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STUDENT VIEWS ON THE POPULARITY/PRESTIGE OF TEACHING JOBS

(A case of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and the USA/Canada)

Natela Doghonadze

International Black Sea University
Georgia

Thomas C. De Bello

State University of NY
United States of America

Aydin Aliyev

Azerbaijan State Economic University

Azerbaijan

Huda Halawachi

University of Mosul

Iraq

Venera Ulker

Tishk University

Iraq

Abstract
According to existing studies, the popularity of teaching jobs is decreasing. Considering the significance of teaching, without which other professions cannot develop efficiently, it is important to assess how acute the problem is and to try to offer some solutions to it. Another goal of the study was to try to develop recommendations on how to raise teaching jobs' reputation and thus contribute to the improvement of the situation. The goal of the given study, which is a part of three surveys, was to find out students' views on the prestige of teaching jobs. The main question was 'Is teaching prestigious?' An online survey applying a self-made questionnaire was held in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and USA with 657 respondents (122 + 362 + 102 +71, consequently). The conclusion was made that the respondents' attitude towards teachers in these countries is reasonably positive, however, not many of them are planning to become teachers. It was recommended that to increase the prestige of teaching jobs it is necessary, first of all, to raise the quality of teaching, as well as to stimulate book and movie authors and mass media to present the profession to the public more often and positively.

Key words: Popularity, prestige, reasons to become a teacher, assessment by students

Introduction

There are hundreds of jobs and professions in the world. Although it seems logical that the two professional spheres: health and education - are the most valuable for society, as health workers care for people's lives, while teachers are responsible for their future, the situation is not like this in reality. This is based on the philosophies of Realism (dealing with the body) and Idealism (dealing with the soul/mind) (Conant, 2012; Rose & Baird, 2013).

According to US News Money (2024), among the hundred "best" jobs 39 deal with health (nurse practitioner, physician assistant, medical and health service manager are among the ten "best"), which is natural, and only three (health educator, teacher assistant, school psychologist) deal with education (one of them simultaneously deals with health). According to the Google search machine (Popular jobs, 2024), out of the 24 most popular jobs in the world six are health-related and non-

teaching related. As for Europe, the 20 most popular in Europe professions include two dealing with health and none dealing with education (Professions / Europe, 2024).

Nowadays, when there is a great choice, people try to choose the occupation/profession that will satisfy all their basic demands: intrinsic motivation (enjoying the work and being interested in it), and extrinsic motivation (acceptable salary, working conditions, workload, possibility of promotion, prestige, and support). Unfortunately, the millennial generation more often pays attention to extrinsic motivation (Boyle, 2022; Taimalu, 2021). Interestingly, according to Fekete's (2023) study, females more often place intrinsic motivation first and extrinsic last, while males more often place extrinsic motivation first and intrinsic motivation last (so, it is not by chance that in primary and secondary education the majority of teachers are females).

Besides, there is so much discussion in the contemporary world that teachers will not be needed soon and be substituted by artificial intelligence. Therefore, no surprise that, despite the obvious importance of teaching professions and the claimed attention paid to their development (Symeonidis, 2020; Carlo et al., 2013), a great many teachers are quitting their jobs. According to Adams (2023), for instance, based on the Department of Education data, in the UK, 40,000 teachers (almost 9% of all teachers in the country) resigned from state schools in 2022, while 4,000 retired. Teaching vacancies made up 2,500 positions, compared to 530 ten years earlier. Concerning the USA, Kraft and Lyon (2022) mention that the professional prestige of teaching in the country has fluctuated: "A rapid decline in the 1970s, a swift rise in the 1980s, relative stability for two decades, and a sustained drop beginning around 2010. The current state of the teaching profession is at or near its lowest levels in 50 years" (p. 1). Do not forget that teaching has never been very prestigious in the US and it was even viewed as an occupation or semi-profession (Guerriero & Deligiannidi, 2017). Varkey Foundation (Dolton et al., 2018) held a large-scale study involving teacher professional associations from 35 countries. This study revealed that in China and Malaysia, teacher status is the highest, while in Canada teachers' profession rates the 11th among the 35 countries, in the UK the 13th, and in the US in the 17th place (p. 22).

Literature review

Let us see what the situation is in less developed countries. According to Silova (2009), "since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the status of the teaching profession has begun to erode in the Caucasus and Central Asia as evidenced in such indicators as a teacher shortage, the feminization of the profession, an over-aged teaching force, a low transition rate from teacher education graduation to professional service, and a decrease of enrollment in teacher education programs at colleges and universities" (p. 366).

Burduli (2021) stated that almost two-thirds of teachers in Georgia believe that their profession is not valued in their country. Only 1-3% of university graduates work as teachers. According to OECD (2018), TALIS revealed that among 48 countries rated, Georgia is in 15th place according to teachers' views of how society values their profession (the USA in the 17th place and the UK in the 23rd) according to teacher characteristics, with Vietnam and Singapore leading on the list.

Ramazanova (2011) states that in Azerbaijan, teaching used to be a respectful occupation. "For many people, a teacher has also been a mentor" (p. 4). "22% of Azeri respondents completely trust, 44% chose mostly trust, 18% more or less trust, 7% mostly distrust, and 5% completely distrust public school teachers" (p.6), however, private tutoring is very popular, which indicates that parents are not quite sure that the quality of knowledge provided by school is sufficient for their children to be admitted to universities. In a more contemporary study, Amirova and Valiyev (2021) claim that there are many unemployed teachers in the country; low salaries of university academic staff cause their demotivation, besides, educational materials are below international standards, which affects the qualification of graduates of teacher programs. All this reduces the reputation of the teaching jobs.

"Without teachers, there are no other professions," wrote Hindie (2016), and the majority of teachers would agree, as all professions need to be taught. However, if the prestige of teaching jobs is not high, there is a risk that the best brains will not want to teach. We hope that this research will make at least a little contribution to raising or at least maintaining the prestige of this profession.

Although there are some studies on the popularity of teacher's professions, they do not involve all countries. Besides, most of them involve only one side of the problem – teachers, while the problem obviously deals with at least three – students, their parents, and teachers. To fill in this gap, we decided to undertake the given research, including Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Iraq as countries where the issue has been less studied, on the one hand, and students, parents, and teachers, on the other.

Method

The quantitative (survey) method was applied to get objective results. The complete study, for triangulation, was based on three questionnaires – for students, parents, and teachers. However, in this paper, only the results of the first questionnaire are discussed, others will be presented in further publications.

Instrument

The questionnaire was developed by the corresponding author based on literature (Dolton et al., 2018; Fico, 2022; Kraft & Lyon, 2022; Stromquist, 2018; Thompson, 2021) analysis, then assessed for validity by the rest of the authors, and piloted with 10 students not involved in the study. The reliability/consistency of its results was measured by the test-retest method (10 minutes between filling out the same questionnaire) and was found to be equal to 0.89, which means that the questionnaire was reliable. The questionnaire included sections to find out the popularity (or lack of it) of teaching jobs, the reasons for the desire (or lack of it) to become a teacher, students' assessment of their teacher, and the factors that had an impact on students' views.

Participants

Sampling was done by convenience and snowball approaches. The questionnaire in Google Forms was placed on the authors' social media, with the request to share and/or fill it in. To analyze the representativeness of the survey data, despite its being conducted through a non-random selection method, the researchers utilized a combination of stratified and cluster sampling approaches. The collected demographic data includes information on gender, age distribution, living areas (urban, suburban, rural), geographical distribution, and school/university involvement. This breakdown helps in understanding the diversity within your sample, which is crucial for representativeness. Stratification involves dividing the population into subgroups (or strata) that share similar characteristics (age groups, school/university students, living areas), while the cluster approach involves the geographical distribution of the respondents. This approach allows to ensure that each subgroup is represented in the sample. Thus, despite its non-probability character, the sample can still provide valuable insights.

The authors wanted to see whether the situation is different in developed countries, particularly in North America. We did our best to involve the US respondents, but it turned out to be difficult due to the red tape involved in the process and a lack of their interest in the research, due to this we added Canadian respondents to them. The questionnaire was online for 3 months but we managed to collect only 71 responses. Other countries are represented by 100+ respondents each. The questionnaire (available   at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1QdF65xr8hmCGb8tGHqiqPDxPFKtqYRChSQioBo13SEc)   is open, and we hope that this publication may help to do more reliable statistics in the future.

Table 1. *Respondents' demographic data*

Country/data	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Iraq	USA & Canada
Total number of respondents	362	122	102	71
Gender	32.3% m, 66.6% f	26.2% m, 73.8% f	51% m; 49% f	56.3% m, 38%f, 5.6% prefer not to say
Age – respondents %	15-22.7%; 16-21.5%; 17-23.5%; 18-11% 18-year-olds;	15-25%; 16-21.3%; 17-10.1%; 18-10.1%; 19-6.6%; 20-3.5%;	15 – 2% 16 – 3% 17 -6% 18 – 9% 19- 11.7%	15 – 38% 16 – 25.3% 17 –8.5% 19 -4.28% 21 – 4.2%

	19-9.4.%; 20-6.9%; 21-1.7%; 22-1.7%; 23-1.4%; 24-0.3% 25-0.3%	21-7.4%; 22- 6.5%; 23-1.6%; 24-1.6%; 25- 2.4%.	20 -27.5% 21- 10.8% 22 -5% 23 -3% 24 – 3% 25- 20.6%	22 – 2.8% 23 – 2.8% 24 – 4.2% 25 – 9.92%
Living in an urban, suburban, or rural area	20.2% from 15 villages, 79.8% from cities and towns (46.13% from the capital, 10.22% from 2 out of 3 cities with population above 100,000	20% from 5 villages, 80% from cities and towns (13.9% from the capital, 7.3% from all three cities with a population above 100,000)	4.9% from 5 villages, 95.1% from cities, suburbs, and towns (1.9% from the capital, 7.3% from 5 cities out of 22 cities with a population above 100,000)	62% in a city (including 8% from the Canadian capital; 22% in a suburb, 16% in a rural area
Geographical distribution	39 (out of 69) regions and 1 autonomic republic	9 regions (out of 9) and 1 autonomic republic	2 major geographical regions (out of 4) / 6 provinces out of 16	8 states of the US; Toronto in Canada
School number & %	94 (2.12% out of 4,439)	24 (1% out of 2,313)	9 (out of 16,000)	4 (all US - out of 115,576+ 14,600 in Canada
School students number & %	227 (62.7% of the respondents)	71 (58.2% of the respondents)	34 (33.3% of the respondents)	36 (72% of the respondents)
University number and %	23 (20.91% out of 110 authorized universities and colleges)	8 (17% out of 47 authorized universities and colleges)	11 (out of 110 authorized or 10%)	5 – three in the US and 2 in Canada (over 4,000 in the US + 437 in Canada)
University students' number & %	118 (32.6% of the respondents)	51 (41.8% of the respondents)	59 (57.8% of the respondents)	14 (28% of the respondents)
Other	-	-	work: 9	-

Results

When dealing with items in the 5-point Likert scale, the mean equal to or above 3.1 was viewed as positive. The central tendency measures in the majority of measurements were close to each other, so the obtained results are trustworthy, however, SD and distribution reveal that the respondents have quite different views on all items of the questionnaire, and none of the answers can be disregarded.

Table 2. *Answers to item 6: I would like to become a teacher*

Country/item	%					descriptive statistics					
						central tendency			dispersion	distribution	
	1	2	3	4	5	mean	median	mode	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Azerbaijan	24.6	19.1	28.2	13.8	14.4	2.85	3.00	3.00	2.67	-1.07	0.23
Georgia	31.1	24.65	15.60	12.30	16.40	2.58	2.00	1.00	1.45	-1.16	0.47
Iraq	9.8	6.86	18.63	38.24	26.47	3.64	4.00	4.00	1.22	-0.11	1.22
US & Canada	34	24	20	12	10	2.40	2.00	1.00	1.34	.59	-.80

Table 3. *Answers to item 9: Many young people I know would like to become a teacher*

Country/item	%					descriptive statistics					
						central tendency			dispersion	distribution	
	1	2	3	4	5	mean	median	mode	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Azerbaijan	17.70	23.50	32.00	19.90	6.90	2.78	3.00	3.00	1.21	-0.81	0.16
Georgia	21.30	33.60	27.00	10.70	7.40	2.49	2.00	3.00	1.16	-0.39	-0.54
Iraq	3.92	19.61	35.29	33.33	7.84	3.31	3.00	3.00	0.90	0.37	-0.34
US & Canada	18	38	26	10	8	2.54	2.00	2.00	1.15	.58	-.23

If we compare means, medians, and modes in Tables 2 and 3 to each other, they are close enough and the kurtosis and skewness also show that we deal with normal curves, correspondingly, the mean results are statistically meaningful. The results of Tables 2 and 3 for Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the USA/Canada reveal that not many respondents are thinking about teaching jobs, although (see Tables 6-8) their assessment of their teachers is positive. In Iraq, more than half of the respondents would like to become teachers, so teaching jobs are still prestigious there.

Concerning the reasons why those respondents who chose the positive answers (agree or completely agree), see the rating (1 – the highest, 11 – the lowest) of the reasons according to countries in Table 4. The reasons a-d deal with intrinsic motivation, while e-j with extrinsic motivation.

Table 4. *Rating of reasons to become a teacher*

Reasons/countries	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Iraq	US & Canada
a) I love children / young people	5	2	5	5/6
b) I love teaching	1	4/5	3	4
c) I love sharing my knowledge and skills	4	1	1	1/2/3
d) I like helping others to learn	2	3	2	1/2/3
e) This job is prestigious	6	7	7	1/2/3
f) This job has advantages such as annual summer vacation, relatively short work day, flexible timetable, etc.	9	6	4	5/6
g) Teachers' positions are regularly available	8	8/9/10	8	7/8/9
h) This job is well-paid	7	11	10	10/11
i) I think this job is easy	11	8/9/10	11	7/8/9
j) I think this job is noble and socially important	3	4/5	6	7/8/9
k) It is easier to be admitted to (at the university/college) than to other specialties.	10	8/9/10	8	10/11

Although the chosen reasons differ, intrinsic motivation (a-d) in both Georgia and Azerbaijan are rated higher than extrinsic motives (e-k). In Iraq and the USA/Canada, three leaders among the answers also include intrinsic motive and only one (f) extrinsic. The least popular answers were "Teachers' positions are regularly available," "This job is well-paid," "I think this job is easy" and "It is easier to be admitted to than to other specialties."

The answers on the whole demonstrate that those students who wrote that they would like to become teachers are mostly intrinsically motivated. Further detailed analysis revealed that the majority of them are females, which is in line with the above-mentioned international studies results.

Among 'other' reasons one Georgian student named the desire to make schools such places where children come not only for cognitive purposes but also for fun and enjoyment. Among the Iraqi respondents 'other' reasons were: getting on well with children, the stability/security of the job.

Concerning the reasons why those respondents chose the negative answers (disagree or completely disagree), see the rating (1 – the highest, 7 – the lowest) of the reasons in Table 5.

Table 5. *Rating of reasons not to become a teacher*

Reasons/countries	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Iraq	US & Canada
a) it's a difficult job	4	4	1	3
b) it's not an interesting job	1	1	4	1
c) it's a stressful job	2	2	2/3	5
d) one needs to know so much to be a good teacher	5	5/6	2/3	6
e) it's low-paid, compared to other jobs that require higher education	3	3	5	2
f) it's not prestigious	6	5/6	7	7

| g) it's not very safe | | | | | | | 7 | 7 | 6 | 4 |

Interestingly, the reasons not to become teachers are practically the same in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, the majority of the Georgian, Azerbaijani, and American/Canadian respondents chose "it's not an interesting job" as the main reason. For the Iraqi respondents, the difficulty of the job is the main reason. The lack of prestige is in the last or the first-before-last place, which either means they do not care about the prestige of the job they choose or that they view this job as a relatively prestigious one (this question requires further investigation). Among 'other' answers the Georgian students name a lack of love for children and difficulty of dealing with them. The Iraqi students mentioned the nagging of parents and the exceeding number of responsibilities.

Table 6. *Answers to item 10: Most of your teachers are knowledgeable in their subject*

Country/item	%					descriptive statistics					
						central tendency			dispersion	distribution	
	1	2	3	4	5	mean	median	mode	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Azerbaijan	6.60	11.00	25.70	36.70	19.90	3.52	4.00	4.00	1.13	-0.33	-0.57
Georgia	3.30	12.30	30.30	36.10	18.00	3.53	4.00	4.00	1.03	-0.34	-0.39
Iraq	1.96	1.96	20.59	51.96	23,53	3.60	4.00	4.00	0.67	4.43	-1.97
US & Canada	0	12	14	34	40	4.02	4.00	5.00	1.02	-.76	-.51

Table 7. *Answers to item 11: In your experience, the majority of teachers motivate students to learn*

Country/item	%					descriptive statistics					
						central tendency			dispersion	distribution	
	1	2	3	4	5	mean	median	mode	SD	skewness	kurtosos
Azerbaijan	8.8	15.5	36.7	25.4	13.5	3.33	3.00	3.00	2.95	263.67	15.00
Georgia	9	17.2	27.9	28.7	17.2	3.27	3.00	4.00	1.20	-0.79	-0.27
Iraq	5.88	3.92	17.64	45.71	25.49	3.82	4.00	4.00	1.05	1.13	-1.11
US & Canada	2	2	32	44	20	3.80	4.00	4.00	.87	-.59	.95

Table 8. *Answers to item 12: As far as you are aware, teachers (including university teachers) contribute to their students' future success*

Country/item	%					descriptive statistics					
						central tendency			dispersion	distribution	
	1	2	3	4	5	mean	median	mode	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Azerbaijan	7.5	8.8	28.7	37.6	17.4	3.57	4.00	4.00	2.42	222.46	13.26
Georgia	5.7	6.6	23	42.6	22.1	3.69	4.00	4.00	1.07	0.37	-0.84
Iraq	1.96	4.90	16.67	45.10	29.41	3.99	4.00	4.00	0.93	0.98	-0.97
US & Canada	2	10	20	40	28	3.78	4.00	4.00	1.09	-.81	.10

Once again, if we compare means, medians, and modes in Tables 2 and 3 to each other, they are close enough and the kurtosis and skewness also show that we deal with normal curves, correspondingly, the obtained mean results are statistically meaningful. In all countries, the results are quite positive.

Table 9. *Answers to item 13: I agree with George Bernard Shaw's saying «Those who can, do; those who can't, teach»*

Country/item	%					descriptive statistics					
						central tendency			dispersion	distribution	
	1	2	3	4	5	mean	median	mode	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Azerbaijan	14.10	15.70	29.80	21.00	19.30	3.16	3.00	3.00	1.30	-0.99	-0.15
Georgia	16.40	23.00	28.70	21.30	10.70	2.87	3.00	3.00	1.23	-0.93	0.07
Iraq	4.90	11.76	37.25	34.31	11.76	3.36	3.00	3.00	1.00	-0.08	-0.37
US & Canada	10	12	28	30	20	3.38	3.50	4.00	1.23	-.44	-.61

Table 10. *Answers to item 14: I think teachers (including university professors) are losers*

Country/item	%					descriptive statistics					
						central tendency			dispersion	distribution	
	1	2	3	4	5	mean	median	mode	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Azerbaijan	4.20	38.40	13.00	2.50	1.9	1.88	2.00	1.00	1.87	213.87	12.98
Georgia	54.9	27.00	9.80	2.50	5.70	1.77	1.00	1.00	1.10	2.10	1.63
Iraq	45.10	30.39	8.82	11.76	3.92	1.99	2.00	1.00	1.17	0.11	1.07
US & Canada	50	16	18	4	12	2.16	1.50	1.00	1.45	.97	-.42

The answers presented in Tables 6-8 reveal that the respondents' views on their teachers are not very critical, however, as is seen in Tables 9-10, many students do think that teachers are not a respectful profession. This is in line with Ramazanova's finding that in Azerbaijan people trust teachers as personalities, but are not sure of their professional qualification. While item 13 is only ironic, item 14 is extremely negative. If we compare the results in Tables 9 and 10 to each other, we can see that fewer respondents from all countries support a very negative view of teaching jobs.

The rating of factors that influence students' views on teaching is shown in Table 11. It ranges from 1 (the most important one) to 5 (the least important one).

Table 11. *Factors that impacted the described attitude toward teaching jobs*

Country/factors	family	teachers	peers	mass-media	books and movies
Azerbaijan	2	1	5	4	3
Georgia	2	1	5	3	4
Iraq	2	1	5	3/4	3/4
US & Canada	2	1	5	3	4

Again, the factors' rating is almost identical with students from all countries. Among Georgian students 'other' answers included 'nobody', and 'my own experience', while among Iraqi students - 'religion'.

Only two Iraqi respondents made comments to the whole questionnaire:

- Some of professors are losers, maybe they have a PhD, master's, or anything they call certification, but don't have any morality.
- I'm one of those students who loved ELT because of teachers. I will never forget those teachers and how in a good way they treat me. They are friendly teachers and for students, this is more important to be friendly with teachers, not their PhD or master's degree. They should speak with students in a good way and motivate students.

The obtained results indicate the importance of teachers' and parents' influence on students' perceptions of teaching as a profession. Additionally, they signal further reflection on the reasons why students do not find teaching an attractive profession. Table 5 reports the two highest reasons, "It's not an interesting job" and "It's a stressful job". These opinions are formed through student observations of teachers. Presumably, through a reflection of experiences based on teachers' discourse, interactions, reactions, and demeanor during and outside of classroom situations. It appears that, despite teachers' intentions, they may have allowed their misgivings about their work to influence their behavior vis-á-vis their students.

There are no such professional standards to influence or limit parents' reactions to teachers or the teaching profession. While it is hoped that parents' perceptions of teachers and teaching will be positive, especially in terms of their children's educational experiences, they approach situations with all the bias that their own prior experiences have produced. One study suggests that parents are more likely to encourage their children to become teachers when people outside the family have encouraged their children to teach (Christiansen et al., 2022). If teachers are the most likely people outside of the family to encourage children to become teachers, then the results of Table 11 are crucial to understanding where we are today.

Discussion

Wang et al. (2019) discovered that self- and social-oriented factors in choosing a career path are important for choosing this or that profession. This is congruent to our finding that to choose a teaching job, intrinsic motivation is more important, however, extrinsic motivation also has to be taken into account.

According to Granjo et al. (2021), Munna and Kalam (2021), and Sahin (2017), teaching efficiency and teacher self-esteem are interrelated. This is in line with our findings that, to help teachers perceive their profession as an esteemed one, it is necessary to train the future teachers better.

Lam (2012) found that in Hong Kong the major motivations to become teachers are 'teaching as a safe haven' and 'internal satisfaction'. This is close to our finding that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are important drives for becoming a teacher.

Limitations

The major limitations are the method of an anonymous online survey (no guarantee that who fills in the questionnaire form is the right person) and the scale of the research ((at least 350 participants from each country are needed, according to Cresswell (2015)). Further research should / can be conducted in Georgia, Iraq, and some other countries, taking into consideration that a piloted tool is available.

Conclusions

Teaching jobs were assessed by the respondents of the study as reasonably prestigious. To satisfy the need of contemporary society for effective/efficient teachers, this job needs to be more prestigious than it is at the moment.

When students are taught by teachers who love their job, they will be more willing to become teachers, as they will have good role models. But one simply cannot just tell teachers that they should be better role models, the conditions of their employment, the view that society has of their importance, and the administrative support they receive are factors that contribute to their job satisfaction, and in that sense promote their ability to become more positive role models of the profession. These factors include elements of extrinsic motivation, specifically teacher salaries, as well as governmental and media support and awareness, which are critical elements of developing more positive views of teaching as a profession.

Nor can the influence of families be ignored. Most families have had experience with schools and teachers at some level. Those experiences form the basis of their value of education as a profession. Sometimes the greatest influence was a teacher who took the time to understand and support an academically struggling family member, other times, it was a teacher who did just the opposite. Personal experiences, positive and negative, form the basis of familial attitudes toward the teaching profession and willingness to support or encourage teaching as a career choice. Low regard for teaching as a profession will not encourage the best young people to enter the field.

In the past teachers were valued for the knowledge they possessed, today most knowledge is readily available on the internet. That leads to a false sense of what education is about. A teacher's role needs to be reinterpreted and understood in this new age we have entered. If we are building a knowledge-based society, the best brains should be attracted to teaching positions. It is a vicious circle: on the one hand, to be a reputed profession, teaching should be of high quality, on the other hand, without better training and better conditions for efficient teaching we will have teachers who are limited in their effectiveness. Unless these issues are addressed, the cycle of seeing teaching as uninteresting, stressful, and underpaid will continue to be the reasons why young people do not want to become teachers.

