviour shows the deficiency of *social situation assessment* abilities.

Conclusions

The structure of social skills is individual for each person; and this causes unequal level of social adaptability and social functioning. The identification of individual social skills is important because it allows constructing an education oriented towards the child's strengths.

A viewpoint, oriented towards a person's *strengths*, means a provision to acknowledge the individuality and available abilities. The identification of available social skills (strengths) is extremely important when assessing social skills of a moderately intellectually disabled

person. A reason for the application of case analysis methods was to highlight the strengths of a schoolgirl with moderate mental retardation: her abilities, experiences, characteristics, and roles, to describe particularities of her social functioning and educational potentials. The identification of social skills, when analysing social interactions and behaviours in certain situations (observation method) and scrutinizing subjective interpretations of the pupil's actions by interaction participants (interview method), allowed to reveal the person's social skills (strengths) and problem areas in detail.

It needs to be highlighted that a majority of moderately intellectually disabled individuals do not speak; therefore, it may be difficult for the researcher to communicate with the person, in pursuance of gathering authentic interview data about the individual, when talking to them. The advantage of this research is the possibility, when identifying the skills of the moderately intellectually disabled person, to talk not only with family members and pedagogues, but also with the pupil herself, whose answers were supplemented by interview data of other research participants.

Analysing the content of the PPS findings, mostly negative characteristics that described inabilities (intellectual, linguistic) were noticed. However, under a detailed case study, the social skills (strengths) of the person were highlighted — the need to communicate, especially with adults, the need for communication and emotional contact; the basic emotional sensitivity (recognition of the others' emotions) and expressiveness (empathic reaction, care for others), social sensitivity (recognition of the essence of uncomplicated social situations), and other abilities. The person's linguistic skills, even if they are poor, are her strength, which expands her opportunities of social functioning, allows making contact with peers and adults. For instance, the person feels and is able to express her emotions (especially satisfaction and joy) in an elementary language. There is an especially obvious need for motivation (the attention of adults and compliments). Spare time hobbies are rather primitive and infantile.

Problem areas of social skills also became obvious. Especially poor are social cognition skills: orientations in complicated situations of social interaction and problem-solving abilities. For the expression of the latter abilities not only a well-developed language is necessary, but also the entirety of all other social intellectual abilities. She lacks *self-control* the most: it is difficult for her to find an adequate solution in a conflicting situation; to calm down; however, she uses strategies of the learnt behaviour in such situations (complex situations are solved defensively (inadequately laughs, withdraws). A somewhat hypertrophic need for food is also related to the lack of self-control abilities.

Considering data of the case study and findings of other authors, it can be stated that typical and individual difficulties of social functioning are characteristic of the person, as of the majority moderately intellectually disabled schoolchildren, due to which she cannot avoid conflicting situations (Scrambler et al., 2007): inadequate expression of emotions and behaviour, poor self-control skills.

Under the basis of strong and problem areas analysis, tasks for an individualised social skills education are formulated, and the most relevant of them is the education of social cognition skills (knowledge of social norms, conflict-solving) and emotional and behavioural self-control abilities. In the perspective, during the process of education of the lacking social skills, it should be leaned on the pupil's strengths (available linguistic abilities, the need to communicate, emotional sensitivity and expressiveness abilities). Referring to the strength perspective, the strengths of a person become the most important resource in education of social skills.

Besides, a purposeful systemic collective activity (specific tasks for each participant, educational methods, constant attention to the expression of social skills) in various environments and various situations of all education participants should be projected in the

education of social skills. A purposeful education of social skills has to take place in the least restricting environment, having the pupil actively involved in social interactions with peers and adults; however, due to a specific environment of special schools, schoolchildren lack actual situations, in which these skills could be applied and improved. Therefore, it is extremely important for the family members of intellectually disabled person to participate in the education of person's social skills.

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