Acknowledgments

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DECISION-MAKING PECULIARITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOCIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS

Daiva Urniežienė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / State Higher Education Institution

Lina Garšvė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / State Higher Education Institution

Abstract

The peculiarities of decision-making by social workers in social care institutions are analyzed in the article. It introduces how social workers cope with delicate and socially sensitive situations according to the clients, of social care institutions, welfare. Ethical commitments and empathy of social workers, personal indications of client's needs and objectives, are emphasized in the research. When a social worker is a team member and collaborates with other specialists, the interdisciplinary aspect of decision-making is indicated in the article.

Key words: *Social care institution, decision-making, co-operation decision-making, teamwork, ethical commitments*.

Introduction

Technological, economic, and social changes constantly affect the sphere of decision-making. People are getting vulnerable due to society aging in Lithuania and other social changes. As a result, social worker becomes a pivotal person to assist those, who are unable to take care of themselves or their family members. It is crucial that the decision-making peculiarities of social workers are constantly investigated, since, working in social care institutions, they meet the change of population and new social problems, phenomena day after day. Social worker takes the responsibility to provide social services when people under care do not have necessary social skills or encounter difficulties in life. "Socially under care", most of clients that means a decrease in self-support and the ability to make decisions, according to Orlova and Gruževskis (2014). Thus, social worker must reveal more complex decision-making responsibilities together with specific competence and duty to solve their position problems. To improve quality of life and ensure the quickness of decision-making, social workers cooperate with the clients of social care institutions and solve a variety of problems. A social worker's daily routine of decision-making is one of the most important aspects, especially working in a social care institution, when social workers must solve problems properly and competently, also co-operating with institution colleagues for decision-making. Complex provision of social services, according to Gražulis (2014), offers opportunities to progress and promote professional qualification. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the decision-making process in the institution. Practical offers to develop learning in institutions, according to actual world needs, presented by Baldwin (2016). He emphasizes the pursuit of continuous learning, as well as creative tension is required to become a learning institution. The competence and professional skills of social worker are essential in the decision-making process. High competence of the specialist is required due to increasing complexity and decision-making at lower management levels of the institution. The purpose of social work practice, by Coulshed and Orme (2018), is to make appropriate decisions according to social work theory in the context of individuals. As stated by Adamonienė (2015), a social worker takes full responsibility for the process, examines the condition of the client, identifies the current situation, looks for appropriate solutions, considers the most acceptable possibilities, and, finally, submits a decision and implements it. The research indicated that the decision-making of social workers depends on the situation: stress level at work, work experience and culture of communication in the institution.

Problematic research questions set in the article: the impact of decision-making due to the professional experience of social worker? By what method co-operation of the decision-making in social care institution is presented?

The aim of the research – to analyze the peculiarities of decision-making by social worker in social care institution.

The objectives of the research:
1. Examine theoretical aspects of the decision-making process.
2. Investigate the professional experience of social worker due to the decision-making process.
3. Reveal the active involvement of interest groups in the decision-making process.

Practise-based decision-making of social workers in social care institutions

"Socially under care", most of the clients that means the decrease in self-support and the ability to make decisions, according to Orlova and Gruževskis (2014). As a result, a person becomes dependant on other people or loses self-sufficiency. Charenkova (2018) pointed out that socially under care person in social care institution, where he is incapable to control simple decisions of everyday life, is a threat to personal identity and welfare. Residents of social care institution, who only seek to meet their needs, become dependent on others compassion, professionalism, and empathy. Thus, social worker of social care institution takes full responsibility for the establishment and guidance of clients' welfare, hence, for decisions he make as a professional. However, according to Charenkova (2019), criticism often appears due to the dominant professional role when social care institution workers make decisions related to the elderly care process. It is crucial for social worker to determine which decisions a resident can make on his own, without harming (insulting) a person or depriving him of his full self-sufficiency. The ethical need of decision making emerges to point out main principles and standards to ensure that decision made is honest and equitable according to the requirements of the client and institution. The value of honesty indicates that decision made does not discriminate a client and creates a position of equality. The following important ethical aspect is community benefit. Community is the institution wherein social worker and client are the members of it. Ethical decision is considered acceptable when it is beneficial for the community and presents the creation of common good. The philosophers of ancient times considered the purpose of social welfare as the priority of common good for society.

Social workers in social care institution constantly encounter with problems and difficulties depending on personal situation of clients, such as: economic challenges, health issues, legal proceedings, personal relationships with family members, social segregation. According to Charenkova (2018), daily decisions, such as: how to spend spare time, when to have dinner, who to go for a walk with, made by residents of social care institution, are not simple decisions about behaviour, but more obviously about development of their identity. Social workers, while making decisions, assume the responsibility for the creation and maintenance of welfare for a client, since socially under care clients encounter with compound difficulties. Social workers of social care institution, act in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts and make decisions due to distribution of residents' supplies and financial costs, as Gambrill (2013) indicates. These decisions are essential both, for residents and social worker. Co-operating with a client, social workers have an opportunity to observe the behaviour and interaction, whereas observation presents crucial information to evaluate the situation of a client, as Šatkauskienė (2014) states. Proper relations with a client provide an opportunity for social worker to analyze and observe a client, as well as obtain equitable decisions to the emerged difficulties. Čiapaitė and Vaitkevičienė (2020) point out that, to correspond to people under care needs, it is essential to communicate about actual possibilities of service provision, pay attention to their expectations, analyze and preferable recognize the needs of service for the clients and improve social services.

The investigation of social workers motivation aspects in social care institution by Griciūtė and Senkevičiūtė-Doviltė (2018), pointed out that low motivation level might cause difficulties or decision-making and development at professional level, reluctancy, as a result, social worker loses interest in his position. It is essential to increase the level of motivation for work and possibilities to form appropriate decisions, to encourage and motivate social workers. One of the methods is to operate as a learning institution, to achieve and convey latest comprehension. To increase a sense of work satisfaction, change behaviour and thinking, according to Grublienė and Urbonaitė (2014), it is necessary to create sustainable and united institutional culture. One of the most important motivation aspects to function, is a commitment to clients. Social workers with strong sense of commitment to clients and their social welfare, are prepared to make decisions according to the needs and interests of a client. It is essential to emphasize that motivation is closely related to acknowledgment and work contentment of social worker. The benefit for clients and institution submits social workers particularly motivated to achieve higher institutional results, according to acknowledgment of their work results and efforts. Šneiderienė (2020) states that the level of social worker competence, learning necessity of work environment and motivation for social workers from an executive to make progress, influence the impact on decision making and the capacity to adjust external and internal challenges of the institution, thus, to build a learning organization. It supports social workers to recognize situations promptly, create an interrelated knowledge interaction, improve skills and in accordance with the previously mentioned aspects, to make decisions. Community members of a learning institution merge new comprehension and skills into daily work environment, as a result, social care for clients is provided more qualitatively. It is essential, due to an individual level of social worker and institution, that the whole maintains to adjust and correspond compound needs of clients and worldwide social challenges.

The methodology of the research

A qualitative methodological approach was chosen for the research, to investigate individual experiences of the informants. Three social workers of social care institution participated in the research. Research sample concluded according to the criterion sampling method. As Žydžiūnaitė and Sabaliauskas (2017) claim, criterion sampling is structured by improving cases, which correspond the criteria stated by the researcher and provide relevant information. A semi-structured interview method was selected to gather research data. According to Kardelis (2017), the interview method helps to reveal the problems of the subject and to evaluate work peculiarities. Research was conducted in December 2022. The method of qualitative content analysis was chosen to examine and process the data collected in the research, which enabled the research participants to reveal the peculiarities of decision-making process and decision-making by social workers in the context of learning institution.

The ethical principles that were applied in the research: *confidentiality* and *anonymity* to protect the personal data and information of the research participants; *respect for personal privacy* so that research participants are not used solely to achieve the research objectives.

Results and analysis of the research

Proceeding the research about decision-making of social workers, it was essential to analyze the opinion of research participants about decision-making process. The participants of the research indicate subjectively individual attitude and feelings, point out different experiences and attitudes to equivalent items. Firstly, the research indicates the formation of decision-making process by research participants, "Refer to Figure 1".

Figure 1. *The description of decision-making*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Characteristic of decision-making	Process formation	*It is a definite process...[B] Arrange decision-making process...[C]*	2
	Process establishment	*The situation...[A] The ability to evaluate situations...<> <...Asking are there any encountered an analogous situation. [A] Define situation together with residents of the institution...> [A] It is possible individually if the situation is clear..>[B]*	4
	Determined by requirements	*Appropriate solution to the problem.[C] Structured approach to problem solving..<> <..related problems of the residents in the institution...[C] When the problem is clarified..>[A] Daily problems...<> Depending on the situation, problem. [B]*	4

According to decision-making process, identity similarities appear analyzing informants' experiences and could be determined by the same institutional behaviour. Decision-making by the participants of the research was stated as a process of creation: *"The situation...[A], The ability to evaluate situations...<>, <...Asking are there any encountered an analogous situation. [A], Define situation together with residents of the institution...> [A], "It is possible individually if the situation is clear...>" [B].* Some of the research participants related decision-making with the dependence of needs: *"Appropriate solution to the problem" [C] "Structured approach to problem solving...<>" "<...related problems of the residents in the institution...[C] "When the problem is clarified...>" [A] "Daily problems..." <> "Depending on the situation, problem." [B].* Decision-making is complex and segregate process, which does or does not develop in a certain order, selecting an appropriate and effective way of solution, as Adamonienė (2015) states. However, the

experiences of informants emphasize the understanding of decision-making as a "situation." Decision-making according to the situation is an adaptable method to operate. Each situation is defined by certain circumstances, accordingly, the competence of social worker to operate in dynamic environment is crucial. As Baranauskienė and Kyguolienė (2013) claim, it is essential to evaluate the status of decision-making in certain situations, while the situation may appear as an opportunity to exceed objectives or expectations. The participants of the research emphasize the concept of "a problem", due to decision-making conception: "*Appropriate solution to the problem [C]. "Daily problems...<>" Depending on the situation, problem" [B]*. Most of the research participants frequently stress that situations and problems are an integral part of decision-making. Therefore, decision-making is a structured activity, which aim is to achieve the intended objective, thus, as the research results indicate, objective depends on the situation.

In the analysis of decision-making, it is essential to reveal the category of decisions made by social worker in his professional practice. The participants of the research pointed out that decisions made during their work practise are connected to daily situations and the behaviour of clients, "Refer to Figure 2".

Figure 2. *Decision-making in work practise*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Professional decision-making	Daily decisions	*<...decisions connected with living conditions in the institution...[A] Daily problems<...> maybe the main for residents, so when, where they should leave or go...[C]*	2
	Decisions caused according to clients' behaviour	*<...decisions related to the behavior of residents and other social problems.[B]*	1

Research data emphasize that principal decisions, encountered in work practise, relate to: "*Daily problems <...> the main for residents, so when, where they should leave or go...*" [C]. *Present experience assumes previous experience*: "*... with people under care, living conditions in the institution*" [A]. One of the informants stated that frequently decision-making is caused by the behaviour of the clients: "*Constantly making decisions related to the behaviour of the residents...*" [B]. Opinions of the research participants confirmed the statement of Charenkova (2019), that persons living in social care institutions are traditionally claimed to be passive recipients of care services and incapable comprehensively participate in solving social care issues. Consequently, social workers make decisions related to daily routine and social welfare of the clients. According to the author (Charenkova 2019), daily decision-making of the residents of social care institutions, such as: how to spend leisure time, when to have dinner or go for a walk, are not just ordinary decisions how to behave themselves, but more like decisions of what to be as a person. As a result, a crucial issue for the clients of social care institutions appears, what way to maintain and foster their identity. According to the maintenance of identity, the relevance of personal approach to the client appears, i.e., "small narratives" in the context of daily routine. Since social worker is a creator of "small narratives" too, yet these can differ from the ones of the clients', an ethical attitude towards the other is emphasized.

The most decisions made during work practise are related to behaviour of the client and daily living conditions. These decisions are affected by the clients' appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. Daily living conditions of the clients are constantly improving, therefore clients usually become dependent on the personnel around.

The function of social worker is substantiated with co-operation, as decision-making is divided into levels. According to the opinions of the informants about mostly applied decision-making methods of problems solving in work practise, it was found out that personal decisions dominate against collective decisions, "Refer to Figure" 3.

Figure 3. *Level solved and analyzed problems*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Methods of decision-making	Personal level	*The most acceptable decision-making for me is individual, because I can make it fast.[A]* *I use individual level more often, because we spend lots of time with the residents.[B]* *In my opinion, usually individually. Because problems more often relate to the residents of care institution and we must react at once, here, and now. [C]*	3
	Co-operation level	*...if it is important, significant, using co-operation level, to search for a suitable solution.[B]*	1

While investigating an interview, the informant stated: *The most acceptable decision-making for me is individual, because I can make it fast. [A].* Other informants expressed certain opinions: *I use individual level more often, because we spend lots of time with the residents. [B] In my opinion, usually individually. Because problems more often relate to the residents of care institution and we must react at once, here, and now. [C].* It indicates that social worker is constantly co-operating with the client and involved in his individual situations. Personal level decisions are the first and the closest level for the client. Personal level decisions made, include the evaluation of individual client needs, the provision of services and emotional support. According to Kavaliauskienė and Nikolajenko (2017), social worker can interpret the subject of his profession as a personality, which creates and accumulates unique personal experience. In relation to personal level, it motivates self-sufficiency and individual decision-making. As Adomaitytė-Subačienė (2015) states, the quality of social services and the standards of social care institution include both, personal and co-operation levels. It confirms the established procedure of work organization in the context of decision-making process. The opinion of co-operation decision-making level identified: *...if it is important, significant, using co-operation level, to search for a suitable solution. [B].* The participant of the research emphasizes that important and significant decisions are made consulting with colleagues or executives, to prevent himself of full responsibility or to manage the best suitable decisions made for the situation. According to Buzaitytė-Kašalynienė, etc. (2016), executives of the institution might help their employees, solving complicated situations, as they gain experience in social work with the clients too. Executives foster social workers to consider their work experiences with the clients, relations, and emotions, to create institutional culture with open communication, sharing experience and learning from it. Decision-making in co-operation level, improve the quality of decisions, as not only the diverse of solutions are afforded, but a stronger team is formed, together with the confidence of members. It contributes to more effective institution function and the implementation of its mission.

The participants of the research are more likely to make decisions personally, this might be caused by the peculiarities and circumstances of work. According to co-operation level, the participants emphasize the most important and significant decisions of the institution, to convey decisions initiated, as well as possible.

The aim of the research was to find out obvious diversity in decision-making among the employees of the institution. According to the participants, significant differences have not been noticed, except, distinguish certain circumstances, that decision-making process might differ, "Refer to Figure 4".

Figure 4. *Differences in work practice, according to decision-making process*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Decision-making peculiarities	The avoidance of responsibility	*Some employees avoid making crucial decisions, together with responsibility .[C]*	1
	General discourse	*...the attitude to decision-making is different.[A] depends on the situation, problem... Do not notice any significant differences. [B]*	2

The data of the research indicate that diversity of decision-making is not extensive: "*Difficult to answer, depends on the situation, problem. Do not notice any significant differences*" [B]. "*Do not notice differences, our work order is similar, a client is the most important...[A].*" According to Rimkus (2015), the sense of decision-making peculiarities and uncertainty comes from expanding the boundaries of social work and the dependence on the context, together with prevailing discourse. Each social group provides a meaning to the occurrence of experience through a general discourse, and it is never one-sided. Social worker can make the best decisions only by recognizing these interactions. The participants of the research do not notice disagreements among colleagues in decision-making, however, they distinguish circumstances that might cause differences in work results of decision-making process. An interesting aspect emerged: the uncertainty in decision-making. The statement of the informant reveals: "*Some employees avoid making crucial decisions, together with responsibility. "[C].* In accordance with the institution needs of changing society, uncertainty is a natural component of decision-making process. Analyzing data, the importance of collegial collaboration and institutional culture is essential.

In decision-making process, it is crucial to reveal the necessity of human recourses characteristics in decision-making. Informants were focused on skills, competences, and the evaluation of the situation, "Refer to Figure 5".

Figure 5. *Required characteristics in decision-making process*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Human recourses characteristics in decision-making	Analytical and communicational skills	*Be able to evaluate situations, according to the needs of residents, also it is very important to know how to communicate with residents and colleagues.[A]* *The ability to evaluate and identify assistance needs for a person<...> the ability, to communicate [B]* *<...be able to collect information,...[B]*	3
	Personal skills	*Responsibilities, psychological knowledge, communication skills, tolerance, goodwill, confidentiality.[C]* *<...empathy is important, the ability to communicate, confidentiality, ethics, honesty<...>, co-operate [B]*	2

The research pointed out that analytical and communication skills are principal in decision-making. The participants revealed the importance of: "*Be able to evaluate situations "[A]. "The ability to evaluate and identify assistance needs for a person <...> the ability, to communicate [B], ...be able to collect information...[B]* and apply, decisions made to the residents of social care

institution. The informants stress that social care workers consult clients about their rights and duties, analyze the situation and submit appropriate decisions with the guidance reference, observe if support for a client is productive, as Adomaitienė and Balčiūnienė (2017) imply. Analytical skills of social worker in decision-making are crucial to analyzing the situation of a client, identifying, evaluating, and implementing the problem. The research also revealed that communicational skills are significant, as these abilities consider the capacity to listen diligently, to communicate empathically, creating relationships based on trust and acknowledgement between social worker and the client. Personal decision-making skills are essential: *"... psychological knowledge, communication skills, tolerance, goodwill, confidentiality. "[C], „... empathy is important, the ability to communicate, confidentiality, ethics, honesty <...>, co-operate "[B]*. These personal skills enable to evaluate situation and to make proper decisions. According to Sadauskas and Leliūgienė (2010), a social worker must possess knowledge about culture, race, ethics, social status and to comprehend the influence for a client lifetime, otherwise, it might cause a negative impact to social relationships.

According to the research data analysis, the process of co-operative decision-making was revealed. The participants of the research shared the experience about co-operation with colleagues in decision-making process. Most of the participants agreed that partnership co-operation in decision-making, assists to solve problems successfully. In addition, according to the importance of situation, colleagues get involved into decision-making, "Refer to Figure 6".

Figure 6. *The aspect of co-operation in decision-making*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Collegial decision-making	Team co-operation	*I try to co-operate with colleagues, share necessary information...>[B]* *We all look for common and appropriate decision-making method..>.[A]* *Consulting, accepting different opinions...>[C]*	3
	Colleagues involvement according to situation	*<... assistance in decision-making, asking colleagues or executive for some advice, asking if there are those who encountered a similar situation.[A]*	1

The research data revealed that in the process of decision-making, participants usually implement a team co-operation approach, using active co-operation manner and seeking for common, appropriate decision-making method. The participants state that: ," *... I try to co-operate with colleagues, share necessary information* > "[B]. „*... We all look for common and appropriate decision-making method* > "[A]. „ *Consulting, accepting different opinions...*> "[C]. According to Gražulis (2014), the participants agree that social workers apply co-operation method to implement institutional objectives. Social worker, in this case, brings team members together for a decision-making process. The collegial decision-making indicates that the involvement of colleagues according to situation, appears when: "<...> *assistance in decision-making wanted, asking colleagues or executive for some advice, asking if there are those who encountered a similar situation* "[A]. Collegial co-operation, according to the opinion of the participants, is a preferable attitude in decision-making, to lead the assistance to decide, while the involvement of colleagues according to situation appears when the informant has not encountered a particular experience, until a certain situation emerged.

Decision-making analysis investigates aspects to the influence of immediate and proper decision-making. The participants of the research revealed actions for immediate and efficient decision-making. Various opinions of the participants appeared, "Refer to Figure 7".

Figure 7. *Decision-making process*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Decision-making levels	Investigation approach	*When the problem is fully resolved or searching for the most appropriate way to make a decision.[A]* *Firstly, it is necessary to collect essential information about the client.[B]*	2
	Estimation approach	*The list of advantages and disadvantages, consideration of the opportunities...[C]* *...the assessment of expected benefits ..[B]* *...then the problem is defined...[B]*	3

According to the collected research data, decision-making process begins from the analysis of the problem. The necessity develops to investigate the situation in detail, during decision-making analysis: "*When the problem is fully resolved or searching for the most appropriate way to make a decision, without a delay of decision-making.*" *[A]*, the other participant claimed, "*Firstly, it is necessary to collect essential information about the client <...>*" *[B]. The analysis of the problem reveals objectives and the identification of proper decisions. All this, assume to ensure social welfare for the clients. As previous research data indicated, it requires analytical skills and co-operation with colleagues.* As participants of the research point out, it is the necessity to accomplish the evaluation of situation, according to decision-making analysis: "*...the assessment of expected benefits <...> the prediction of possible choices, the possibilities of consequence outcomes, then the most suitable decision revealed.*" *[B], "The list of advantages and disadvantages, consideration of the opportunities, the proper decision-making [C].* The competence, according to Adomaitienė and Balčiūnienė (2017), depends on personal knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, which conceal deep into the personality and occur with successful work results in a certain sphere. In decision-making process, it is crucial to apply evaluation means properly, as risk factors and solutions are estimated.

The aim of the research was to consider the involvement of residents into decision-making process. During the interview, the participants of the research claimed that the involvement of process is multifaceted, "Refer to Figure 8".

Figure 8. *The involvement of residents*

In accordance with the collected data of the research, it is obvious that the involvement of

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
Co-operation with the residents of the institution	Collection and acceptance of suggestions	*Together with the residents of the institution, we sort out the situation and listen to their opinions and suggestions to identify the most suitable decision-making alternative .[A]*	1
	Social needs and its enforcement	*Residents involved to whom the decision-making is related.[C]* *Efforts are made to indicate the benefits of being involved in decision-making, also, it is important a proper (trust-based) communication with the residents of social care institution. [B]*	2

the residents to decision-making process and their contribution, are essential: "*Together with the*

residents of the institution, we sort out the situation, listen to their opinions and suggestions to identify the most suitable decision-making alternative "[A]. As Šatkauskienė (2014) states, social workers co-operating with the client, gain the opportunity to observe the communication and behaviour between clients, which is crucial for situation evaluation process of the client. The participant claims about the contribution of residents in decision-making process: "*Efforts are made to indicate the benefits of being involved in decision-making, also, it is important a proper (trust-based) communication with the residents of social care institution." [B].* The opinion of another participant: "*Residents involved to whom the decision-making is related "[C].* These experiences focus attention on the significance of the involvement of clients to decision-making process, which impacts to ensure clients welfare. The involvement process enables clients to feel comprehensive and that decision-making responds to their needs. It fosters the confidence of clients to social care institution and improves the quality of communication.

The research pointed out the difficulties, which influence decision-making process. The participants of the research revealed that difficulties in work practise and decision-making process, arise due to lack of co-operation and systemic boundaries, "Refer to Figure 9".

Figure 9. *Difficulties in decision-making process*

Category	Subcategory	Affirmative statements	Number of statements
The impact of difficulties	The lack of co-operation	*The resistance of residents to any decision made, the lack of colleagues co-operation in decision-making.[A]* *The lack of collective decision, teamwork.[C]* *<... the reluctance of colleagues to co-operate,<...>, the reluctance of the client to co-operate, [B]*	3
	Systemic boundaries	*The lack of information,<... > conflicts, disagreements...[B]* *<...uncertain requirements<...> the lack of finances.[B]*	1

The data of the research indicate that basic difficulties in decision-making emerge due to co-operation problems with the clients: *"The resistance of residents to any decision made, the lack of colleagues co-operation in decision-making "[A].* The participant of the research emphasizes the lack of teamwork and collective decision: "*The lack of collective decision, teamwork." [C].* Likewise, the research data identified the reluctance to co-operate between colleagues and clients: "*<... the reluctance of colleagues to co-operate, <...>, "the reluctance of the client to co-operate" [B].* The difficulties in decision-making process emerge when systemic boundaries appear: "*The lack of information, <... > conflicts, disagreements...[B] <...uncertain requirements<...>the lack of finances [B]."* These are essential reasons for difficulties to evolve. It might be stated that difficulties for the participants of the research in decision-making occur, when adverse or inappropriate co-operation with colleagues and clients, or systemic boundary, disturb eligible decision-making. Systemic boundaries in decision-making process appear due to structural, organizational, or cultural subjects. The research revealed that colleagues, to prevent consequences due to respective decision, approach to risk avoidance more. As a result, in the context of learning organization, a social care institution should additionally encourage open communication, the diversity of attitudes and promote innovation, that create new experiences and contemporary opportunities.

Conclusions

1. According to the analysis of the decision-making process, it was proved that the knowledge and competencies of social workers are crucial to the decision-making process. Applying knowledge and competencies, it is not difficult to decide on various levels: individual, co-operation, and organizational. In addition, the interaction of a client and teamwork are essential in decision-making. The impact of social workers' decision-making process in social care institutions, implements the loss of self-government of the residents in the institution. Consequently, the responsibility of decision-making, in most cases, depends on social worker and his competence to enable knowledge and experience.

2. The research revealed that social workers in their work practice face difficulties due to teamwork decision-making, this was emphasized by social workers with long-term careers, compared to other professionals in the sphere. The decisions are related to the appropriate or inappropriate behavior of the clients. So that, to maintain an ethical attitude towards the client and to enable actions in the daily environment, the ethical attitude of social worker develops, without denying otherness.

3. The data of the research expose that social worker, working in social care institutions, observes uncertain co-operation with colleagues in the decision-making process, which might cause difficulties in implementing responsibilities as a social worker. This is determined by several aspects, like, insufficient communication when the conversation between colleagues is effectless or competitive, the other aspect, there are no definite responsibilities or explicit decision-making process. Consequently, the individual level of social worker accepts a crucial role in decision-making, involving empathy and ethical responsibility concerning the client.

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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER SOCIAL IDENTITY ON MOTIVATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

Tamari Gvelesiani
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
Georgia

Abstract

In the field of psychology, motivation is viewed as the process through which individuals prioritize incoming messages based on their needs and subsequently engage in behaviour accordingly. When exploring factors contributing to teachers' motivation, it becomes crucial to emphasize the role of teachers' social identity. Teachers with elevated social identity and group belonging levels often integrate didactic and innovative methods in their teaching practices, driven by their confidence in their abilities. These methods not only foster students' independence and autonomy but also enhance the learning environment.

As part of the study, 405 teachers from both private and public schools in five diverse cities across Georgia took part in the quantitative survey. The convenience sampling method was employed throughout the research process; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the population of teachers in Georgia.

The study reveals that teachers perceive themselves and their colleagues similarly, indicating a strong collective identity within the teaching community, regardless of individual differences. Demographic factors such as teacher status, income, city, and education do not significantly affect this sense of belonging. Identified regulation emerges as the primary form of motivation among teachers, reflecting their perception of the importance of their profession. Moreover, there is a positive correlation between social identity and teacher motivation, suggesting that a stronger sense of belonging corresponds to higher motivation levels.

Keywords*: teacher, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, motivation, social identity*

INTRODUCTION

Motivation lies at the core of human behavior, driving individuals towards goals and aspirations. Psychologists have long sought to understand the intricate mechanisms underlying motivation, tracing its roots back to pioneering theories by scholars like Sully (1884) and Maslow (1955). While early perspectives highlighted intrinsic and extrinsic drivers, contemporary theories delve deeper into the nuanced interplay between individual and contextual factors.

In parallel, the Theory of Social Identity, introduced by Tajfel (1979), introduces a novel perspective on motivation, emphasizing the role of group affiliation in shaping individual identity. This theory underscores the dynamic nature of social categorization, wherein individuals derive identity and belonging from their association with various social groups.

Against this backdrop, the realm of teacher motivation emerges as a focal point of inquiry, spurred by global concerns surrounding dwindling teacher numbers and job satisfaction. Sinclair (2008) presents a multifaceted framework for understanding teacher motivation, encompassing factors ranging from autonomy in teaching to social connections and professional growth opportunities. However, challenges arise in categorizing these determinants, with overlapping domains complicating the delineation of distinct motivational factors.

Of particular interest is the exploration of teacher social identity, shedding light on the collective identity forged within the teaching community. Research indicates that a strong sense of group identification among teachers correlates with heightened engagement, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (Christ et al., 2003; van Dick & Wagner, 2001; van Dick & Wagner, 2002). Furthermore, interactions within the teaching community foster the development and consolidation of social identity, exerting profound implications on teacher performance and achievement.

TEACHER MOTIVATION AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

Motivation, as defined by various psychologists, encompasses the desire preceding and driving behaviour, whether stimulated by internal or external factors (Sully, 1884; Maslow, 1955). Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-determination Theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with intrinsic motivation rooted in personal enjoyment or interest. However, extrinsic motivation often predominates, driven by external rewards or avoidance of negative outcomes.

Psychological theories categorize motivation into content and process theories. Content theories, exemplified by Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs and Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, focus on hierarchical needs guiding behaviour. Herzberg's (1959) Two-factor theory differentiates between motivational and hygiene factors, emphasizing internal versus external sources of motivation.

Contrastingly, process theories view motivation as a rational process. Adams' (1965) Equity Theory posits that individuals assess fairness in social interactions, influencing their motivation. Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory suggests that motivation hinges on the expectation of future rewards based on effort. The Porter-Lawler Model (1968) builds upon Vroom's theory, incorporating multiple variables such as perceived effort-reward probability and satisfaction, within a dynamic framework.

On the other hand, the Theory of Social Identity, introduced by Henry Tajfel (1979), emphasizes self-perception and identity shaped by group affiliation, values, and emotional ties. Unlike other socio-psychological theories, social identity theory focuses on group characteristics rather than individual traits. Tajfel (1979) highlights the dynamic nature of belonging to social categories, which evolves with new information. Consequently, attitudes toward oneself and the group, as well as other groups, may shift, sometimes leading individuals to leave their own group.

Since the 1990s, there has been significant research activity on teacher motivation worldwide, spurred by a decrease in the number of teachers in European countries, the US, and Australia. This interdisciplinary field encompasses psychological, social, economic, political, and cultural perspectives. Sinclair (2008) defines teacher motivation as a blend of factors influencing both the choice of the teaching profession and its continuation. These factors include autonomy in teaching, social connections with colleagues, opportunities for professional growth, work environment, and income. Sinclair (2008) categorizes the determinants of teacher motivation into ten main groups, including teacher calling, altruism, and perceived benefits. However, some scholars (Han & Yin, 2016) find this classification problematic due to overlapping categories, such as teaching process, teacher status, and financial benefits. Research indicates that factors like loss of autonomy and excessive control from leadership can diminish teacher self-efficacy, social identity and motivation (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque & Legault, 2002).

The concept of teacher social identity, while relatively new in research, plays a vital role in understanding teacher behavior (Mavor et al., 2017). Research indicates that a strong group identification among teachers predicts higher engagement (Christ, van Dick, Wagner & Stellmacher, 2003), job satisfaction (van Dick & Wagner, 2001), and overall well-being (van Dick & Wagner, 2002). For instance, teachers' identification with their colleagues influences their behaviours both within and outside of school settings (Mutjaba & Reiss, 2013). Interactions with fellow teachers contribute to the development and strengthening of social identity, which, in turn, can impact teacher performance and achievement (Haslam, 2017). Although research in this area remains limited, studies such as Canrinus and colleagues' (2011) investigation of Dutch teachers highlight the link between social identity and teacher motivation and emotional involvement.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed quantitative research methods, utilizing a teacher survey conducted via convenience sampling in Georgian schools. A questionnaire comprising three scales and demographic variables was developed to gather data. Demographic variables encompassed gender, age, place of residence, education level, years of teaching experience, salary, and other relevant factors.

Teacher motivation was assessed using the Work Task Motivation Scale of Teachers (WTMST) developed by Fernet and colleagues (Fernet et al., 2008). This scale traditionally evaluates teacher motivation across five dimensions, but our study focused on four: class preparation, teaching, evaluation of students, and completing administrative tasks. The fifth dimension, involving complementary tasks like leading committee meetings or participating in community projects, was excluded from the Georgian version of the questionnaire due to its limited relevance. Each dimension of the questionnaire comprises 15 items, totalling 60 items overall, rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The WTMST includes five sub-scales: intrinsic motivation, identified regulation (extrinsic motivation based on the job's importance), introjected regulation (extrinsic motivation influenced by feelings of guilt, shame, or anxiety), external regulation (extrinsic motivation driven by a sense of responsibility), and amotivation.

The Teacher Social Identity Scale, was developed based on Weinreich's (1980) identity measurement approach, consisted of 13 antonymous adjectives representing characteristics of teachers, e.g.: active, motivated, professional, confident, organized, strict, energetic, competent, independent, satisfied, successful, sociable and creative. Participants rated themselves and their colleagues separately on a 5-point Likert scale.

Prior to data collection, the English instruments underwent double translation into Georgian and back into English to ensure accuracy. Pilot testing with 110 teachers refined linguistic aspects of the questionnaire, with minor changes incorporated into the final version.

The survey included 405 teachers from 29 schools across five cities in Georgia, predominantly female (93%) in line with national statistics. Teachers' ages ranged from 21 to 68 years *(M=43.75, SD=11.5),* with teaching experience spanning from 1 to 47 years *(M=16.37, SD=11.2).* Most respondents (68%) held a master's or equivalent degree, with 27% having a bachelor's degree. The majority (81%) taught in public schools, with primary school teachers (16%) being the most common, followed by Georgian language and literature (12%) and mathematics (12%) teachers. Half (50%) of respondents were engaged in additional tutoring activities, and 80% had passed teacher certification exams in Georgia. Their monthly salaries varied, with 44% earning 701-1000 GEL and 43% earning below 700 GEL. Overall, the sample exhibited diversity in age and experience but was homogeneous in education level, school type, certification status, and monthly income.

RESULTS

The study examined teachers' social identity and motivation, revealing noteworthy findings. Teachers showed a strong sense of belonging to their social group, as evidenced by the lack of significant differences between self-assessment and peer group assessment of social identity *(M=55.69, SD=7.73 vs. M=55.51, SD=8.02).* The primary focus of the study, the teacher motivation scale, is segmented into five sub-scales, each indicating the prevailing type of motivation among teachers. The findings from the research demonstrate that identified regulation emerged as the dominant type of motivation *(M=71.26, SD=13.14)*, followed closely by intrinsic motivation *(M=68.82, SD=12.14)*, while amotivation scored the lowest *(M=36.73, SD=18.64).* Gender did not influence social identity or motivation levels.

However, age and experience yielded significant differences. Social identity was lowest among teachers aged 31-40 *(M=1.3, SD=0.64)* and those with less than 5 years of experience *(M=0.5, SD=0.54)*, while it peaked among teachers over 61 *(M=2.68, SD=0.22)* and those with 21-25 years of experience *(M=1.5, SD=0.04).* Similarly, motivation was highest among teachers aged 41-50 *(M=268.62, SD=46.13)* and those with 11-15 years of experience *(M=272.96, SD=38.45).* Mentor teachers displayed significantly higher motivation than practicing teachers *(M=311.75, SD=6.13 vs. M=238.68, SD=50.02).*

Salary also impacted motivation levels. Teachers earning 1600 GEL or more monthly showed the highest motivation *(M=287.00, SD=34.66)*, while those earning up to 400 GEL had the lowest *(M=240.75, SD=40.61).* However, intrinsic motivation did not significantly differ between low-earning *(M=65.34, SD=14.32)* and high-earning *(M=68.67, SD=3.14)* teachers. These findings underscore the intricate relationship between demographic factors and teacher motivation, shedding light on areas where interventions may be beneficial.

It's important to note that a positive relationship was noted between the principal study factors and their internal measurements. The level of surveyed teacher intrinsic motivation increases with the increase of their social identity *(r = .415**, n=402, p <.01).* Also, a positive correlation was observed between social identity and identified regulation *(r = .338**, n=402, p <.01)*, the type of motivation based on conscious valuing and importance placed on the profession. Additionally, low positive correlation was observed between social identity and motivation in general *(r = .385**, n=402, p <.01),* when excluding amotivation sub-scale. Relatively low, 3.4% of teacher motivation variability is explained by their social identity level *(R2ADJ=.032, F (1,398) =14.05, p <.01)*, however, it is a reliable determinant of motivation *(β = 1.21, p <.01).*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that despite minor distinctions, the surveyed teachers attribute diverse characteristics equally to themselves and their peers. From the gathered data, it can be inferred that teachers perceive themselves as integral members of a unified, extensive community of educators, as they don't perceive notable discrepancies between themselves and their colleagues. Regardless of gender, teachers exhibit high levels of similarity and sense of belonging to their social group. It's unsurprising that as teachers' age and experience increase, so does their sense of social identity. Additionally, there exists a moderate positive association between social identity and motivation, indicating that teachers with elevated levels of social identity tend to display high motivation. Moreover, a notably stronger positive correlation was identified between intrinsic motivation and social identity, indicating that teachers with high social identity also tend to exhibit high intrinsic motivation. However, there was no correlation observed between social identity and amotivation.

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THE IMPACT OF COSMETOLOGICAL PROCEDURES ON STRIAE AFFECTED WOMEN SKIN

Raimonda Auškalnė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution
Lithuania

Lina Stungienė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution
Lithuania

Abstract

The article analyses the effect of cosmetic procedures on women's skin affected by striae, the impact of stretch marks on women's quality of life and presents the research data describing respondents' knowledge about stretch marks, their correction possibilities, and their impact on quality of life. The research data is compared with the findings of studies conducted by foreign authors.

Keywords: *striae, stretch marks cosmetological procedures, life quality*.

Introduction

Actuality. Around 90 % of females face the problem of striae affected skin condition. This often causes low self-confidence and psychological distress particularly in women of certain professions where physical appearances have significant importance. Recently, with the increasing significance of cosmetic procedures and awareness, women approach specialist for stretch marks correction [8].

The cause of this pathology is currently unknown and despite several advances, no means of striae correction is fully effective. Striae known as stretch marks, are a common disfiguring skin condition, characterised by tearing of elastic fibres. Elastic fibres undergo elastosis along with degranulation of mast cells. The skin loses its elasticity in the affected area [9]. The emergence of stretch marks is associated with changes in elastin, fibrillin, and collagen. These components are responsible for the skin's elasticity and resistance to stretching [4]. Stretch marks generally develop in various physiological states such as growth spurt during puberty, pregnancy, obesity, in pathological conditions as a side effect of systemic corticosteroid therapy [9]. Various diseases such as nervous anorexia, Cushing's syndrome, rheumatic fever, and chronic liver diseases also influence the appearance of stretch marks [16]. The formation of stretch marks is also associated with hormonal imbalances. Increased levels of androgens, oestrogens, and glucocorticoids contribute to the appearance of stretch marks [1]. Typically, the development of stretch marks is influenced not by a single factor but by several [10].

The issue of stretch marks is particularly sensitive during pregnancy. It has been found that stretch marks have a negative impact on the psychological well-being and quality of life of pregnant women. While stretch marks pose no health risks, they come with their own set of symptoms: itching, discomfort, and psychological dissatisfaction. All of these symptoms contribute to the overall quality of life of women [15]. Stretch marks, much like scars, alter the aesthetic appearance of the body. This causes psychological dissatisfaction, lack of self-confidence, stress, emotional disappointment, and even withdrawal from social life for women [6] [2] [7].

Though no fully effective method for correcting stretch marks has not yet been discovered, but research is constantly ongoing to achieve better results in striae correction [9]. For successful correction, it is necessary to properly assess and determine the cause, type of striae, and skin type affected by stretch marks [8] [12]. Numerous studies have been conducted to identify the measures and procedures that positively affect skin affected by stretch marks (see Figure 1).
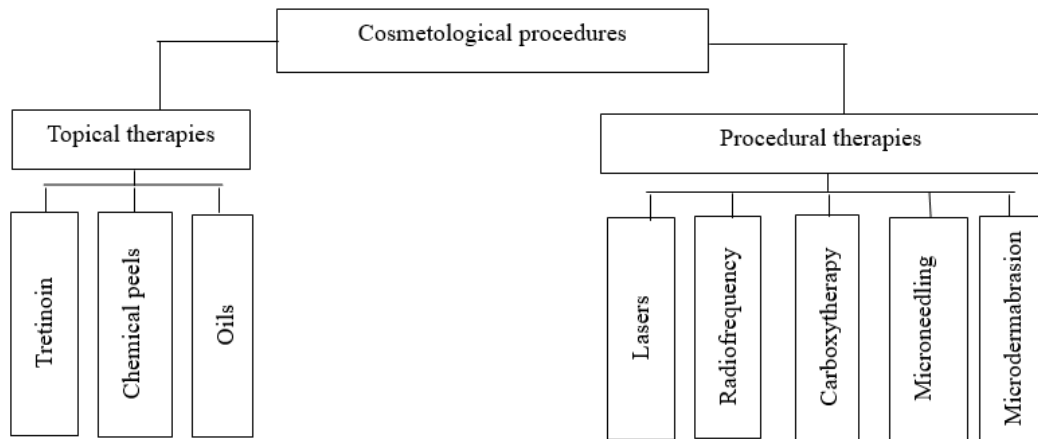
Figure 1. Cosmetological procedures

Both, topical therapies and procedural therapies can be successful in stretch mark correction. However, it's important to understand the basis of different therapeutic options, their mechanisms of action, so that the most appropriate procedure for stretch mark correction can be chosen [8]. The main goal of cosmetological procedures is to promote fibroblast activity, collagen synthesis, and skin regeneration. Therapies aim to provide lasting improvements in pigmentation and texture of both striae rubrae and albae, with minimal side-effects, in patients of all skin types. Procedures increase collagen production and fibroblastic activity, elasticity and blood perfusion, improve cell proliferation, increase skin hydration and anti-inflammatory properties in the dermis. As a result, the signs of stretch marks decrease, improving the physical appearance of the skin, which becomes thicker, firmer, and more elastic [16].

Aim – to analyse the peculiarities of striae affected skin, its care and impact on quality of life.

Objectives:

1. To reveal respondents' opinion on skin affected by stretch marks, its care, and the impact on quality of life.
2. To Compare the results of the empirical research on the impact of stretch marks on quality of life with the data from studies conducted by foreign authors.

Research Methodology

In conducting the study " Striae Affected Women Skin its Care and Impact on Quality of Life" the following research methods were employed: a review of scientific literature was conducted using abstract, analysis, and summarization theoretical methods. An anonymous questionnaire survey was conducted to explore women's knowledge about stretch marks and their correction possibilities, as well as how stretch marks affect women's quality of life. Descriptive analysis and comparative analysis of the collected data were performed, applying theoretical abstraction and summarization methods. The data were organized into tables, diagrams, described, and compared (see Figure 2).
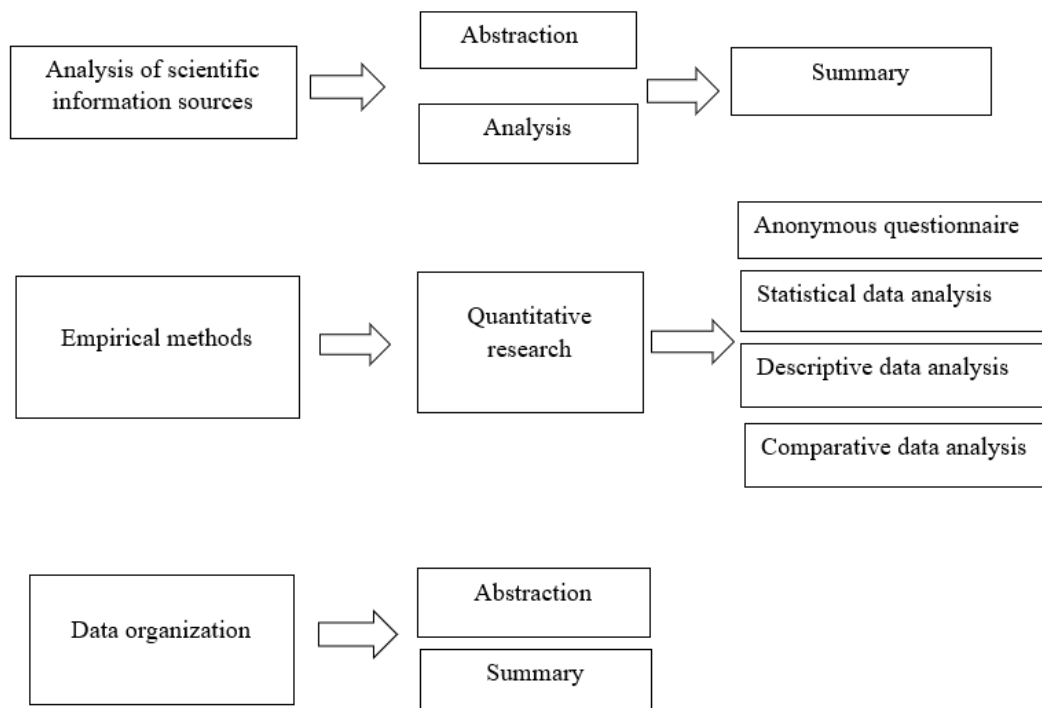
Figure 2. Research methodology

Research instrument - anonymous questionnaire. A questionnaire survey means that the survey is conducted in writing, using a questionnaire [14] [5]. The questionnaire is composed of closed and open-ended questions aimed at understanding women's attitudes towards stretch marks, the problems they pose, and correction possibilities. The questions of the research questionnaire can be divided into two main parts. The first introductory section includes questions about the social demographic characteristics of the respondents (age, place of residence, education, etc.). These questions are necessary to assess the potential influence on the distribution of responses according to certain criteria when answering the questions in the questionnaire. The main part of the questionnaire consists of 13 closed and open-ended questions, which can be divided into two blocks:

1.   Women's knowledge about stria and their correction possibilities.
2.   The impact of stretch marks on women's quality of life.

Data analysis methods: The study was conducted on a public survey website www.apklausa.lt. The research material was processed using the PSPP statistical data analysis program. Microsoft Excel program was used for graphical representation of the obtained data. Quantitative analysis of the research data was performed. The statistical significance level used was $p < 0.05$ - statistically significant. The statistical correlation between variables was examined using the method of contingency tables. Based on the table data, the value of the chi-square ($\chi 2$) criterion, its degrees of freedom (df), and statistical significance were calculated.

Selection criteria: The research participants were selected using non-probabilistic purposive sampling method. The group of survey participants was formed according to the researcher's objectives [3]. Purposive selection is carried out when the researcher chooses a sample, taking into account a specific objective, based on certain criteria or decisions (for example, specific competencies, experience, events) [11]. Women were chosen as research respondents.

The sample size of the study was 311 respondents. According to Židžiūnaitė (2011), it is preferable for the number of participants in quantitative empirical research to range from 6 to 120. If there are more than 120 participants in the study, then the research results are characterized by a higher degree of reliability and suitability [18].

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Analysis of research results

Socio-demographic data: 311 respondents participated in the anonymous questionnaire survey. The participants were selected through non-probabilistic purposive sampling. The age of the women participating in the survey ranged from 18 to 49 years old. The women participating in the survey were divided into age groups as follows: the first group (<20 years old) comprised 5.47%, the second age group (20-25 years old) comprised 22.83%, the third group (26-30 years old) comprised 14.15%. The fourth age group (31-35 years old) consisted of 15.43% of the women participating in the survey, the fifth group (36-40 years old) consisted of 16.72%, and the last group (>40 years old) comprised 23.15% of the women participating in the survey. Therefore, the majority of women participating in the survey were between 20 and 25 years old and older than 40 years old (see Figure 3).
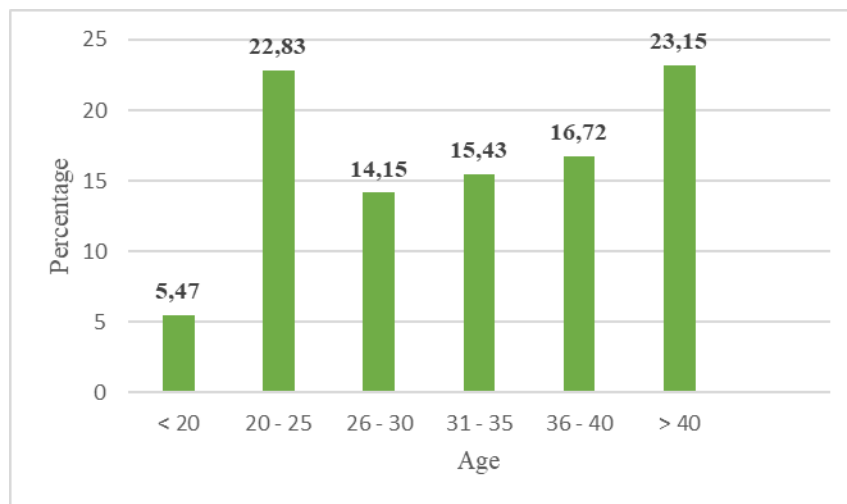
Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by age

The study did not identify statistically significant correlation between the age of respondents and the negative emotions caused by stretch marks. However, Karhade et al. (2021) found statistically significant correlation in their study, stating that younger respondents with stretch-marked skin experience more negative emotions [6].

The majority of female participants surveyed reside in urban areas (80.06%), with one-tenth residing in rural areas (9.97%) and 9.65% in small towns (see Figure 4).
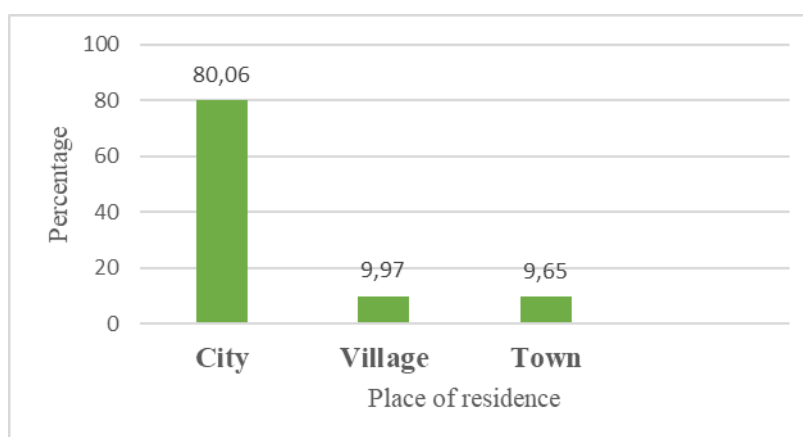
Figure 4. Place of residence of respondents

Nearly half (49.20%) of the women participating in the study have obtained higher education degree. One-third (33.76%) of the women have completed secondary education, 14.15% have some form of post-secondary education, and only 2.89% have completed basic education (see Table 1).

Table 1. Education of the respondents

Education	Number of women (N)	Percentage (%)
Basic	9	2,89
Secondary	105	33,76
Post - secondary	44	14,15
Higher	153	49,20

Respondents' knowledge about striae and their correction possibilities: Almost all (98.39%) of the women participating in the survey responded positively to the question "Do you know what stretch marks are?". Only 5 women (1.61%) were unaware of what stretch marks were and responded negatively to the question (see Figure 5).
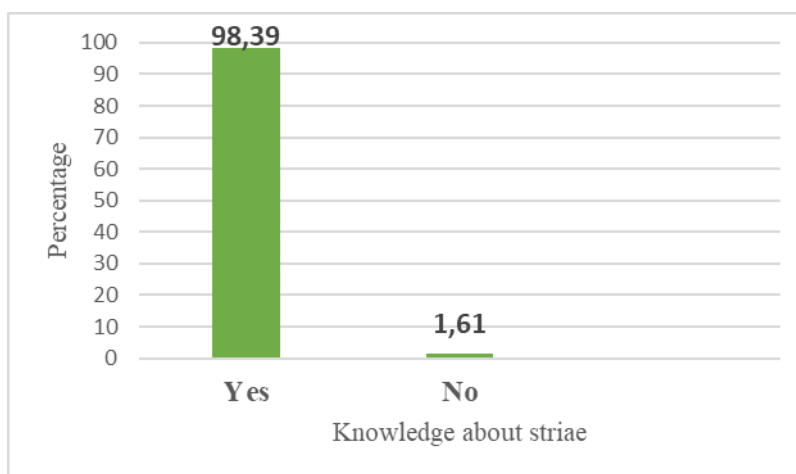
Figure 5. Respondents' knowledge about striae

According to Al-shandawely et al. (2021), approximately 90% of women have striae affected skin [1]. The results of our study confirm the fact. Even 277 (89.07%) out of 311 women participating in the study have striae affected skin. Therefore, we can conclude that the issue of stretch marks is very common and relevant among women (see Figure 6).
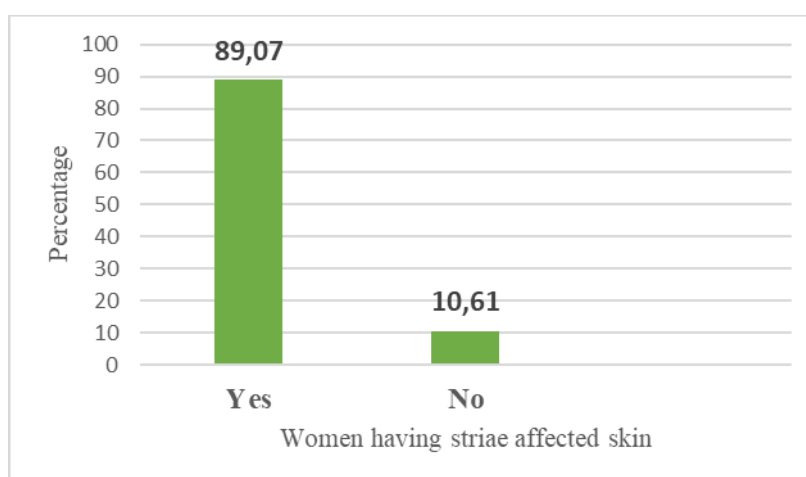
Figure 6. Respondents having striae affected skin

Respondents were asked "Which parts of your body are affected by stretch marks?" Women could choose multiple options for areas where they have stretch marks (see Table 2).

Table 2. Stria affected body area

Affected Body Area	Number of women (N = 311)	Percentage (%)
Abdominal area	110	**35,37**
Waist area	63	20,26
On thighs	210	**67,52**
On the back	10	3,22
Breasts	123	**39,55**
Other option	25	8,04

Out of 311 women surveyed, 210 (67.52%) indicated they have stretch marks on their thighs. 110 women (35.37%) reported having stretch marks in the abdominal area. 123 women (39.55%) mentioned having stretch marks on their breasts. 63 women (20.26%) stated that they have stretch marks in the waist area. 10 women (3.22%) among those surveyed indicated having stretch marks on their back. Women who selected another response option most mentioned having stretch marks in the buttocks area. Additionally, one woman reported having stretch marks on her arms.

Karhade et al. (2021) conducted a study where one of the analyzed aspects and goals was to determine the most common body areas where women have skin affected by striae. In the conducted study, 116 pregnant women were surveyed. The majority of the respondents indicated that they have stretch marks on their abdominal area (75%, N = 87), 43% (N = 50) of women reported having stretch marks on their chest, 43% of women mentioned having stretch marks on their thighs, and 19% of women stated that their buttocks area was affected by stretch marks [6].

Wang et al. (2021) conducted a study where 125 respondents were surveyed. According to their findings, 56% of the respondents reported having stretch marks on their abdominal area. Additionally, 43.2% stated that they have stretch marks on their thighs, 35.2% of respondents reported having stretch marks on their buttocks, 24.8% on their chest, and 21.6% mentioned having striae on their arms [17]. The comparison of the data from three studies are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Data comparison on striae affected body area

Affected Body Area	Our survey (%)	Karhade et al., 2021 (%)	Wang et al., 2021 (%)
On thighs	**67,52**	43	43,2
Abdominal area	35,37	**75**	**56**
Breasts	39,55	43	24,8
Waist area	20,26	-	
On the back	3,22	-	
buttocks area	2,3	19	35,2
Arms	0,64	-	21,6

Summarizing the results of the studies, it can be stated that stretch marks most commonly affect the abdominal and thigh areas. Additionally, stretch marks frequently occur on the buttocks and chest. There is a statistically significant correlation between women who report having stretch marks in the abdominal area and pregnancy ($\chi2 = 78.41$; df = 1; p = 0.00). This indicates that many women who have stretch marks in the abdominal area associate it with pregnancy.

Silva et al. (2023) state that stretch marks most commonly occur during pregnancy, can also occur due to sudden weight gain or loss and during adolescence. The data of our survey confirm those statements (see Figure 7).
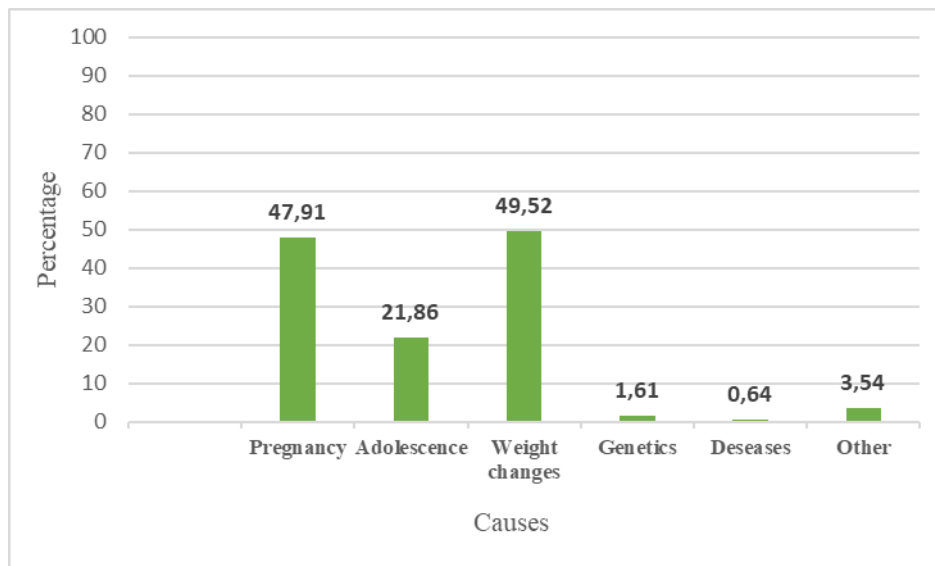
Figure 7. **Causes of striae**

Out of the 311 respondents in the study, 154 women (49.52%). 49.52% indicated that the appearance of their stretch marks was caused by sudden weight gain or loss. 47.91% of women (n = 149) stated that pregnancy was the cause of stretch marks. 68 women (21.86%) believed that stretch marks appeared during adolescence. Only 5 (1.61%) women indicated that their stretch marks appeared due to genetic reasons, and 2 (0.64%) women cited illnesses as the cause of stretch marks. It is statistically significant that women who encountered stretch mark problems due to sudden weight gain or loss have stretch-marked skin on their thighs ($\chi2$ = 39.69; df = 1; p = 0.00). Women who chose another option stated that they did not know the cause of stretch mark appearance.

In the study conducted by Wang et al. (2021), nearly half of the respondents (40.8%) believed that rapid weight gain was the cause of striae. Pregnancy was indicated as the cause of stretch marks by 37.6% of the respondents, while 28.8% of the participants believed that stretch marks occurred during adolescence. 23.2% of respondents stated that the cause of stretch marks was growth spurt, and 20% of those surveyed believed that stretch marks occurred due to hormonal imbalance [17] (see Table 4).

Table 4. Data comparison on causes of striae

Causes of striae	Our survey (%)	Wang et al., 2021 (%)
Rapid weight change	**49,52**	**40,8**
Pregnancy	47,91	37,6
Adolescence	21,86	28,8
Growth spurt	-	23,2
Hormonal imbalance	-	20
Genetics	1,61	-
Diseases	0,64	-

Summarizing and comparing the results of the studies, we can conclude that the main causes of stretch marks are rapid weight change and pregnancy.

The study aimed to clarify women's knowledge about striae correction methods. In response to the question "Do you know what methods or ways are used for stretch mark correction?" 163 women (52.41%) answered positively. 119 women (38.26%) did not know about the methods for stretch mark correction (see Fig. 8).
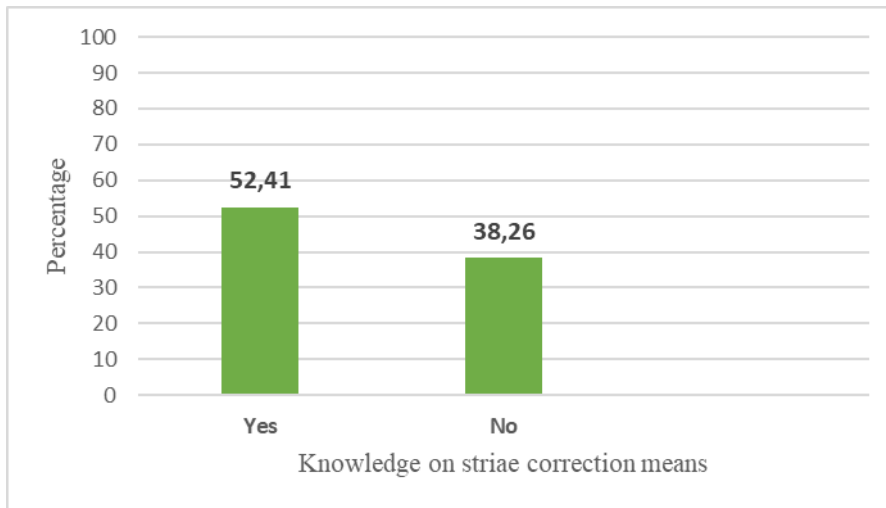
Figure 8. Women's knowledge on stria correction methods

The research results indicate that a significant number of women lack knowledge about the means and methods of striae correction, hence there is a need to encourage women to explore ways and possibilities to solve the issue of stretch marks.

Although nearly half (n = 163) of the women participating in the study claimed that they know the means and methods for stretch mark correction, only 83 women use these mentioned means or methods (see Fig. 9).
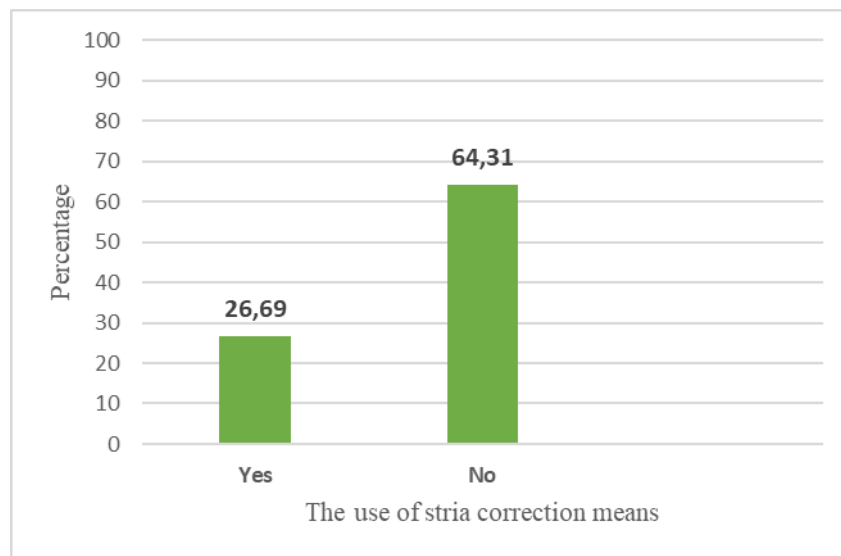
Figure 9. The usage of striae correction means among respondents

According to Mendes et al. (2022), the most used means for stretch mark correction are topical products [9]. In our study, we aimed to determine which means for striae correction are most popular among women (see Fig. 10). Respondents were asked about the means they use for stretch mark correction. Four response options were provided: creams, oils, chemical exfoliants, and hardware techniques. Women could also write their own options. Most women, 22.19% (n = 69), reported using creams for stretch mark correction. 13,18% (n = 41) of respondents stated they choose oils for stretch mark removal. 20 (6.43%) women use hardware techniques for stretch mark correction, and only 3.54% of respondents choose chemical exfoliants for striae correction. Women who chose to write their own option mentioned that they do not use any means of stretch mark correction but do sports. Two women specified a particular hardware techniques – microneedling as a means for stretch mark correction.
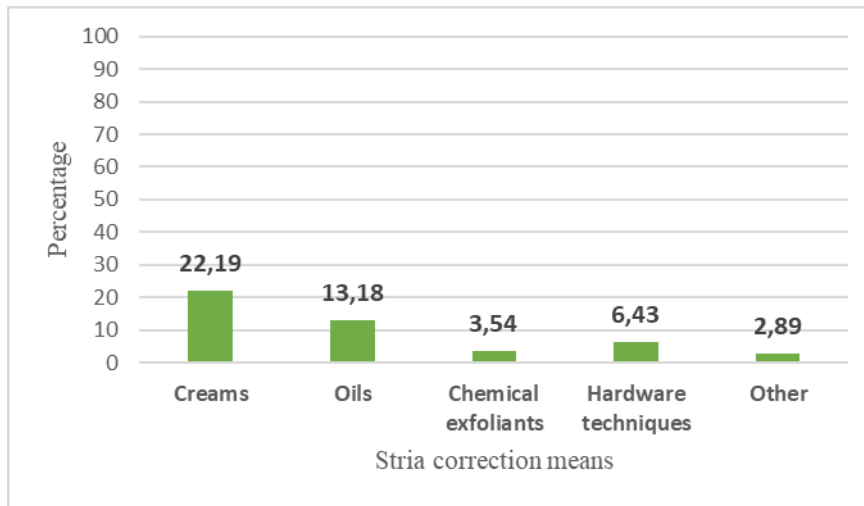
Figure 10. The choice of stria correction means among respondents

The research results indicate that the most popular means for stretch mark correction used by respondents are creams and oils. These findings align with the study conducted by Karhade et al. (2021), which shows that almost half of the women surveyed (51%) use oils and creams for stretch mark correction. We can assume that other methods of striae correction are either poorly known or entirely unknown to women. This assumption is supported by the responses to the question about the use of chemical exfoliants for stretch mark correction. Women were asked to specify which chemical exfoliants they use. Three options were provided: with glycolic acid, with salicylic acid, and with TCA (trichloroacetic acid). 2.89% of respondents chose peels with glycolic acid, 2.57% with salicylic acid, and 1.29% with TCA. Women who chose to write down their answer mentioned the previously listed means, such as oil or cream for stretch mark correction (see Fig. 11). We can conclude that women have insufficient knowledge about chemical exfoliants and their use in striae correction.
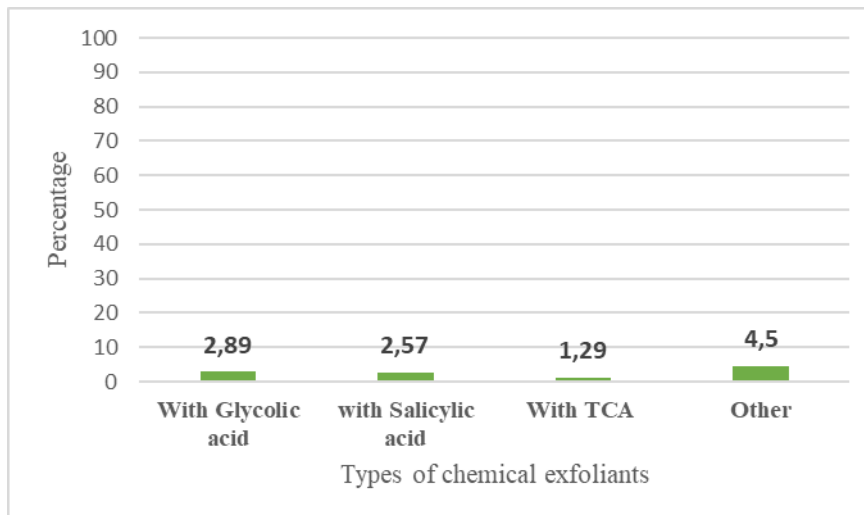

Figure 11. The use of chemical exfoliants among respondents

The impact of stretch marks on women's emotional state and quality of life. As Gaber and Elshafie (2021) claim, stretch marks deteriorate body image and are associated with beauty loss for many women. This affects women's psychological well-being and quality of life [2].

Regarding the question "Do stretch marks cause you negative emotions?" more than half (53.38%) of 311 women respondents answered affirmatively. More than one third (37.3%) of the respondents stated that stretch marks do not cause them negative emotions. 29 women (9.32%) did not respond to the question (see Fig. 12).
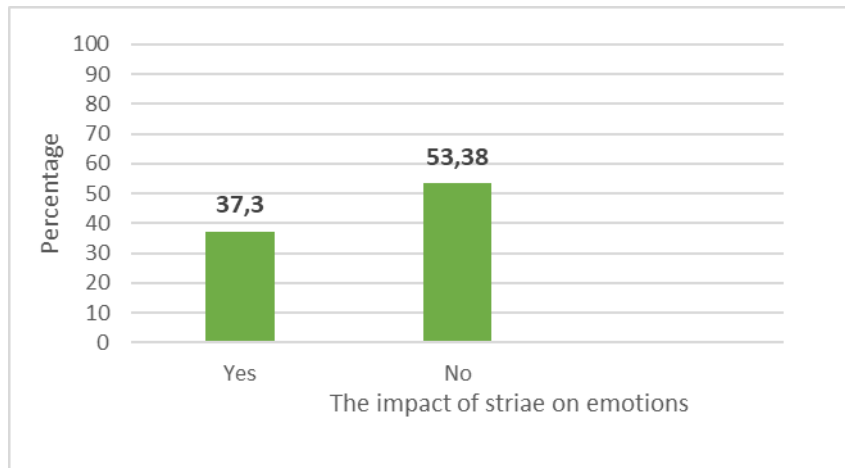
Figure 12. The impact of striae on emotional well – being of respondents

As stated by Lokhande and Mysore (2021), stretch marks are a very common cosmetic issue among women, causing psychological dissatisfaction and negative emotions [8]. This is also confirmed by our study. It revealed that more than half of the women participating in the study reported that stretch marks cause them negative emotions and feelings.

Women who experience negative emotions due to striae were asked to indicate the reason. The options provided were: "Stretch mark removal is difficult or impossible", "Stretch marks are very visible", "Stretch marks cause physical discomfort". Additionally, women could provide their own option (see Figure 13).
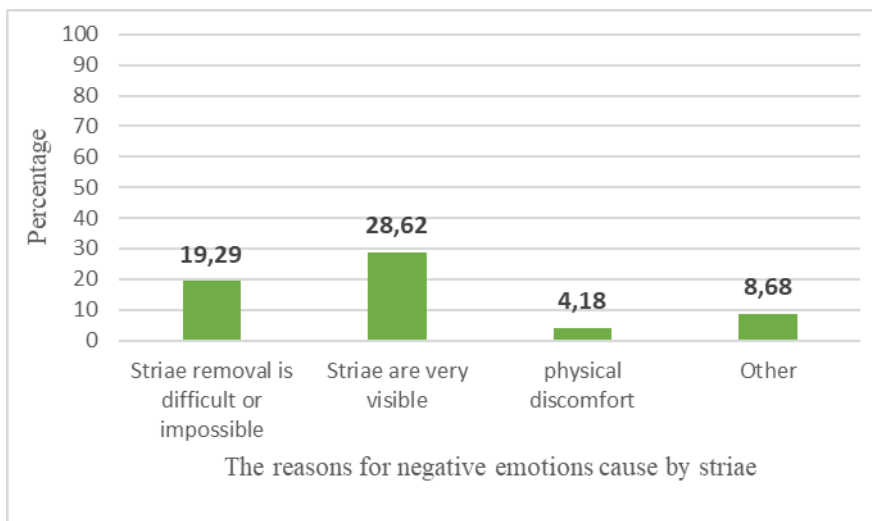
Figure 13. The reasons for negative emotions caused by stretch marks

The majority of women, 28.62% (n = 89), stated that stretch marks are highly visible, causing negative emotions. 60 women (19.29%) chose the response "Stretch mark removal is difficult or impossible." Only 4.18% of women indicated that stretch marks cause physical discomfort. Women who selected another option indicated that stretch marks cause them negative emotions because the affected skin looks aesthetically unpleasing and unattractive, causing embarrassment when undressing.

In the study conducted by Karhade et al. (2021), the reasons for negative emotions caused by stretch marks were also explored. Women were asked why stretch marks caused them concern and negative emotions. The majority of surveyed women (75%) stated that their greatest concern was the impossibility of eliminating stretch marks, as they remain for life. 37% of women indicated that stretch marks caused negative emotions because the affected skin is a different color from healthy skin, making the stretch marks highly visible. A very small percentage of women chose the option that stretch marks cause physical discomfort (itching and pain) [6]. The summarized and compared research data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Data comparison on reasons for negative emotions caused by striae

Reasons for negative emotions and concern caused by striae	Our research (%)	Karhade et al., 2021 (%)
Striae removal is difficult or impossible	19,29	**75**
Stria are very visible	**28,62**	37
Physical discomfort	4,18	3

Comparing the research data, we see that the respondents in our study are most concerned about the fact that stretch marks are highly visible, causing them negative emotions, while in the study conducted by Karhade et al. (2021), women participants believe that their greatest concern and negative emotions are due to the difficulty or impossibility of eliminating stretch marks.

In our study, women were asked to rate their stretch marks as highly visible, prominent, visible, prominent, and almost invisible. 29 women (9.32%) rated their stretch marks as highly visible and prominent. Slightly less than half of the respondents, 44.69% (n = 139), stated that their stretch marks to be visible and prominent, while 120 women (38.59%) believe that their stretch marks are almost invisible (see Figure 14). It is statistically significant that women who rated their stretch marks as highly prominent experience negative emotions due to stretch marks ($\chi2 = 180.69$; df = 2; p = 0.00). Figure 14 illustrates women's self-assessment of stretch marks.
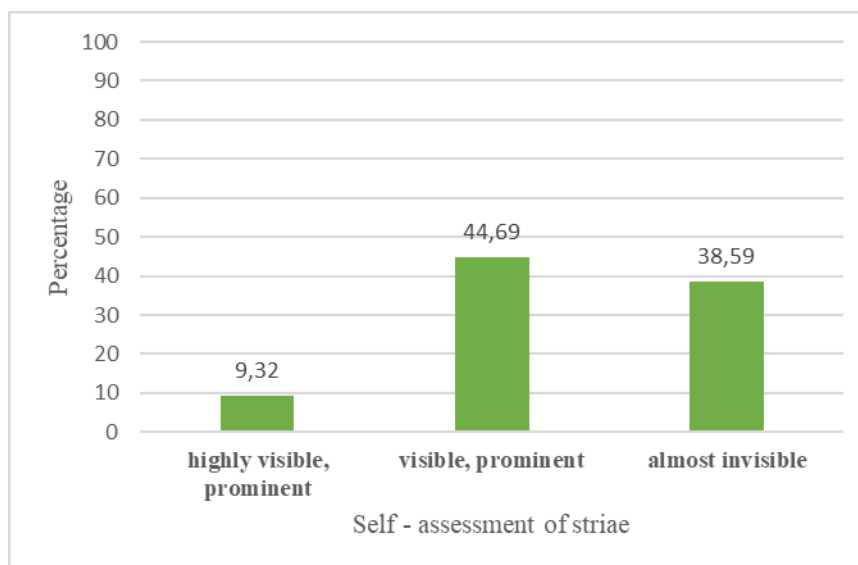

Figure 14. Respondents' self – assessment of striae

Karhade et al. (2021) also examined how women perceive the condition of their skin affected by stretch marks as one of the analyzed aspects in their study. Respondents could rate their stretch marks as "highly visible," "visible," and "almost invisible." Out of the 116 women who participated in the study, 21% of respondents rated their stretch marks as highly visible, 49% of women stated that their stretch marks are visible, and 30% indicated that their stretch marks are almost invisible [6]. We compared the results of the mentioned studies (see Table 6).

Table 6. Data comparison on striae self - assessment

Striae self - assessment	Our survey (%)	Karhade et al., 2021 (%)
highly visible, prominent	9,32	21
Prominent, visible	**44,69**	**49**
Almost invisible	38,59	30

Having compared the research data, we can conclude that the majority of women participating in the studies perceive their stretch marks as visible and prominent.

During our survey, women were asked to evaluate how stretch marks affect their emotional state and quality of life. Five statements regarding emotional states were presented: "Lack of self-confidence", "Embarrassment about one's body", "Emotional disappointment", "Reluctance to socialize". They were asked to assess how stretch marks affect each emotional state. The rating options were: "Significantly affects", "Affects", "Does not affect" (see Table 7).

Table 7. The affect of striae on women emotional state and life quality

Emotional state	Significantly affects %	Affects %	Does not affect %
Lack of self-confidence	22,86	30,58	**34,02**
Embarrassment about one's body	21,58	**34,76**	29,20
Emotional disappointment	27,72	**32,19**	26,27
Reluctance to socialize	26,11	21,25	**38,17**

22.86% of women stated that stretch marks significantly affect their self-confidence. 30.58% (n = 94) believe that stretch marks affect their self-confidence, and 34.02% (n = 89) believe that stretch marks do not affect their self-confidence. 73 women (21.58%) with stretch marks on their skin feel very embarrassed about their bodies, 34.76% (n = 89) feel embarrassed, and 29.20% (n = 75) indicated that stretch marks do not cause them embarrassment about their bodies. 27.72% of women (n = 70) believe that stretch marks significantly contribute to their emotional disappointment, 32.19% (n = 81) believe they contribute, and 26.27% (n = 69) stated that stretch marks do not contribute to emotional disappointment. 26.11% of women (n = 68) stated that stretch marks significantly affect their reluctance to socialize. 68 women (21.25%) believe that stretch marks affect their reluctance to socialize, and 38.17% (n = 102) of respondents stated that stretch marks do not affect their reluctance to socialize. Statistically significant correlations were identified, revealing that women who rated their stretch marks as highly visible and prominent believe that stretch marks significantly affect their quality of life: lack of self-confidence ($\chi2$ = 30.36; df = 3; p = 0.00), embarrassment about their body ($\chi2$ = 23.25; df = 3; p = 0.00), experiencing emotional disappointment ($\chi2$ = 28.39; df = 3; p = 0.00), reluctance to socialize ($\chi2$ = 22.67; df = 3; p = 0.00), avoiding daily activities ($\chi2$ = 66.77; df = 4; p = 0.00), avoiding leisure activities ($\chi2$ = 45.13; df = 4; p = 0.00), choosing to wear concealing clothes ($\chi2$ = 33.20; df = 4; p = 0.00), and worrying that their partner will lose interest in them ($\chi2$ = 46.25; df = 4; p = 0.00).

The data from the study conducted by Karhade et al. (2021) also reveal correlations between how women perceive their stretch marks and their quality of life assessment. Women who rated their stretch marks as highly prominent reported experiencing embarrassment, choosing more conservative clothing, lacking self-confidence, neglecting their social life, and encountering communication issues [6].

One of the aspects we aimed to explore in the conducted study was the impact of stretch marks on women's social life, relationships with others, and quality of life. The participants were asked to evaluate how stretch marks affect their social life and interpersonal relationships (see Table 8).

Table 8. The impact of stretch marks on social life and relationships with others

Life quality aspects	Very often %	Often %	Rarely %	Never %
avoid daily activities	2,57	3,22	14,15	**67,52**
avoid leisure activities	3,54	4,82	16,72	**62,38**

choose to wear concealing clothes	28,33	**30,50**	11,58	21,80
worry that their partner will lose interest in them	17,40	**35,79**	8,01	26,27

Women were asked to assess how often they refuse everyday and leisure activities, choose to wear more covered clothing to hide stretch marks on their skin, and worry that their partner will lose interest in them. 2.57% of women (n = 8) who have stretch marks on their skin refuse everyday activities very often. 3.22% (n = 10) do it often, 14.15% (n = 44) do it rarely, and 67.52% (n = 210) never refuse daily activities. 3.54% (n = 11) of respondents very often refuse leisure activities. 4.82% of women (n = 15) often refuse leisure activities, 16.72% (n = 52) rarely do so, and 62.38% (n = 194) of women with stretch marks on their skin never avoid leisure activities. When asked how often they choose to wear more covered clothing to hide stretch marks, 18.33% of respondents (n = 78) said they do it very often, 30.50% (n = 115) often choose more covered clothing, 11.58% (n = 36) rarely do it, and 21.80% (n = 98) never do it. 17.40% of respondents said they very often worry that their partner will lose interest in them. 35.79% of women (n = 138) often worry, 8.01% (n = 28) rarely worry, and 26.27% (n = 135) of women never worry that their partner will lose interest in them because they have stretch marks. It is statistically significant that women who have stretch marks on their thighs choose more covered clothing to hide them ($\chi2$ = 74.57; df = 4; p = 0.00).

Gaber and Elshafie (2021) conducted a study aiming to explore the impact of stretch marks acquired during pregnancy on women's quality of life. The study involved 323 women who were asked questions about how intensely they felt certain negative emotions or how stretch marks affected their quality of life during the past week. Women were asked whether stretch marks influenced their refusal of daily activities. 4.3% of women stated that it greatly influenced, 27.6% said it influenced, 40.6% of respondents said it slightly influenced, and 27.6% claimed that stretch marks did not influence the refusal of women's daily activities. When asked if stretch marks affected women's clothing choices over the past week, 43.3% of respondents said it greatly affected, 51.7% said it affected, 0.6% of respondents indicated that it affected only slightly, and 4.3% thought it did not affect at all. Responses to the question of whether stretch marks affected the refusal of leisure activities over the past week were distributed as follows: greatly affected - 43.3%, affected - 52.3%, slightly affected - 0%, and not affected at all - 4.3%. The authors of the study wanted to ascertain how stretch marks affected women's sexual lives over the past week. 2.2% of women claimed it greatly affected, 41.8% said it affected, 51.7% of respondents stated it affected slightly, and 4.3% indicated that it did not affect at all.

Comparison of our research results with Gaber and Elshafie (2021) conducted research results is presented in table 9.

Table 9. The comparison of data on striae impact on life quality

Our survey				Gaber, Elshafie (2021)				
Quality of Life Indicator	Very often %	Often %	Rarely %	Never %	Quality of Life Indicator	Affect greatly %	Affect %	Slightly affect %	Does not affect %
Refuse daily activities	2,57	3,22	14,15	**67,52**	The impact of stretch marks on refusal of daily activities in the past week	4,3	27,6	**40,6**	27,6
Refuse leisure activities	3,54	4,82	16,72	**62,38**	The effect of stretch marks on refusal of leisure activities in the past week	43,3	**52,3**	0	4,3
Choose to wear concealing clothes	28,40	**30,50**	11,58	21,80	The impact of stretch marks on clothing choice in the past week	43,3	**51,7**	0,6	4,3
worry that their partner will lose interest in them	17,40	**35,78**	8,01	26,27	The impact of stretch marks on sexual life in the past week	2,2	41,8	**51,7**	4,3

Having compared the results of the studies, we see that the majority of our study participants (67.52%) never refuse daily activities due to stretch marks on their skin, while according to Gaber and Elshafie (2021), the majority of their study respondents believe that stretch marks either affect or slightly affect the refusal of daily activities. Most of our study participants stated that stretch marks do not influence the refusal of leisure activities. However, the majority of Gaber and Elshafie (2021) study participants believe that stretch marks significantly affect the refusal of leisure activities (43.3%) and that they affect it – indicated by 52.3% of respondents. Respondents from both studies mentioned that stretch marks on the skin lead to choosing more covered clothing. More than a third of our study respondents often worry that their partner will lose interest, with 17.40% even experiencing this very often. Meanwhile, the majority of participants in the Gaber and Elshafie (2021) study acknowledge that stretch marks negatively or partially affect their sexual life.

Overall, both studies indicate that stretch marks have an impact on women's daily activities, clothing choices, leisure activity refusal, and sexual life.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. There is a wide range of stretch mark correction procedures available in modern cosmetology, but women often lack knowledge about them. Most women opt for oils and creams for stretch mark correction.

2. Stretch marks do not cause physical discomfort or pose a threat to health, but they do lead to psychological dissatisfaction and negative emotions, affecting the quality of life for women. Women who perceive their stretch marks as very prominent or prominent tend to experience more negative emotions and feelings. Due to stretch marks on their skin, women feel ashamed of their bodies, choose to wear more covered clothing, and worry that their partner will lose interest in them.

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TRANSITION FROM MATERNAL CHRONIC RENAL FAILURE TO PERITONEAL DIALYSIS TREATMENT

Sevda Tűzűn Özdemir
Izmir Kavram Vocational School, Turkey
Ege University, Turkey

Aynur Tűreyen

Ege University, Turkey

Yasemin Yildirim
Ege University, Turkey

Abstract

Chronic kidney failure (CKF) has become an increasingly important public health issue in our country and worldwide. According to data systems in our country, as of the end of 2022, there were a total of 86,665 patients with chronic kidney failure, and 4.1% of these patients undergo peritoneal dialysis treatment. Peritoneal dialysis requires active participation of the patient in the treatment, and it can lead to negative effects on body image, self-esteem, and sexual relations due to the peritoneal dialysis catheter, causing anxiety and depression in patients and negatively affecting their quality of life. Throughout human life, individuals undergo changes in identity, roles, responsibilities, abilities, and behaviors due to various reasons (illness, pregnancy, death, birth). One of the fundamental duties of nurses is to assist individuals undergoing various transitions in their lives, to support healthy transitions, and to minimize unhealthy transitions. In this study, the process of transition experienced by a healthy woman transitioning to the role of motherhood due to health problems during pregnancy, and transitioning to chronic kidney failure and peritoneal dialysis treatment, is examined based on Meleis' Transition Theory.

Keywords: *nurse; peritoneal dialysis; mother; Meleis; transition theory*

Introduction

With the advancement of medical technology, life expectancy is increasing, and the prevalence of chronic diseases is also on the rise. Chronic kidney failure (CKF) has become an increasingly important public health issue in our country and worldwide (Tolasa & Akyol, 2017; Taşan E. et al., 2019). CKF is an irreversible and progressive disease that affects all systems and organs due to the loss of nephrons beyond recyclability and the decrease in glomerular filtration rate as a result of various factors (Tolasa & Akyol, 2017; Yıldırım, 2017). The treatment options for CKF are hemodialysis (HD), peritoneal dialysis (PD), and transplantation (TX) (Tüzün Özdemir & Akyol, 2023). According to the Turkish Nephrology Society 2022 Registry data, as of the end of 2022, there were a total of 86,665 CKF patients, of which 69.77% preferred Hemodialysis (HD), 4.1% preferred peritoneal dialysis (PD) treatment, and 24.48% opted for transplantation. PD treatment is the least preferred CKF treatment model in our country (Süleymanlar, et al. 2022). In this treatment model, the patient performs the treatment at home without visiting a different center and actively participates in the treatment. Continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) involves delivering dialysis fluid into the patient's abdominal cavity through a permanent silicone catheter, which is then replaced with fresh fluid after a certain period (4-6 hours), and this process is repeated 4/5 times a day. In automated peritoneal dialysis (APD) treatment, the patient is connected to a PD machine while lying down, disconnects from the machine in the morning (after 8-12 hours), and does not undergo dialysis during the day (Gökçe, 2010; Ballı, 2015; Aydın, 2022). Patient involvement in PD treatment, frequent dialysis changes during the day in CAPD, and negative effects on body image, self-esteem, and sexual relations due to the PD catheter can lead to anxiety, depression, and negatively impact the quality of life (Aguiar, et al. 2019). A study found that PD patients expected their active involvement in treatment to have a positive impact on their quality of life, but the results showed that the quality of life of PD patients was worse compared to other treatment modalities (Süleymanlar, et al. 2022). In a study examining the effects of PD on life and psychological symptoms, 32% of patients reported difficulty in going to work, 44.4% reported difficulties in social life, and 46.6% reported that nothing was the same in their personal lives as before, indicating it was more complex and difficult (Karaca, et al. 2012).

The objective of this study is to assess a patient diagnosed with chronic renal failure during pregnancy, who is scheduled to commence peritoneal dialysis treatment, within the framework of the Meleis Transition Theory. The aim is to facilitate her transition process in a manner conducive to optimal health outcomes.

Meleis' Transition Theory

Meleis' Transition Theory was published in 1994 by Afaf Ibrahim Meleis after extensive research. This theory describes the transition from a known situation to an unknown situation (Artan, et al. 2022). Transition encompasses situations that cause changes in various aspects of human life such as identity, roles, responsibilities, abilities, and behaviors; for example, illness, pregnancy, death, birth, migration, etc. (Meleis, et al. 2000).

The main concepts of Meleis' theory are grouped into four key points. Firstly, the nature, types, patterns, and characteristics of transition situations are examined. Secondly, facilitators and barriers encountered during the transition process are identified; these factors may be personal or societal. Thirdly, the individual's responses to the transition process are addressed. Finally, the role of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual nursing care in transition is explained (Konuk & Su, 2020; Meleis, 2010).

Transitions are highly complex and multifaceted. Meleis argues that a successful transition consists of five fundamental characteristics: awareness, taking responsibility, change and diversity, flow of time/transition, significant milestones, and events (Bekmezci, et al. 2016; Chao, et al. 2020). In Meleis' theory, there are three main headings: the nature of transition, transition situations, and response patterns to transition (Artan, et al. 2022).

1. Nature of Transition

The nature of transition encompasses an area where nurses play a significant role in patient care. Nurses working in this field should understand not only an individual's single transition process but also recognize that individuals and their families may experience multiple transition processes simultaneously. Awareness is associated with the perception, understanding, and acknowledgment of transition experiences (Im, 2010; Meleis, 2010). Taking responsibility indicates the extent to which an individual engages in the transition process. In this context, the level of awareness affects the level of engagement, and awareness is not possible without involvement (Meleis, 2010). Change and diversity influence the responsibility assumed during the transition process. All transitions are characterized by the flow and change over time. Understanding a transition situation fully requires identifying and uncovering the meaning and effects of the change it involves (McEwen, 2014).

Transitions can be identified by significant milestones and events such as birth, death, menopause, diagnosis of illness, etc. Multiple transitions involve significant milestones or events. These milestones often facilitate awareness or active participation. Additionally, there are milestones or events characterized by a sense of stability in new habits, skills, lifestyles, and personal care activities. Each milestone requires the nurse's attention, knowledge, and experience in different ways (Bekmezci, et al. 2016; McEwen, 2014).

2. Transition Situations

Individuals' personal, social, or community situations can facilitate or hinder transition processes, and these situations can affect the outcomes of transitions (Meleis, 2010). Individuals' health is influenced by biological, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental factors. Additionally, the degree of alignment between an individual's roles within society affects whether the transition process is easy or difficult. Role definitions and values can lead to difficulties in role transition when not accepted by the society experienced. Socioeconomic status is also a significant factor influencing transition. Preparations for the future can facilitate the transition process, while being unprepared can make the process more difficult. Social resources can also influence the transition process; societal elements such as reliable information and role models obtained from health professionals, books, educational groups, and written materials provide significant support during the transition process (Artan, et al. 2022).

3. Response Patterns

A healthy transition process is determined by indicators of development and outcomes (Meleis, 2010;22). These indicators are measurable parameters of how the transition process progresses at each stage. Development indicators include a sense of attachment, interaction ability, positioning, self-confidence, and coping skills (Artan, et al. 2022; Meleis, et al. 2000).

Physical, Psychological, and Spiritual Nursing Care

Meleis (2010) emphasizes that the primary duty of nurses is to assist individuals during various transitions in their lives, support healthy transitions, and minimize unhealthy transitions. Since the concept of transition affects an individual's physical and psychological health, it falls directly within the realm of nursing (Körükcü & Kukulu, 2014). Understanding the transition process, identifying individual needs and potential risks, and planning effective interventions to enhance well-being are crucial tasks for nurses (Meleis, 2010). Perceiving the experienced transition process, identifying the individual's needs and potential problems, and planning effective interventions to enhance well-being are also among the responsibilities of nurses during the transition process (Aguiar, et al. 2019; Karaca, et al. 2012). Understanding the characteristics and conditions inherent in a transition process will contribute to the development of nursing care tailored to the unique experiences of clients and their families and thus provide healthy responses to the transition.

Methodology

The study was conducted at the dialysis unit of a university hospital in Izmir between April 1st and May 30th, 2023. Prior to the commencement of the study, written and verbal consent was obtained from the patient. As part of the research protocol, the researcher devised and executed a nursing care plan tailored to the patient, guided by the Meleis Transition Theory.

CASE

M.A. is a 30-year-old mother of two children. M.A., who is married, is a housewife. She experienced her first pregnancy at the age of 26 and developed preeclampsia during her second pregnancy at the age of 28. She was diagnosed with chronic kidney failure a year ago. While hospitalized during her pregnancy, M.A. gave birth to a healthy baby girl at 34 weeks. Continuing regular nephrology outpatient clinic follow-up after childbirth, M.A. was asked by her nephrologist to decide on one of the end-stage kidney replacement therapy options due to symptoms such as decreased glomerular filtration rate, edema, hypertension, nausea-vomiting, and loss of appetite. Due to her two children being young, M.A. decided that PD treatment would be more suitable for her.

One week ago, a peritoneal dialysis catheter was placed, and patient education has begun. During this process, the patient completed the necessary arrangements for PD treatment at home. Prior to the interview, verbal and written consent was obtained from M.A.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF TRANSITION THEORY AND CASE STUDY

Nature of Transition: Types and Patterns

Transition Theory provides nurses with a roadmap to understanding patients' health-disease, situational, and emotional transitions (Meleis, 2010). Within the conceptual framework of the theory, when evaluating M.A.'s transition process, situations such as becoming a mother for the second time in the last few years, experiencing illness during pregnancy, followed by a diagnosis of CKD, and being separated from her first child due to necessary treatment during pregnancy are observed. These situations indicate that M.A. is undergoing developmental transitions. M.A.'s health-disease transitions and transition to motherhood are still ongoing. According to the nature of transition theory, M.A.'s transitions can be described as sequential, related, and multiple transitions.

Awareness: Meleis emphasizes that awareness, although not mandatory in the transition process, is key to achieving positive outcomes (Meleis, 2010). Ms. M.A. is aware of her transitions and has planned for a smooth transition. However, the experience of illness and treatment during pregnancy, followed by the diagnosis of a chronic illness, has been a challenging experience for the patient. Additionally, due to the difficult process she experienced, she mentioned that not being able to give enough attention to her children, and not being able to fulfill her roles as a mother and wife, were transitions she did not want. It is quite challenging to experience these situations, be unable to change them, and be fully aware of everything.

Taking Responsibility (Participation): The level of responsibility, a feature of transition, reflects the degree of an individual's participation in the transition process (Meleis, 2010). Ms. M.A. is aware of the responsibilities she must carry as a woman, mother, and wife. However, the illness she experienced has prevented her from fulfilling her responsibilities, such as not being able to spend enough time with her children and husband, not being able to breastfeed her second child, and not being able to fully fulfill her roles as a mother and wife. During this transition period, she feels supported by her husband and family but believes that she has not fulfilled her

responsibilities. This situation creates feelings of anger and inadequacy. Ms. M.A. expressed that she felt the joy of becoming a mother for the second time, but she could not show the same attention to her second child as she did to her first, could not breastfeed adequately, and needed her mother-in-law's support in caring for her children due to her illness.

Change and Diversity: Adapting to new roles and situations requires change, and change is inevitable in all transitions (Meleis, 2010). Nurses are responsible for preparing individuals for change and helping them cope with the changes they encounter during the transition process. The transitions experienced by Ms. M.A. are characterized by significant changes and diversities in both her and her family's lives.

Flow of Time: Transitions move chronologically, and each individual's transition experience is personal and unique (Meleis, 2010). Ms. M.A.'s transitions are long-term processes, and it should be noted that the process is ongoing when evaluating them.

Significant Milestones and Events: Identifying critical periods or milestones is necessary for determining appropriate interventions (Meleis, 2010). Ms. M.A. evaluates the significant milestones and events in her life. She says that until the 22nd week of her pregnancy, everything went well, and she was happy, but receiving the diagnosis of preeclampsia, the risk of losing her baby, and subsequently being diagnosed with chronic kidney disease were the most important events in her life. After receiving the diagnosis of preeclampsia, the most important thing for her was the health of her baby and herself, and she was also worried about what would happen to her other child if something happened to her. After giving birth to her baby, she thought she would get rid of all these illness processes, but learning that she now had a chronic illness and needed to undergo dialysis regularly made her very upset. However, she believes that she needs to take care of her health for the sake of her children's health and care and needs to comply with the treatments.

Transition Situations: Facilitating and Hindering Factors

It has been determined that Ms. M.A. experienced many transitions she did not want within a short period of time and attributed negative meanings to the transitions during our initial interviews due to both her and her children's health problems. These factors emerge as factors hindering the transition. Accordingly, Ms. M.A. firstly needs to accept her own health problems and protect her health. It is important for her to adapt to dialysis treatment, learn the correct application steps of peritoneal dialysis treatment, and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to manage possible complications at home. In addition, she needs to become aware of nutrition and lifestyle changes and learn and implement what is necessary to support her children's healthy development. Thus, a plan is made for her to experience a healthy transition process. Ms. M.A. expressed that she was worried about not being able to provide adequate care for her children and not being able to properly apply the necessary PD treatment for her health, as her children still need her care and she cannot fully trust herself to apply the PD treatment. However, she mentioned that she preferred PD treatment out of necessity because she would have to go to a different center for hemodialysis treatment three days a week, and during this process, she would have to be separated from her children. Nursing care processes related to PD diet compliance, medication use and application steps, PD application steps, cleaning of the home dialysis room and dialysis application, possible complications and solution suggestions, chronic disease treatment and care, care of her children, and education aimed at supporting their healthy development have been planned for Ms. M.A. Additionally, her strengths are supported, and preparations have been made for situations that may lead to weaknesses.

PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND SPIRITUAL NURSING CARE ACCORDING TO THE TRANSITION THEORY

The nurse responsible for MA's care was consulted, and a plan for regular education and nursing care for the patient was established over a 2-week period. During this process, MA was initially provided with information on CKD, PD treatment, and potential complications through a PowerPoint presentation and a demonstration on a model. On the same day, MA was instructed on hand washing procedures, preparation of PD supplies, and the steps involved in dialysis application through a demonstration on the patient. Finally, the PD catheter dressing of the patient was changed, and the patient was discharged home. On the second day, when the patient returned, PD supplies were prepared, surgical hand washing and PD application were performed to complete any missing steps. On the third day, the patient was asked to perform the dialysis process steps themselves, and any remaining steps were explained and completed. Additionally, the patient was observed changing their own catheter dressing. After completing the dialysis

procedure, the patient was educated on dietary management. On the fourth day, MA appeared more confident, successfully completing all PD application steps without any omissions. She expressed feeling better, believing that deciding on dialysis was the right choice for her, allowing her to stay with her children and care for them as desired. On the fifth day, MA was educated on the disposal of medical waste, cleaning of the PD room, and storage of PD solution at home after the PD treatment. One week after starting the education, during the seventh session, the patient was able to complete all PD application steps correctly, answer all questions about potential complications, treatment procedures, and diet. MA's psychology was observed to be better than during the initial encounter, showing increased confidence and a more positive outlook on life. Additionally, MA came to the clinic with her children and husband. Both children were observed to be healthy and happy, and MA's husband expressed, 'When she is happy, we are all happy,' indicating his wife's improved mood.

PROCESS INDICATORS OF A HEALTHY TRANSITION

According to Meleis, process indicators of a healthy transition include interaction, a sense of attachment, positioning, self-confidence, and coping skills development (Meleis, 2010).

Interaction: MA expressed difficulty in communicating with others when she was diagnosed with preeclampsia and subsequently with CKD due to emotional difficulties. However, with the knowledge and support gained during the dialysis education process, she regained confidence and improved her communication with her surroundings. This is an important indicator of interaction in a healthy transition process.

Sense of Attachment: MA emphasized her trust in dialysis nurses and other healthcare staff, stating that positive interaction with the healthcare team supported her. Trust and attachment to healthcare workers are significant indicators of a healthy transition process.

Development of Self-Confidence and Coping: As MA began to implement dialysis treatment and progressed through the education process, she gained increasing confidence in managing the treatment and started to manage this process successfully. This is an important indicator of increased self-confidence and coping skills development in a healthy transition process.

Mastery Indicators: MA mentioned that with the knowledge and skills she gained in applying and managing PD treatment, she began to fulfill her familial roles and responsibilities more effectively. This indicates the acquisition of new skills and the ability to apply them successfully in a healthy transition process.

Development of Flexible Identity: By accepting and being determined to manage dialysis treatment, MA demonstrated flexibility in accepting the status of being a chronic patient and integrating with this new identity. This indicates the ability to integrate with new identities and roles flexibly in a healthy transition process.

Conclusion

In light of Meleis' Transition Theory, the nursing care provided to M.A., a patient undergoing peritoneal dialysis treatment following a diagnosis of chronic kidney failure during pregnancy, offers valuable insights into facilitating healthy transition processes. Through a comprehensive assessment of M.A.'s transition journey, it becomes evident that nurses play a pivotal role in understanding and supporting individuals through complex life transitions.

The conceptual framework of Meleis' Transition Theory provides a structured approach to comprehending patients' health-related transitions, encompassing situational, emotional, and developmental aspects. M.A.'s transition process, marked by significant life events such as pregnancy, illness, and the subsequent diagnosis of chronic kidney disease, underscores the multifaceted nature of transition experiences. Within this framework, M.A.'s journey can be characterized by sequential, related, and multiple transitions, emphasizing the complexity inherent in her situation.

Central to Meleis' theory are the notions of awareness, taking responsibility, change and diversity, the flow of time, and significant milestones and events. These concepts offer a lens through which to evaluate M.A.'s transition process. Despite facing numerous challenges, including the need to balance her health needs with her roles as a mother and wife, M.A. demonstrates resilience and determination in navigating her transition journey. By actively engaging with her healthcare team and acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for peritoneal dialysis treatment, she exhibits a proactive approach to managing her health.

The nursing care interventions implemented for M.A., guided by Meleis' Transition Theory, focus on facilitating her adaptation to dialysis treatment, supporting her physical and psychological well-being, and enhancing her coping mechanisms. Through structured education sessions, hands-on demonstrations, and ongoing support, M.A. gains confidence in managing her treatment and assumes an active role in her healthcare journey. The observed indicators of a healthy transition, including increased interaction, a sense of attachment, development of self-confidence and coping skills, and mastery of new roles, highlight the effectiveness of the nursing interventions in promoting M.A.'s well-being.

In conclusion, the application of Meleis' Transition Theory provides valuable insights into understanding and supporting individuals undergoing complex health-related transitions. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of transition experiences and tailoring nursing interventions accordingly, healthcare professionals can facilitate healthy transition processes and optimize patient outcomes. Further research in this area is recommended to deepen our understanding of transition experiences and inform evidence-based nursing practices.

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INTERCULTURAL NURSING IN CHAOS ENVIRONMENT: CASE REPORT

Duygu Akbaş Uysal

Izmir Kavram Vocational School, Turkey

Fisun Şenuzun Aykar

Izmir Tınaztepe Unıversity, Turkey

ABSTRACT

The epidemic caused by the Covid-19 virus released in December 2019 was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. The rapid spread of the virus unexpectedly and causing high deaths has led to a difficult process in the field of health. Societies, which are a social and cultural phenomenon, have also been affected by this epidemic in different ways. The phenomenon of health is not only a stable state of medical procedures, but also a dynamic concept where different cultures come together. Defending that if nurses do not take into account the cultural differences in the individual or society, the care to be given will not be effective, Leninger says that care should have the universal characteristics of the human structure under all conditions. In this sense, the aim of intercultural nursing is to provide culturally appropriate care. In this case, there are problems in health caused by the communication problem encountered in an Angolan patient who was hospitalized in the burn service when the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was pandemic.

Keywords: *Leninger model, burn, nursing, pandemic,transculturel nursing*

Introduction

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a pandemic that originated in the Wuhan region of China, causing acute respiratory infections and leading to high mortality rates (Aslan 2020). Due to the nature of the pandemic, anxiety and fear arising from it are affecting people's daily relationships (Aykut et al.2020;Bulut et al.2020). It is quite natural to feel more anxious during this period compared to normal life (Torumoğlu et al.2004). Anxiety and fear are typical responses to uncertainty, threat, and extraordinary life events (Tortumoğlu et al. 2004). Healthcare providers need to consider this when caring for patients and offer support (Aykut et al.2020;Bulut et al.2020). Strong social support facilitates coping by providing individuals with someone to share their emotions and thoughts, regardless of their cultural background ((Aykut et al.2020;Bulut et al.2020).

Culture is defined as values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, customs, and traditions shared and transmitted by people (Bekar 2001). Cultural sensitivity refers to being aware of and sensitive to cultural differences, similarities, cultural history, and ethnic makeup (Öztürk 2012). People shape aspects of life such as dietary habits, sleep patterns, physical activity levels, use of substances like tobacco, coping mechanisms for stress, and attitudes towards illness based on cultural influences (Öztürk 2012). Consequently, healthcare needs can vary among individuals from different cultures (Tuna 2015,Tanrıverdi et al.2009). Studies related to culture in nursing care began in the 1950s and evolved with the emergence of transcultural nursing. Transcultural care involves comparing health beliefs and practices from different countries or regions, focusing on comparative, humanistic, and scientific knowledge to preserve health and improve healing across all cultures (Tuna 2015,Tanrıverdi et al.2009). Leininger, a pioneer of transcultural nursing, stated that "care is the essence of nursing, healing is the essence of care, and care is curing," bringing about significant changes (Leninger 1991).

Transcultural care within cultural contexts is a holistic process that emphasizes research and deep observation (Tuna 2015,Tanrıverdi et al.2009). Effective intercultural communication enhances the quality of care, leading to satisfaction for both caregivers and care recipients (Leninger 1991). Conversely, inadequate intercultural communication between nurses and patients can result in negative outcomes such as cultural conflict, cultural voids, cultural pain, and culture shock (Leninger 1991).

In the chaotic environment brought about by the pandemic, nurses can be affected by even minor disruptions in communication with patients (Williamson) et al.2010. Communication breakdowns adversely affect the quality of care and treatment (Williamson) et al.2010). Therefore, for effective continuity of care, nurses need to plan care with a holistic perspective.

Purpose

The aim of this case study is to evaluate a patient from Angola who was admitted to the burn unit with a diagnosis of 27% third-degree electrical burn at the time of the pandemic outbreak using the Leininger Model, and to draw attention to the outcomes of culturally competent nursing care.

CASE REPORT

J.R., a 30-year-old male patient from Angola, is being treated in the burn unit due to third-degree burns covering 27% of his body. The patient speaks only French, and there are no staff members in the unit who speak French, nor is there an onsite French interpreter available. Consequently, daily dressing changes have been performed without effective communication, leading to a lack of understanding by the patient regarding movement precautions, resulting in joint contractures in his extremities. Additionally, due to differing dietary habits, the patient has refused hospital meals, leading to significant weight loss and inadequate caloric intake.

Consent for contracture and flap surgeries was obtained from the patient with the assistance of an interpreter, but surgery had to be postponed for two weeks due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this delay, explanations were provided to the patient via internet translation due to the absence of an interpreter. Subsequently, surgery was further postponed when the operating doctor tested positive for COVID-19. When the surgery was finally performed on the rescheduled date, the patient exhibited agitation postoperatively, attempting to remove dressings aggressively, causing bleeding at the wound site.

Upon admission, the patient initially communicated with nurses by saying "mama," although he did not understand the nurses' responses during rounds. However, after undergoing procedures, he began displaying inappropriate behaviors. The absence of an active interpreter due to the pandemic and the repeated postponements of surgery have significantly distressed the patient.

The purpose of Cross-Cultural Nursing Care Decision Making

The Leininger Model is based on philosophical assumptions derived from systems theory, anthropology, and humanistic values. According to the system, nurses who plan care listen to and discuss the patient's problems and life stories, and encourage the individual to decide what they need. The goal of Leininger's Cultural Care Theory is to explain the differences in nursing care interventions across human cultures and how culture affects individuals' health status.

In the case, the difficulties experienced by the patient, particularly due to language barriers, are highlighted. The inability to communicate with the patient has led to the development of a significant complication of burns, contracture. Additionally, the fear brought about by the global pandemic and being alone in an unfamiliar country have further exacerbated the patient's agitation. Based on these considerations, our aim in using this model is to evaluate the patient's cultural characteristics and to provide nursing care by understanding the patient's cultural differences.

In line with the Leininger Model,

The aim of Leininger's Cultural Care Theory is to explain the differences in nursing care interventions across human cultures and how culture affects individuals' health status. Providing culturally appropriate care involves understanding the dimensions of culture, shifting from a biophysical to a more holistic approach, increasing knowledge, seeking to change approaches, and developing clinical skills. In this sense, to provide holistic care, the nursing diagnoses we identified in the patient are as follows:

a. Communication impairment due to language barrier between the patient and caregiver.

b. Ineffective coping related to separation from home country and family.

c. Weakness related to social isolation and social change**.**

a. **Communication Disorder Between the Patient and the Caregiver Due to Language Problems**
   Lack of language proficiency prevented a comprehensive history from being obtained from the patient, who presented with disorientation and agitation, thus hindering a thorough clinical evaluation. The patient resides in Angola, an African country, and the nursing staff on the unit lacked knowledge about this region. Utilizing technology, information was gathered about the patient's place of origin and dietary habits. In order to develop an effective treatment plan, the patient's spiritual values and customs were explored, and their dietary habits and health practices were assessed. The patient mentioned consuming mostly dry foods, which did not align with our typical cuisine.

   Efforts were made to provide the patient with more of the foods they enjoy as part of their customary diet to meet their caloric needs. For instance, the patient preferred having two boiled eggs for breakfast but declined tomatoes, which are common in our meals.

   Given the language barrier, basic Turkish words were taught to the patient to facilitate simple communication in the clinical setting, such as "water," "nurse," and "toilet." Recently, the patient has started learning to express gratitude and count numbers.

b. **Ineffective Coping Due to Leaving One's Country and Being Away from Family**
   The patient is unable to display appropriate coping strategies related to emotional fluctuations and the separation process they are experiencing. During this period, an assessment was conducted to evaluate the patient's current coping abilities and reactions to events. Sufficient time was given to the patient to express themselves, and observations were made regarding their facial expressions, body language, and eye movements. Additionally, expert support was sought to assist in understanding the patient's situation and identifying effective coping mechanisms.

c. **Social Isolation and Powerlessness Due to Social Change**

The patient feels isolated in social settings due to a lack of understanding and the physical deformity resulting from flap surgery. During this period, the patient was encouraged to participate in daily life activities. Methods to promote social interaction were selected in collaboration with the patient to facilitate their socialization.

Discussion

The changes and losses experienced during the illness process can be challenging for patients, especially when these changes and losses are not fully understood, leading to a chaotic situation. Patients generally seek to be understood and supported; therefore, when they feel misunderstood, they may experience agitation and stress. However, when patients begin to feel understood, agitation decreases, and a sense of trust develops, significantly improving the quality of care(Bolsoy 2006;Yaman 2016).

Despite technological and scientific advancements in the healthcare field, the relationships and communication between healthcare professionals and patients remain crucial. Humans are fundamentally relational beings. Healthcare personnel, especially nurses who interact with patients continuously, should understand and assess each individual within their cultural context and consider these cultural differences in their nursing approach (Bolsoy 2006;Yaman 2016).

In his study conducted in Japan, Hisama (2000) found that nurses' awareness of the cultures of the individuals they care for has a positive impact on nursing care(Hisama 2000). The health needs of people from different cultures and the practices related to these needs vary. For example, pain behavior and perceptions are heavily influenced by patients' socio-cultural backgrounds and cultures. People living in the Northern regions of Turkey tend to express their experiences of pain in a highly exaggerated manner, whereas those living in the Central and Eastern Anatolia regions are seen to be more resilient and patient in the face of pain(Kılınç et al.2021).

Patients from rural areas tend to be more reserved in expressing their pain complaints compared to urban dwellers, and they also tend to adapt more easily to the treatment methods applied.

Kılınç et al.(2021) approached the case presentation of a male patient diagnosed with spinal tumor from a rural area according to the transcultural model. In the study, the patient reported consuming a mixture of olive oil and figs and herbal teas (ginger and St. John's wort) because he believed they were beneficial for cancer and accelerated wound healing. In addition, the patient used St. John's wort oil for his wounds. Nurses evaluated whether these practices had any negative impact on the patient's medical treatment. As a result of the evaluation, a decision was made to "preserve/sustain cultural care."(Kılınç et al.2021)

Düzcü et al.(2023) addressed the case of a Syrian university student with an existing atrial septal defect (ASD) within the framework of transcultural care to emphasize the importance of cultural care. ASD, which requires lifelong medical treatment, is a challenging condition to manage for a migrated individual. The patient, who underwent the transcultural care model, expressed that they regularly took their medications and felt physically and mentally well(Düzcü et al.2023).

Therefore, transcultural nursing care is of great importance. Nurses should identify elements that facilitate communication across different cultures and receive training in this area. Understanding patients' cultural, religious, and social contexts helps healthcare providers deliver services more effectively and appropriately, ultimately increasing patient satisfaction.

Nurses should conduct a cultural assessment from the moment they first communicate with patients. When gathering information from patients, factors such as economic status, family structure, gender roles, religious beliefs, health practices, lifestyle, and other cultural characteristics should be taken into account. It's important to remember that health and illness have emotional, social, behavioral, spiritual, and cultural dimensions.

Conclusıon and Recommendatıons

In conclusion, the patient expressed feeling better as a result of the care received, with the assistance of an interpreter.

The increased risk of virus transmission, coupled with the chaos and anxiety brought about by uncertainty, creates significant stress for hospitalized patients and healthcare workers during the pandemic. In this process, maintaining sensitivity to cultural differences may be more challenging. However, it is essential to remember that healthcare is both individualized and universal in nature regardless of the circumstances.

Therefore, transcultural nursing should be an integral part of nursing practices and education. This approach recognizes the importance of considering cultural diversity in healthcare delivery, particularly in times of heightened stress and uncertainty. By incorporating transcultural nursing principles into healthcare practices and education, healthcare professionals can better address the needs of diverse patient populations and promote culturally competent care, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes and overall healthcare quality(Topbaş et al.2013).

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PECULIARITIES OF ADAPTATION OF FIRST – YEAR AND ERASMUS+ PROGRAM STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Simona Balčienė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution
Gustina Šabasevičiūtė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution
Ugnė Vrubliauskaitė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution
Laima Milkintaitė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution

Abstract
When students start their studies both in their own country and upon arrival in another country, it is very important that students adapt as soon as possible to the changed living, learning conditions or even other cultural environment. This influences both the results of studies, but also their psychological well-being. The purpose of this study is to find out the peculiarities of the adaptation of first-year and Erasmus+ students in higher education. The study involved 8 full-time students and 6 Erasmus+ program students. Methods were a written survey and the content analysis Students of both groups viewed their adaptation in higher education positively, emphasized the importance of social support as a factor facilitating adaptation.

Key words: *adaptation, social adaptation, first – year students, Erasmus+ exchange program students.*

Introduction
Adaptation is a challenging process to a changing environment. Social adaptation is directly related to human behaviour, when an attempt is made to reconcile motives and needs, environmental requirements, different circumstances, reactions in order to achieve positive actions that bring satisfaction and lead to greater social acceptance, and therefore the ability to adapt in various life situations (AlZboon, 2013). The course and duration of adaptation of each person is subjective. And the main task of higher education is to create a challenging educational environment for providing students with all possible opportunities to realize their abilities and skills (Bates, 2015). The success of studies, the quality of studies depends on adaptation in higher education (Marcinkevičienė, Morkūnienė, 2014; Topuzov, Shame, Malykhin, Aristova, Opaliuk, 2020).

After starting their studies in the first - year students have to go through many changes and adapt to the requirements of the new learning environment, the new status, changed living conditions, relationships with other people, etc. Having come to seek higher education and enter a different social, economic, educational and cultural environment, Erasmus+ program students also face ethnic, cultural, domestic, language barriers. Even living in the most favourable conditions of adaptation, for example, in metropolitan areas, where the population is large and adaptation to the environment should be easier, foreign students still face various challenges (Gapsalamov, Gallyamova and other, 2016). For both Lithuanians and Erasmus+ exchange students the adaptation in a new environment can also be associated with emotional changes such as the appearance of mental conditions (depression, anxiety or changes in self-esteem).

Successful adaptation of students is important in order to achieve positive learning attitudes and good learning results, which are undoubtedly associated with well-being during studies. For many students, these changes in their life are overcome easily, do not cause difficulties or problems of various kinds. For others it can complicates the study process, worsens the quality of life (Marcinkevičienė, Morkūnienė, 2014; Mičiulienė, Pugevičius, Pugevičienė, 2015).

The students' adaptation in the studies process is analysed by many foreign researches. This theme became again popular after Covid-19 pandemic returning from distance learning to contact. Soroka (2022) analysed social adaptation of students in a multicultural environment during distance learning. And Birzina, Cedere and Petersone (2019) state that students' adaptation to studies in the first year is a complex process which is affected by institutional, personal and academic factors. By their research date students associate the adaptation to studies in the first term more with the "soft" transferable skills: personal well-feeling and integration in the university study environment. Then

Erzen, Ozabaci (2023) examined the relationship between personality traits, social support perceptions, academic self-efficacy and the adjustment to university. Also Valenti, Faraci (2021) found that students' beliefs in their own abilities to control life events, and the way they approach them, play a crucial role in predicting how well they adapt to university life.

There are some researches about students' adaptation in Lithuania. Bendžiūtė, Stanislavovienė (2021) reviewed, based on scientific sources, the psychosocial factors that high school students face and that may affect their academic achievement, health, and well-being. Mičiulienė, Pugevičius, Pugevičienė (2015) presented recommendations for improvement of adaptation programme by presenting and comparing student assessment results of the adaptation programme events; revealing advantages and disadvantages of the institutional and the academic adjustment. But the more widely research about first year and Erasmus+ program students adaptation there are no founded. Therefore, the following **problem questions** are raised: What are the features of the adaptation of first-year and Erasmus+ students? What difficulties do first-year students face after starting their studies? What challenges do students of the Erasmus+ programme face when they start their studies abroad? What help would be needed for first-year and Erasmus+ students to facilitate their adaptation to higher education?

The research object is the adaptation of first-year and Erasmus+ program students.

The purpose of the research is to analyse the peculiarities of adaptation of first-year and Erasmus+ students.

Research objectives: 1. To find out what facilitate the adaptation of Lithuanian first year and Erasmus+ program students. 2. To determine what aggravate first-year students face after starting their studies. 3. To identify what aggravate Erasmus+ program students who start their studies abroad. 4. To identify what kind of help got and would be needed for first-year and Erasmus+ program learners to make it easier for them to adapt to higher education.

Research methods: analysis of scientific information sources, written questioning, structured content analysis.

Research methodology and organisation. The qualitative research was employed to implement the purpose and objectives of the research. To achieve the objectives of the research, the data collection method – a written questioning– was used. The selected form of research data collection was sending questionnaire by e-mails and getting them the same way. The data processing method applied in the research is the structured content analysis.

The research instrument is a structured interview questionnaire. During the structured questions, first year and Erasmus+ program students answered 6 questions. The questionnaire has questions about a general experience of the beginning studies in the higher education institutions, the positive experience, the challenges which appear with start of studies in the higher education institution, the reasons of these difficulties and about help which they got in the institutions or out of it and what kind of help they or future students would need to make the adaptation process successful.

The procedure for conducting the research. The research was in October - November of 2023. Conducting the study, four principles of research ethics were followed. These were: the principle of anonymity – research participants were informed that the questionnaire was completely anonymous, no personal information that could identify informants would be mentioned and their answers would be coded, which would make it impossible to identify the person; in addition, no specific questions were asked in the questionnaire, according to which it would be possible to identify the subjects; the principle of confidentiality – research participants were notified that the obtained data would be provided in a coded form and only in academic activities, which guaranteed the confidentiality of subjects; the principle of benevolence – the informants' participation in filling questionnaire was voluntary; the principle of justice – the research data were not falsified and the research was conducted honestly (Gaižauskaitė, Valavičienė, 2016).

The research sample. The study involved 8 first year students and 6 Erasmus+ program students. To analyse the subjects' statements, informants were coded with the following abbreviations: AV1- AV14. The informants were selected using a probability sample – all first year and Erasmus+ program students have probability to participate in this research because they got letters with invitation take part in the research in their institutional e-mail. The questionnaire was sent for 14 informants who agreed to take part in the research and got back filled questionnaires.

Research results

The study analysis the peculiarities of adaptation of first-year and Erasmus+ students. At first students evaluated their experiences of the beginning studies in the higher education institution (see Table 1).

Table 1. **Studies of Lithuanian first-year students in the first months in higher education**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
The experiences of the start of study/learning	Positive situation assessment	11
	More complicated situations in studies	2

Lithuanian students evaluated their first month studies process as successful. According informants their studies in the higher education started well and gave positive situation assessment: <...thought it would be still difficult after graduating from school and entering university, but that's definitely not the case.> (A7) and that they can say <I'm doing pretty well.> (A12), < Everything is fine >(A11) or <... it's okay now. > (A13). Some informants said that the beginning of studies is a little complicated: < only a few months of science have passed, but it seems like a whole eternity >(A11), <The beginning was difficult ,...> (A13). Changes not for all are easy, but usually the the biggest part of students adapt easier and faster. As noticed Marcinkevičienė, Morkūnienė (2014) quick and relatively easy adaptation in higher education makes it easier to achieve better studies results. It can say that positive situation assessment shows easy first-year students adaptation going from school teaching to studies in higher education.

Erasmus + program students also assessed their studies in Lithuania positive (seeTable2). As they noticed their learning experiences in the first is evaluated well: <They are going very well...>(A5), <Actually its going good> (A6). And Erasmus+ program students highlighted good

Table 2. **Erasmus+ program students' studies/learning in the first months of the school year**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
The experiences of the start of study/learning	Positive situation assessment	7
	Positive self-esteem	2
	More lethal progress in studies	1

well-being and enjoyed their learning experiences: <I am very happy with my studies>(A1), <The most positive and useful experience> (A5).

Foreign students' talking about studies also emphasized positive self-esteem as a part of studies experiences. In studies abroad they enjoy themselves in the process of studies: < I am enjoying myself very well> (A1), < I am really enjoying myself> (A5). As mentioned Birzina, Cedere and Petersone (2019) personal factors – self-confident, positive experience in learning activities influence adaptation process. If students are self-confident, emphasized positive experience from the beginning of studies – their adjustment is better.

In this studies it appeared that students compared their learning experience in the new institution and home institution and named that have more lethal progress in studies (<My academic experience at the university is progressing much slower> (A2)). Güneş, Aydar (2019) emphasized that different education system, different culture, inability to speak foreign language enough and economic problems make the adaptation of foreign students to the university and environment difficult and affect their academic success. But this study showed that both Lithuanian and Erasmus+ program informants emphasized good studies experiences and found more positive experiences that negative.

Both Lithuanian and foreign authors (Mičiulienė, Pugevičius, Pugevičienė, 2015, Ferencz, Hrehová, Seňová, 2020) noticed that living in a new environment (city, culture) brings many changes in students´ lives including separation from family and friends, meeting new friends and developing networks, learning new social norms, states and behaviours, experiencing a different climate and different types of meals and give a range of incentives to all at the university as to reflect on how to improve adaptation. In this case informants talked about factors that facilitated and aggravated their adaptation in the higher education on the first moth of studies (see Table 3 and 4). The first-year Lithuanian students emphasized the importance of relations with fellow students as the one of factor that facilitate their adaptation in the higher education institution for the first month of studies. Informants talked that adaptation was easier because the connection with studies co-students: <The study co-students accepting>(A9), <Connect with my study colleagues.>(A12), <Friendliness of the co-students.> (A14) and so on. Also, it is important in adaptation process to understand teaching and learning activities and engage in the studies process. Informants said that it is easier when <The teaching staffs <...> involved in the subjects they teach (A11) or when students started to understand principles of teaching, tasks (<I'm starting to get used to the principle of teaching…> A14), <to <... > understand the tasks of the lecturers <...> A14), collaborate in the tasks (<Command classes.> (A13)). As noticed researchers (Bendžiūtė, Stanislavovienė, 2021; Durón-Ramos, García Vázquez, Lagares, 2019) relationships with their fellow students have a direct impact on adaptation to the university environment and academic achievement. If the relationship with fellow students is collegiate, the student feels accepted, involved in group classes, the learning environment becomes pleasant, attractive.

Table 3. **Expression of adaptation of first-year Lithuanian students**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Factors that facilitate adaptation	Relations with fellow students	10
	Understanding teaching and learning activities and engaging in the process	5
	Becoming a part of the higher education institution community	5
	Adapting to the changed situation	5
	Relationships with lecturers and their help	4
Factors aggravating adaptation	Complicated personal adaptation to change	9
	Intermediate settlement in studies	3
	Finding out the organization of studies	3

Birzina, Cedere, Petersone (2019) emphasized institutional factor for students' adaptation. Institutional cultures practices support students to succeed is very important too. The results of this research show that informants named this factor too. Students talked that their adaptation is easier because they became as a part of institution community (<Surrounding of institutions are cozy.> (A9), <I feel at home.> (A10)) and have good relations with lectures whom helps as they need it (<Relations with lecturers. > (A8), < All tutors help when needed.> (A9), <The teaching staffs <,..> whom is very involved in the subjects they teach (A11).

Personal factor was mentioned as aggravating adaptations. Lithuanian first year students named complicated personal adaptation to changes that disturbed to their adaptation in the studies. Informants noticed that it is difficult to adapt to new environment, people (< It was difficult to adapt to the new environment <…> to new people.> (A13). It is difficult to leave the comfortable zone which they had before (<We are pushed out of our comfort zone.> (A14)). These aspects emphasized and other researchers (Bendžiūtė, Stanislavovienė, 2021; Birzina, Cedere, Petersone, 2019; Durón-Ramos, García Vázquez, Lagares, 2019).

As the others factor aggravating adaptation was named intermediate settlements in higher education. They need to plan their time because have to prepare them soon (<The approaching works of writing are quickly written>. (A11), < Upcoming Deliveries.> (A11), <... sooner or later it will be necessary to start working> (A11)). Also, participants noticed that to understand the organization of studies was a little bit difficult for them (<Small ambiguities about schedules.> (A7), <…> on credits.> (A7). These results comply with results of other researches (Bendžiūtė, Stanislavovienė

2021; Birzina, Cedere, Petersone, 2019; Mičiulienė, Pugevičius, Pugevičienė, 2015) whom confirmed that institutional, personal and academic factors influence student's adaptation.

Erasmus+ program students singled out institutional factor – supportive staff – as facilitate their adaptation in the higher education (see Table 4). Students named that professors pay attention to them (<All our teachers are very understanding> (A3)), helps in study and other situation (<...amazed by the availability of ours professors in helping us during the lessons (A5), <(Professors) Help me when I have difficulties> (A3). So relatives and friends support is also very meaningful in adaptation for Erasmus+ program students. As Erzen and Ozabaci (2023) noticed that the support received from family and friends caused an increase in university adjustment levels. They founded that general adjustment levels to university are positively correlated with social support.

Also personal factor was mentioned as facilitate adaptation. The attending classes (<I follow our lessons regularly> (A3), <Attending common classes contributed to my adaptation> (A3)), actively participating in classes (<...actively participating in classes> (A1), <...I'm just doing my tasks <...>(A6)) show students' ability to attend and successfully complete learning and it helps easier to adapt to study process. According Birzina, Cedere, Petersone (2019) it is the personal factor of adaptation.

Table 4. **Expression of the adaptation of Erasmus+ program students**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Factors that facilitate adaptation	Relationships with lecturers, their help and support	14
	Incorporating/engaging to the learning process	7
	Support from relatives and friends	4
Factors aggravating adaptation	Language skills	7
	Adapting to challenges and changes	5
	Lack of organized activity	4
	Personal reasons, experiences	4

Erasmus+ program students name language skills as the factor aggravating their adaptation in the higher education institution. As noticed Güneş, Aydar (2019) One of the aspects of successful training in the foreign country is knowledge of the language of studying. Erasmus+ program language is English, so good English languages can be a factor of an easy adaptation. But informants said their English level was not good enough for them in study process (<My English level was not sufficient> (A3), <Deficiencies in professional English> (A4).

The other factor was personal adaptation to changes. Informants named these difficulties in adaptation: <I had to face common challenges> (A1), <My school life was <...> remote from interpersonal communication (A2). Changing countries and education system student can have some difficulties and need to resolve themselves or with social support. Also, adaptation process can be more complicated if there is a lack of communication skills.

As a factor aggravating adaptation Erasmus+ program students also named personal reasons and experiences: were not prepared in personal level (<I should have improved myself more before coming to Erasmus>(A4) or little experience traveling or living abroad (<It arose due to the little experience I had in my life of traveling and spending more time abroad (A5).

And one more was institution factor – foreign students would like to have more organized activity at free time in the education institution. The lack of them, by their opinion, affect aggravating adaptation.

As showed results both Lithuanian first year and Erasmus+ program students emphasized the social support (professors, family, friends, so-students) is the factor that facilitate and personals skills (adaptation to changes and challenges), introduce to studies are like a factor aggravating. So i

Both – Lithuanian first years and Erasmus+ program - students shared what kind of help they received that their adaptation would be easier (see Tables 5 and 6). Both group students named the social support which they get from friends and fellow students. It is very important form informants

to get support from close social environment in the adaptation process: <friends helped me when I had difficulties in social life> (A3), <Dormitory mates <...> helped me overcome the difficulties (A4), <Fellow students help> (A14) and etc. Then were emphasized teachers' support in the process of adaptation: <My professors helped me a lot in this regard and supported me in learning English> (A3), <...>university professors helped me overcome the difficulties>(A4), <Fellow students with

Table 5. **First-year Lithuanian students received help that facilitated the adaptation period**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Social support	Support from friends and fellow students	4
	Teachers' support for students	2
	Relatives' support	2
Personal engagement and self-esteem	Student's personal qualities	4
	Initiative in finding information	2
	Self-care	1
No help required	No need for help	4

whom you can easily cooperate will help with everything> (A11). And the support from family and relatives: <My family> (A1), <The help of relatives> (A14). As mentioned Güneş, Aydar (2019) first years or Erasmus+ program students separate from their friends, families and their and can lose their support. But it is very important to keep this social support because it can help facilitate the current new situation, create more positive experiences and help to avoid negative consequences in the process of adaptation.

Also, informants named personal engagement and self-esteem as the way helped to facilitate the adaptation period (see Tables 5 and 6). Lithuanian first year students emphasized student's personal qualities (< Curiosity>(A7), < Will> (A12) and <Wish to move forward> (A13), initiative (<to ask administrative and teachers> (A7) and self-care (<Time with yourself> (A12).

Table 6. **Received helped to Erasmus+ program students to facilitate the adaptation period**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Social support	Support from friends and fellow students	5
	Teacher's support for students	3
	Relatives support	1
Personal engagement and self-esteem	Time management	1
	Communication with others	1
	Challenges and overcoming them	1
No help required	No need for help	1

Erasmus+ program students named time management (<Learning to manage time effectively in a new environment> (A1)), communication (<Above all also listening, talking to all the people a little >(A5)) and the overcoming of challenges (<Common challenges> (A1)). It was noticed that personal well-feeling and integration in the university study environment help to pass the process of adaptation easier (Birzina, Cedere, Petersone, 2019).

Informants also named measures which can help future first year and Erasmus+ program to pass successful the adaptation period in the beginning of studies (see Tables 7 and 8). Lithuanian students named general and formal information (<More information> (A7), <More information about written works would be needed (because we usually come after school and do not know how and what to do in it)> (A14)) that would be clear from the first day of studies. Also, informants emphasised the introduction of physical environment of the institution (<More introduction to the

institution>(A7), <in September to give the plan of the building where first year students will study.> (A8)). Besides participants talked about the group formation in the first month: <Common tasks in a group> (would allow everyone to get together faster) (A12) and <More trying to bring the group

Table 7. **Measures to facilitate the adaptation period of first-year Lithuanian students in higher education**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Ways to facilitate adaptation	Providing general and formal information to first year students	4
	Detailed introduction to the physical environment of institution	4
	Formation of the positive climate and focus of the group in the first months	4
	Organisation of teaching and learning	4
	Introductory familiarization events	2
	Financial support	1
	Measures not needed	1

closer together> (A14). As the one more measure was excluded the organisation of the teaching/learning process. It seems that adaptation would be easier if students have <Meaningful lectures>(A13), <meaningful activities>(A13) and <More practice> (A8). All these measures would increase the institutional factor in the adaptation process – institutional cultural and practices support students to succeed (Birzina, Cedere, Petersone, 2019).

Erasmus+ program students more emphasized personal measures such like perception of experiences and losses gained (<To understand with greater clarity not only the obvious aspects like the cold weather...>(A2), <...> this experience can not weigh on them and they can remember it

Table 8. **Measures to facilitate the adaptation period of Erasmus+ students in higher education**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Ways to facilitate adaptation	Perception of experiences and losses gained	4
	Organisation of teaching and learning	3
	Self-confidence	3
	Activity and events	2
	Improving language skills	2
	Support from relatives and friends	2
	Sharing experiences about studies	2
	Attentiveness of employees of the international relations department	1
	Knowing the city and the environment	1
	Provision of general and formal information	
	Measures not needed	1

for life (A5)) or self – confidence (<I am confident that I can handle my studies without any need for additional assistance> (A1), <should be confident in themselves> (A3). Also, foreign students pointed out to organisation of teaching/learning process: <I would like to have a library in the dormitory> (A4), <The thing that makes me feel better about studying is the presence of the slides which helps me a lot and speeds up my studying a lot> (A5)).

By the opinion of both Lithuania first-year and Erasmus+ program students both institution and personal measures can help pass the process of adaptation more successfully. They confirm Birzina, Cedere, Petersone (2019) theory that institutional, personal and academic factors

influencing the studies and adaptation process in the beginning of the first year or studies abroad.

Summarising the research results, it can be concluded that it is important to support students in the beginning of there studies in both cases: if it is just start of the first year in the higher education institution or it is the beginning of Erasmus+ program abroad. Social support helps adapt more successful and faster. This support can be not only from relatives but from teachers or study mates. According theory (Birzina, Cedere, Petersone 2019) and empirical results successful adaptation belongs from three factors: institutional (supportive staffs who respect students differences, good assessment practice, curricula and pedagogies, the resources which needed for learning, accessible buildings and facilities), personal (students self-confident, their attitudes about the benefits and of training/learning, personal development goals, experiences in the training/learning process, feeling of a part of community, stress management) and academic (knowledges, skills, abilities).

Conclusions

1. The results showed that Lithuanian first year students as facilitators for their adaptation named these factors: relations with fellow students, understanding teaching and learning activities and engaging in the process, becoming a part of the higher education institution community adapting to the changed situation and relationships with lecturers and their help. And Erasmus+ program students emphasized relationships with lecturers, their help and support, incorporating/engaging to the learning process and support from relatives and friends.

2. It was identified that Lithuanian first-year students emphasized complicated personal adaptation to change, intermediate settlement in studies and finding out the organization of studies as aggravated factors of adaptation.

3. It was identified that Erasmus+ program students who start their studies abroad named these factors of aggravated adaptation: languages skills, adapting to challenges and changes, lack of organized activity and personal reasons, experiences.

4. The results showed that both Lithuanian first year and Erasmus+ program students named social support and personal engagement and self-esteem as help who made easier their adaptation in studies. Lithuanian first year students as possible help in adaptation process named providing general and formal information, detailed introduction to the physical environment of institution, formation of the positive climate and organisation of teaching and learning process. And Erasmus+ program students emphasized personal perception of experiences and losses gained, organisation of teaching and learning process and self-confidence.

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SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER OBSERVATION ON THEIR APPLICATION OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP STYLE

Sophio Khmaladze

International Black Sea University
Georgia

Abstract

Distributed leadership in secondary education is a leadership style in which all educational personnel at school is involved in the improvement of teaching and learning. Its application corresponds to the contemporary requirements of education organization/management. However, in countries building democracy, such as Georgia, distributed leadership is not sufficiently applied and its application and impacts have not been studied. The paper presents the results of an experimental study at two schools – the experimental one, where teachers were trained to be involved in distributed leadership, and the control one, where no such training was organized. Then for one semester, the teachers in both schools did self-observation and were observed by three observers to see whether they differed in the application of distributed leadership. The results confirmed that a statistically significant improvement in distributed leadership application took place at the experimental school, while no such improvement occurred at the control school. A recommendation is given that for teachers insufficiently aware of distributed leadership style training concerning its clear definition, benefits, and challenges is necessary.

Keywords: *distributed leadership, quality education, teacher involvement in distributed leadership*

Introduction

Providing quality education to all is among 17 main goals named by UNESCO (2016) in the *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*: to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (p.7). The same document speaks about the need to "strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions, school leadership and governance through greater involvement of communities, including young people and parents, in the management of schools" (p.37). The document emphasized the role of teachers and the need to support them: "As teachers are a fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, teachers and educators should be empowered" (p. 54).

According to Day et al. (2020), there is a general consensus that distributed leadership "can have an especially positive influence on student and school outcomes" (p. 21). Therefore, it has to be more actively applied, and the efficiency of the application needs to be studied. There is some research on the impact of teacher training in distributed leadership on teacher empowerment (Bush, 2016; Grant, 2008; Rechsteiner et al., 2022), however, no such research has been conducted in Georgia. This makes the current study innovative and significant.

The research problem is related to the lack of understanding by teachers of the benefits of being engaged in distributed leadership and, consequently, resistance to having additional responsibilities.

The goal of the research was to find out whether the distributed leadership style is being applied in Georgian schools (and to what degree it is possible to speak about its implementation), and whether the application of distributed leadership enables to obtain an increase in teacher involvement in it.

Literature review

While in charismatic or heroic leadership of the first half of the 20th century was applied by the new school principal who carried out great changes in the school management and led the school to success, in distributed leadership, an interactive web of leaders is created at school and "leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation" (Spillane, 2005, p. 144).

The traditional, autocratic (also called authoritarian), leadership style implied decisions taken by one person, leaving no chance for discussion and criticism (Mshelia & Emmanuel, 2022). More innovative and democratic distributed leadership involves both the principal and teachers collaborating to decide on and carry out the best practices at their school, rather than the principal serving as the only or main authority on these issues (Spillane, 2006). This is why nowadays, distributed leadership is often applied in schools.

TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2018) covered 42 countries. It revealed that school leadership is among the major issues included in the survey. In today's education, leadership functions and responsibilities are, to a certain extent, distributed within (school management teams and teachers) and outside (collaboration with other schools and local community) of schools. The variables that were taken into consideration were as follows: academic pressure, stakeholder involvement, involvement in school leadership, organizational innovativeness, school autonomy, teacher collaboration, effective professional development, and diversity of practices. Based on the analysis of TALIS 2018 findings dealing with leadership for learning, according to Veletić and Olsen (2021), countries can be classified according to the degree of teacher involvement in school leadership. Georgia was classified in the group of countries where leadership for learning practices are balanced and all indicators are moderately represented, while UK, USA, Australia, South Korea, Finland, Singapore, and some other countries were classified in the group where leadership for learning practices is strongly represented.

Liu et al. (2020) studied the relationships between school leadership and teacher outcomes, including supportive school culture and teacher collaboration. They found that distributed leadership is positively and indirectly associated with both teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy.

Traver-Martí et al. (2023) showed that distributed leadership can help to develop participatory processes within the educational community. They emphasized the importance and influence of the management team's leadership style in collaborative practices. The study also underscored the need for families' and students' involvement in distributed leadership.

Larsson and Löwstedt (2023) stated that "distributed leadership focuses on what teachers and school leaders do together, but also on how the situation mediates that interaction" (p.138). They found that "infrastructure is to facilitate and guide teachers' sensemaking about their instructional practice" (p.138).

Liu and Watson (2023) studied how variations in the principal's leadership style, relationships within the management team, and teachers' engagement in leadership are related to teacher collaboration, job satisfaction, and school commitment. They revealed that teachers' desire to collaborate has a great impact on the efficiency of application of distributed leadership.

According to the Law of Georgia on General Education (2005), the school principals have to share their responsibilities for school quality and student outcomes with the administration ((involves, besides the principal, deputy principal(s) and an accountant)), Teacher Council (involves all teachers at the given school), the Board of Trustees ((involves representatives of teachers, parents, student self-government, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Defense, local self-government and benefactors' (if any)), self-government of pupils, and a disciplinary committee (article 35).

"Pupils, parents and teachers shall have the right to participate in school governance personally or through an elected representative" (article 11). "The basic goals of the state policy in the field of general education" deal with "developing pupils into free persons with national and universal human values" and developing "intellectual and physical skills of pupils, provide them with necessary knowledge" (article 3). However, judging by PISA 2022 (OECD, 2022) assessment results, the knowledge level of Georgian school graduates on the whole does not yet correspond to the

international standards (380 points compared to the world 470 points average). One of the ways to improve the situation is the full-fledged implementation of distributed knowledge.

Methods

The research method applied was quantitative: experiment with experimental (treatment) and control (no-treatment) schools. After the treatment period, both groups were observed to see to what degree (if at all) they applied distributed leadership.

Two public schools in Tbilisi, Georgia, were at random selected for participation in the experiment (on condition that their administration permitted the researcher to conduct the study). One public school was chosen at random as the experimental school (22 teachers), while the other was the control school (also 22 teachers). The participant teachers were volunteers.

In the experimental school, a series of trainings on distributed leadership was conducted during two months, to ensure their awareness about the leadership style and motivate them to be more actively involved in it. The teachers in both schools were observed by three experts (the school principal, the researcher, and a specialist in educational leadership), and also they did self-observations. An assessment rubric was developed for the observation. The results of the observations and self-observations had to reveal whether there would be any changes in teacher involvement in distributed leadership and whether it would have a positive impact on teacher empowerment.

Sampling

The participant teachers were volunteers from those schools. All teachers at both schools were females. In Table 1 see the demographic data of the participants.

Table 1. The demographic data of the participants

		Experimental school	Control school
Teaching experience	Inexperienced (0-3 years)	1 (4.5%)	5 (22.7%)
	Relatively experienced (4-9 years)	2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)
	Experienced (10 or more years)	19 (86.4%)	12 (54.5%)
Academic degree	Bachelor	3 (13.6%), 2 of them Bachelor + 60-credit teacher training program	5 (22.7%), 2 of them Bachelor + 60-credit teacher training program

		Pre-experimental results		Post-experimental results	
		15 (68.2%)		16 (72.7%)	

	Master's	15 (68.2%)	16 (72.7%)
	PhD	4 (18.2%)	1 (4.5%)
Level taught	Primary	10 (45.5%)	5 (22.7%)
	Secondary	12 (54.5%)	17 (77.3%)
Subjects taught		Combined primary (7), Georgian and Literature (2), Math (1), Physics (1), Chemistry (1), History (1), Foreign Languages (3), Biology (1), Geography (1), Civic Education (1), Art (1), Music (1), Sport (1)	Combined primary (5), Georgian and Literature (2), Math (2), Physics (1), Chemistry (1), History (1), Foreign Languages (4), Biology (1), Geography (1), Civic Education (1), Art (1), Music (1), Sport (1)

Teachers at both schools taught the same subjects, in a little bit various proportions. Their teaching experience and qualification levels differed, however, what is important, they represented various sub-groups. This makes the two groups (teachers from the two schools) comparable.

Results

Teacher involvement in distributional leadership was assessed by three observers – the principal, the researcher, and an expert in the field. Then the mean result was calculated. An observation rubric was developed. The validity of the rubric was assessed by three experts in the field. All items in the rubric were assessed on a 3-point scale: 0 – never, 1 – sometimes, 2 – regularly. The observation occurred on a weekly basis, however, the results were assessed at the end of the post-training semester.

The observation results are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Observation rubric results (experimental school)

#		Pre-experimental results		Post-experimental results	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Initiates events alone	1.67	.48	1.77	.81
2	Initiates events together with colleagues	1.67	.48	1.91	.75

#		Pre-experimental results		Post-experimental results	
3	Initiates innovations alone	1.00	.20	1.32	.48
4	Initiates innovation with colleagues	1.33	.58	1.50	.67
5	Attends school meetings	1.33	.58	1.86att	.64
6	Is involved in discussion during the school meetings	1.67	.48	1.77	.61
7	Is involved in the planning process at school	1.00	.12	1.45	.67
8	Suggests problem decisions	1.00	.12	1.45	.67
9	Develops his/her professional skills	1.67	.48	1.82	.59
10	Involves colleagues in professional skills development	1.67	.48	1.82	.59
11	Participates in projects	1.00	0.05	1.14	.35
12	Provides emotional support to colleagues	1.67	.48	1.82	.59
13	Helps novice teachers	1.33	.58	1.45	.51

The results, initially between 1 and 1.67, revealed a reasonably positive trend after the training (between 1.14 and 1.91). All items got a reasonable improvement by 0.10-0.53. Maximum improvement was in attending school meetings.

Table 3. Observation rubric results (control school)

#		Pre-experimental results	Post-experimental results

		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Initiates events alone	1	0.12	1.09	.29
2	Initiates events together with colleagues	1.67	.48	1.67	.48
3	Initiates innovations alone	1	0.20	1	0.20
4	Initiates innovation with colleagues	1.33	.58	1.09	.29
5	Attends school meetings	1.95	.65	1.27	.46
6	Is involved in discussion during the school meetings	1.67	.48	1.67	.48
7	Is involved in the planning process at school	1.00	.12	1.00	.12
8	Suggests problem decisions	1.00	.12	1.00	.12
9	Develops his/her professional skills	1.77	.61	1.50	.51
10	Involves colleagues in professional skills development	1.67	.48	1.50	.51
11	Participates in projects	1.00	0.05	1.00	0.05
12	Provides emotional support to colleagues	1.77	.61	1.77	.61
13	Helps novice teachers	1.33	.58	1.23	.43

It is impossible to speak about the improvement of the situation, the results rather fluctuate, some of them increase (item #1), sometimes remain the same (items #2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12), or sometimes decrease (items 4, 5, 9, 10).

To see whether the situation concerning the changes in the experimental school compared to the control school can be viewed as statistically significant, a T-test was conducted (see Tables 4.a-4.c).

Table 4.a. Paired-samples statistics (experimental and control schools, pre-experimental)

	Mean	#	SD	St. error mean
Variable 1 (exp.)	1.39	13	.30	.08
Variable 2 (cont.)	1.40	13	.37	.10

The mean results from all items together almost do not differ between the experimental (1.39) and the control (1.40) school results at the pre-experimental stage. The standard deviation is within the norm (<0.5).

4.b. Paired-samples correlations (experimental and control schools, pre-experimental)

	#	Correlation	Sig.
Var. 1 & Var. 2	13	.70	.01

The correlation between the experimental and control school results is .70, which is an average correlation. The significance =0.01 reveals that p<00.5, so the obtained result is statistically significant.

Table 4.c. Paired-samples test (experimental and control schools, pre-experimental)

	Paired differences							
				95% confidence interval of the difference				
	Mean	SD	St. error mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig 92-tailed)
Var. 1 & Var.2	-.01	.27	.07	-.17	-.15	-.16	12	.88

At 95% confidence normally applied for education research, the significance equals .88>.05, which reveals that the difference between experimental and control school results at the pre-experimental stage is not statistically significant. Consequently, before the experiment, the groups were comparable from the point of view of their involvement in distributed leadership.

Table 5.a-5.c demonstrates the T-test results of teacher involvement in school leadership at the post-experimental stage.

Table 5.a. Paired-samples statistics (experimental and control schools, post-experimental)

	Mean	#	SD	St. error mean
Variable 1 (exp.)	1.56	13	.30	.08
Variable 2 (cont.)	1.29	13	.30	.08

The mean post-experimental results from all items together are higher for the experimental (1.59) than for the control (1.29) school. The standard deviation is within the norm (<0.5).

Table 5.b. Paired-samples correlations (experimental and control schools, post-experimental)

	#	Correlation	Sig.
Var. 1 & Var. 2	13	.80	.001

The correlation between the pre-training and post-training results is .80, which is an average correlation. The significance =.001 reveals that p<.0.5, so the obtained difference between the two school results is statistically significant.

Table 5.c. Paired-samples test (experimental and control schools, post-experimental)

	Paired differences					t	df	Sig 92-tailed)
	Mean	SD	St. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Var. 1 & Var.2	.27	.19	.05.15	.16	.38	5.21	12	.00

At 95% confidence normally applied for education research, the significance equals .00<.05, which reveals that the difference between the experimental and control school results at the post-experimental stage is statistically significant. The degree of the experimental school teachers' involvement in distributed leadership has increased compared to the control school teachers.

Teachers at both schools also conducted self-observations with the application of the same rubric (formatted in 'I' style). Tables 6 and 7 present teacher self-observation results.

Table 6. Self-observation rubric results (experimental school)

#		Pre-experimental results		Post-experimental results	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	I initiate events alone	1.18	.39	1.32	.57
2	I initiate events together with colleagues	1.45	.51	1.77	.61
3	I initiate innovations alone	1.14	.35	1.27	.46
4	I initiate innovations with colleagues	1.36	.49	1.50	.60
5	I attend school meetings	1.73	.46	1.91	.29
6	I am involved in discussion during the school meetings	1.50	.51	1.64	.49
7	I am involved in the planning process at school	1.23	.43	1.41	.50
8	I suggest problem decisions	1.18	.39	1.32	.48
9	I develop my professional skills	1.59	.50	1.73	.46

10	I involve colleagues in professional skills development	1.36	.49	1.50	.51
11	I participate in projects	1.09	.29	1.27	.46
12	I provide emotional support to colleagues	1.64	.49	1.82	.39
13	I help novice teachers	1.23	.43	1.45	.51

The initial results between 1.14 and 1.73 revealed a reasonably positive trend after the training (became between 1.27 and 1.91). All items got a reasonable improvement by 0.13-0.32. Teachers' self-evaluations are slightly higher than their evaluations by the observers.

Table 7. Observation rubric results (control school)

#		Pre-experimental results		Post-experimental results	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	I initiate events alone	1.14	0.35	1.14	.35
2	I initiate events together with colleagues	1.23	.43	1.27	.46
3	I initiate innovations alone	1.05	.21	1.05	.21
4	I initiate innovations with colleagues	1.18	.39	1.14	.35
5	I attend school meetings	1.45	.51	1.45	.51
6	I am involved in discussion during the school meetings	1.27	.46	1.23	.43

7	I am involved in the planning process at school	1.14	.35	1.14	.35
8	I suggest problem decisions	1.09	.29	1.14	.35
9	I develop my professional skills	1.64	.49	1.68	.48
10	I involve colleagues in professional skills development	1.50	.51	1.50	.51
11	I participate in projects	1.18	.39	1.18	.39
12	I provide emotional support to colleagues	1.50	.51	1.50	.51
13	I help novice teachers	1.32	.48	1.36	.49

It is impossible to speak about the improvement of the situation, the results rather fluctuate, some of them increase (item # 2, 9, 13), sometimes remain the same (items #1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12), or sometimes decrease (items 4, 6, 8, 10). Again, teachers' self-observation yielded a little higher results than their observation by the school principal, the researcher, and the expert in the field.

To see whether the situation in the changes in the experimental school compared to the control school can be viewed as statistically significant, a T-test was conducted (see Table 9).

Table 8.a. Paired-samples statistics (experimental and control schools, pre-experimental)

	Mean	#	SD	St. error mean
Variable 1 (exp.)	1.36	13	.21	.06
Variable 2 (cont.)	1.28	13	.18	.05

The mean results from all items together do not differ much between the experimental (1.36) and the control (1.28) school results at the pre-experimental stage. The standard deviation is within the norm (<0.5).

8.b. Paired-samples correlations (control school)

	#	Correlation	Sig.
Var. 1 & Var. 2	13	.77	.002

The correlation between the pre-training and post-training results is .77, which is average. The significance =0.00 reveals that p<00.5, so the obtained result is statistically significant.

Table 8.c. Paired-samples test

	Paired differences					t	df	Sig 92-tailed)
				95% confidence interval of the difference				
	Mean	SD	St. error mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig 92-tailed)
Var. 1 & Var.2	.08	.14	.04	-.01	.16	2.03	12	.07

At 95% confidence normally applied for education research, the significance equals .07>.05, which reveals that the difference between experimental and control school results at the pre-experimental stage is statistically not significant.

Table 9.a-9c demonstrates the T-test results of teacher involvement in school leadership at the post-experimental stage.

Table 9.a. Paired-samples statistics (experimental and control schools, post-experimental)

	Mean	#	SD	St. error mean
Variable 1 (exp.)	1.53	13	.22	.05
Variable 2 (cont.)	1.29	13	.19	.05

The mean results from all items together are higher for the experimental (1.59) than for the control (1.29) school at the post-experimental stage. The standard deviation is within the norm (<0.5).

Table 9.b. Paired-samples correlations (control school)

	#	Correlation	Sig.

Var. 1 & Var. 2	13	.70	.00	

The correlation between the pre-training and post-training results is .80, which is an average correlation. The significance =.00 reveals that p<.0.5, so the obtained difference between the two school results is statistically significant.

Table 9.c. Paired-samples test

	Paired differences					t	df	Sig 92-tailed)
	Mean	SD	St. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Var. 1 & Var.2	.24	.16	.04	.14	.34	5.38	12	.00

At 95% confidence, normally applied for education research, the significance equals .00<.05, which reveals that the difference between the experimental and control school results at the post-experimental stage is statistically significant.

Limitations

The limitations of the study deal with its scale – only 42 teachers from two schools in Georgia. More teachers from more schools can be involved in further studies, and international comparison would be beneficial. However, the study looks at the results from two points of view (experts' observation and teachers' self-observation), which makes the obtained results more trustworthy. Besides, the study is replicable (contains the questionnaires assessed for reliability and validity, as well as training materials), so in the future, it may yield more generalizable results. Therefore, in the future larger-scale research is desirable to make the obtained data more trustworthy.

Conclusions and recommendations

The study has confirmed that, without purposeful training and further observed application of the acquired knowledge and skills (to ensure that the training was efficient), it is difficult to engage teachers in distributed leadership.

The mean results of the pre-experimental observation by the experts revealed that in both schools the teachers 'sometimes' demonstrated several behaviors characteristic of distributed leadership (initiate innovations alone, suggest problem decisions, are involved in the planning process at school, and participate in projects in both schools and additionally initiate events alone in the control school), while other characteristic behaviors were more often applied. Therefore, distributed leadership features, similarly to Veletić and Olsen (2021) research, can be characterized as 'moderately represented'.

The mean results per item of the pre-experimental teacher self-observation were higher than those of experts (all of them were above 1 – 'sometimes'), however, on the whole they were very similar to

the experts' assessments. Anyway, according to teachers' self-observation, their involvement in distributed leadership still can be characterized as 'moderately represented'.

According to experts' observations, the degree of the experimental school teachers' involvement in distributed leadership ($M_1=1.39 \rightarrow M_2=1.56$) has increased compared to the control school teachers ($M_1=1.28 \rightarrow M_2=1.29$). As for the teachers' self-observation results, the degree of the experimental school teachers' involvement in distributed leadership ($M_1=1.36 \rightarrow M_2=1.53$) has also increased compared to the control school teachers ($M_1=1.28 \rightarrow M_2=1.29$).

Therefore, to involve teachers more actively in distributed leadership, it is necessary to conduct trainings that will explain to them why this leadership style is beneficial for school, its students and teachers.

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CALCULATING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: THE CASE OF TED DİYARBAKIR COLLEGE (TÜRKİYE)

Sena Ozerdem
TED Diyarbakır College, 11th Class Diyarbakır (Turkey)

Mehmet Sirac Ozerdem
Dicle University Engineering Faculty, Diyarbakır (Turkey)

Abstract

It is crucial to promote awareness, particularly throughout society, regarding a topic that holds significant importance for our environment. This study was undertaken with the intention of making a contribution to research on carbon footprint, driven by this motive. In this study, the carbon footprint calculation of TED Diyarbakır (Türkiye) College was made using the IPCC Tier approach. The carbon footprint of 3 different capabilities, namely scope 1 (Natural gas, gasoline, diesel, fire extinguishers), scope 2 (electric) and scope 3 (Water consumption, services), were calculated. When Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 are evaluated together, it is seen that the amount of carbon footprint originating from Scope 1 is higher. Sources of emissions from Scope 1 include natural gas consumption, diesel and gasoline fuel consumption, as well as fire extinguishers. When the emission sources in the college were compared, it was determined that the highest carbon footprint was due to natural gas consumption within scope 1 (97.98%). Subsequently, it was determined that the carbon footprint was caused by existing vehicle shuttle within scope 3 (1.917%). Finally, it has been determined that the carbon footprint is caused by the existing electricity consumption within scope 2 (0.1%). It is stated that there are 2 reasons for the low carbon footprint caused by electricity consumption. The first is that the equipment used in lighting is LED, and the second is that there is no need for lighting fixtures due to the long lighting time of the day in our geography.

Keywords: *Carbon footprint, environmental sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions, climate change*

1. Introduction

In the 19th century, the industrial revolution played a significant role in a number of factors, including population growth, technological advancements, competition in industrialization, an improvement in the quality of life, and an increase in the demand for energy. As a result, the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increased dramatically. The degradation of the natural ecosystem, global warming, desertification, and the progressive extinction of some biological species provide a significant threat [1]. It has been determined that the global surface air temperature has increased between 0.3°C and 0.6°C since 1800 [2].

Greenhouse gases generated by the use of fossil fuels, irregular use of soil and land are among the factors that cause climate change, and the reduction of forest areas reduces the carbon sequestration potential. According to data from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), atmospheric CO_2 emissions increased from 315.71 ppm in 1956 to 398.78 ppm in 2014 and are projected to reach 450 ppm by 2040 [3].

With the second half of the twentieth century, global warming caused by industrialization, energy consumption, etc., has shown its effect, and it has been stated that if no precautions are taken, its effect will continue in the following periods and this effect will bring an irreparable situation.

The unconscious and inefficient use of fossil fuels causes an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, especially CO_2, the source of global warming. The main greenhouse gas emitted as a result of human activities is CO_2 with 76%, followed by CH_4 with 16%, NO_x with 6% and fluorinated gases with 2% [4] (Fig. 1).
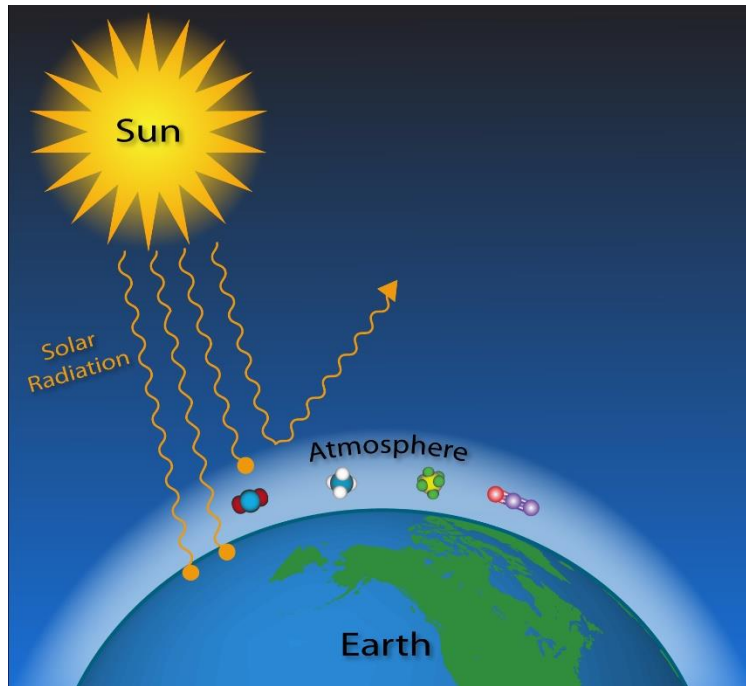
Figure 1. Accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions in our atmosphere
https://www.nps.gov/cajo/learn/nature/greenhouse-gasses.htm

A contract was needed because countries could not set targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and could not prepare the necessary infrastructure. Therefore, this situation was eliminated with the Kyoto Protocol, which entered into force in 2005. With the approaches proposed within the framework of the protocol, awareness has been created for countries on reducing carbon emissions and efforts to determine the carbon footprint have gained momentum [5].

The sum of greenhouse gases (GHG) emitted through direct or indirect actions produced by people, organizations, events and products is called the carbon footprint. To calculate the carbon footprint, it is necessary to know exactly the levels of pollution or GHG emissions that we produce each day. As seen in Figure 2, our business activities entail collecting data on the carbon footprint we leave directly and indirectly through electricity consumption, packaging use, materials, transportation, waste management, etc. The carbon footprint is measured in kg of CO_2 equivalent (kgCO2e) or tonne of CO_2 equivalent (tCO2e) and is calculated by multiplying activity data by emission factors [6].
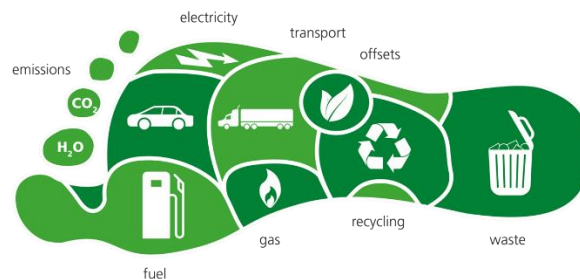
Figure 2. Parameters required to determine carbon footprint
https://www.siegwerk.com/en/sustainability/operations-and-supply-chain/carbon-footprint.html

Different studies have been conducted in the literature regarding the calculation of carbon footprint. Some of these studies are listed in Table 1 with their content.

Tablo 1. Basic studies related to the calculation of carbon footprint

Ref.	Where carbon footprint is calculated / Year(s)	Parameters	Outcomes
[7] Cano	Urban campuses of Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Medellín / 2019	Gaseous fue, liquid fuel, Electricity consumption, Transportation, Waste treatment/valorization /landflls, Internet network	The carbon footprint in 2019 was approximately 7250.52 tons CO2 eq, and 0.432 tons CO2 eq per person. The largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions were the transportation process (58.51%).
[8] Ridhosari	Universitas Pertamina (Indonesia) / 2017-2018	Electricity, transportation, and waste generation (solid waste disposal and waste transportation)	The results showed that electricity is the greatest contributor of carbon emissions at the university, at 92.3%, followed by transportation at 6.66% and waste generation at 1.04%.
[9] Aroonsrimorakot	Mahidol University Faculty of Environmental and Resource Studies /	Electricity and water consumption, amount of wastewater and garbage, amount of fuel	Most of the emissions come from electricity consumption
[10] Sippel	University of Applied Science in Konstanz (Germany) / 2017	Electricity, mobility (including private car use, public transport and aviation), food and other consumption.	The findings show average students' carbon footprint to be 10.9 tCO_2e/year and of the same order of magnitude as the German average.
[11] Sreng and Yiğit	Sakarya University Esentepe campus (Türkiye) / 2015	Including private car use, public transportand aviation and wastepaper	The emission is mostly caused by electricity consumption.
[12] Filimonau	Bournemouth University / 2019-2020	Natural gas, electricity, water and transportation	The change in carbon footprint during the COVID-19 quarantine was examined.

[13] Haseeb	University of the Punjab (Pakistan) / 2019-2020	Transportation, electricity, and waste generation	Electricity is the greatest contributor of CO2 emissions at 59%, followed by transportation at 36%, and waste generation at approximately 5%.

The carbon footprint determines the extent of people's share in global warming. In other words, a carbon footprint is the proportion of greenhouse gases released to nature from individuals, institutions or any product in the general total. Carbon footprint calculation includes many parameters such as the total distance traveled by vehicles, the amount of energy used for heating purposes, etc. In this regard, care should be taken when determining the primary and secondary traces of carbon. The carbon footprint consists of two parts: direct (primary) and indirect (secondary). The primary footprint is used to determine the CO_2 emissions that may occur with domestic energy consumption, transportation, and fossil fuel use, and the secondary footprint is used to determine the CO_2 released into the atmosphere until the production and final degradation of the products we use throughout our lives [14]. The main sources of greenhouse gases are given in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Sources that cause the accumulation of greenhouse gases
https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/where-do-greenhouse-gas-emissions-come

It is crucial to promote awareness, particularly throughout society, regarding a topic that holds significant importance for our environment. This study was undertaken with the intention of making a contribution to research on carbon footprint, driven by this motive. In this study, the carbon footprint calculation of TED Diyarbakır (Türkiye) College was made using the IPCC Tier approach. Parameter values such as the college's total electrical energy consumption, fuel used

for heating purposes, daily transportation values of staff and students, and fuel types of vehicles used by the staff were used in the carbon footprint calculation.

2. Material and Method

2.1 Dataset

With an area of 20,000m^2, TED Diyarbakır (Türkiye) College began for business as the 35th school of the Turkish Education Association during the 2015–2016 academic year. The college offers programs for students in kindergarten, middle school, and high school. Three scopes were used to investigate greenhouse gas emissions, both direct and indirect. Table 2 contains the scope material.

Table 2. Greenhouse gas emission sources according to their scope

	Emission Source
Scope 1	Natural gas, gasoline, diesel, fire extinguishers
Scope 2	Electric
Scope 3	Water consumption, services

Natural gas is used to heat the building in the College. Electricity consumption is; It is caused by the lighting, air conditioning and classroom in the building, as well as the tools used in the laboratories. CO_2 emissions caused by waste gases caused by the vehicles used by the staff and students of the college were also taken into account in this study. In order to determine the emission values, the vehicles used by all the personnel in the units and the distances they travel daily were determined. For the public transportation vehicles used by the students, the distance between the district center and the College was accepted as average.

In addition to these data, it is assumed that all vehicles have the same engine volume, and the change in carbon footprint is calculated according to the IPCC (2006 guideline) Tier approach.

Table 3. Secondary class parameters of TED Diyarbakır College

Parameters	Values
Number of students	1044
Number of teachers	104
Number of staff	34
Closed area (m^2)	6.230 m^2
Type of fuel used for heating and kitchen at school	Natural gas
Number of personnel vehicles	72 (40 gasoline, 32 diesel)
Number of vehicles used for student shuttle service	19 (diesel)
Transportation distance of student shuttles (average)	6 km
Number of daily student shuttle services	38 / day
Fuel type of student shuttles	Diesel
Electricity consumption	600.000 kwh / year
Natural gas consumption	132.000 m^3 / year
Water Consumption	11.000 m^3 / year
Number of fire extinguisher	58 fire extinguishers were utilized in 1 year
Weight of fire extinguisher	5 kg

2.2 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - Tier Approach

Emission calculation methods divided into various levels are called Tiers. When calculating CO_2 emissions, the following steps are applied [15].

- The amount of consumption of fuels is recorded,
- The energy content of the fuels used is calculated by multiplying the consumption values and the conversion factors in the IPCC guideline,
- The consumption amounts of fuels are multiplied by their lower calorific values,
- The resulting unit of energy is converted into the value of Terajoule (TJ), and
- The obtained value is multiplied by the emission factors to find the carbon dioxide content of the fuels.

The general formula for the Tier approach is shown in equation 1.

$$Carbon\ Emission\ =\ Activity\ data\ \times\ Emission\ factor \qquad (1)$$

Within the scope of the study, it was accepted that the vehicles were gasoline and diesel. Current emission factors were used for the calculation. The relevant emission factors are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Emission Factors

Activity	Unit	Emission factor
Electric consumption	kg CO_2e/kwh	0.447
Water Consumption	kg CO_2e/m^3	0.149
Shuttle – diesel	kg CO_2e/km	0.17

The density value was 0.83 for diesel fuel, which is one of the direct greenhouse gas sources, and 0.735 for gasoline fuel. The lower calorific values of fuel types are given in Table 5. Emission factors of fuel types are given in Table 6. Global warming potential values are given in Table 7.

Table 5. Lower boundary of heating values for fuel types

Fuel type	Lower boundary of heating value
Natural gas	8100 kcal/m3
Diesel consumption	43 MJ/kg
Gasoline consumption	44.3 MJ/kg

Table 6. Emission factors of fuel types

Fuel type	CO_2 (kg/TJ)	CH_4 (kg/TJ)	N_2O (kg/TJ)
Natural gas	56100	1	0.1
Diesel consumption	74100	3.9	3.9
Gasoline consumption	69300	25	8

Table 7. Global warming potential

Greenhouse gas	Global warming potential
CO_2	1

CH$_4$	21
N$_2$O	310

3. Results

The carbon footprints obtained as a result of the calculations are listed below according to their scope.

a) Carbon footprint from Scope 1

Natural gas consumption (CO2) = 250.7253 tCO2e

Natural gas consumption (CH4) = 0.0939 tCO2e

Natural gas consumption (N2O) = 0.1385 tCO2e

Natural gas consumption (Total) = 250.9577 tCO2e

Diesel fuel consumption (CO2) = 4.1133 tCO2e

Diesel fuel consumption (CH4) = 0.0045 tCO2e

Diesel fuel consumption (N2O) = 0.0671 tCO2e

Diesel fuel consumption (Total) = 4.1850 tCO2e

Gasoline fuel consumption (CO2) = 6.6312 tCO2e

Gasoline fuel consumption (CH4) = 0.0502 tCO2e

Gasoline fuel consumption (N2O) = 0.2373 tCO2e

Gasoline fuel consumption (Total) = 6.9187 tCO2e

Fire extinguishers = 0.0116 tCO2e

Carbon footprint amounts according to emission sources in Scope 1 are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Carbon footprint amounts from Scope 1

Activity	Carbon footprint (tCO$_2$e)
Natural gas consumption	250.9577
Diesel consumption	4.1850
Gasoline consumption	6.9187
Fire extinguishers	0.0116
Total	262.073

Carbon footprint percentages from Scope 1 are as follows: Natural gas consumption causes the highest carbon footprint with 95.76%. Following natural gas consumption, it has been observed that 2.64% is due to gasoline fuel consumption, 1.60% is due to diesel fuel consumption and approximately 0% is due to fugitive emissions from fire extinguishers.

b) Carbon footprint from Scope 2

Electricity consumption was calculated as the carbon footprint from Scope 2.

Electricity consumption = 0.268 tCO$_2$e

c) Carbon footprint from Scope 3

Water consumption = 1.6390 tCO_2e

Shuttle = 3.4884 tCO_2e

Carbon footprint amounts according to emission sources in Scope 3 are given in Table 9.

Table 9. Carbon footprint amounts from Scope 3

Activity	Carbon footprint (tCO2e)
Water Consumption	1.6390
Shuttle	3.4884
Total	5.1274

The carbon footprint percentages from Scope 3 are as follows: Vehicle service causes the highest carbon footprint with 68%. It was subsequently observed that water depletion causes a carbon footprint of 32%.

4. Conclusion

It is crucial to promote awareness, particularly throughout society, regarding a topic that holds significant importance for our environment. This study was undertaken with the intention of making a contribution to research on carbon footprint, driven by this motive. In this study, the carbon footprint calculation of TED Diyarbakır (Türkiye) College was made using the IPCC Tier approach.

The carbon footprint of 3 different capabilities, namely scope 1 (Natural gas, gasoline, diesel, fire extinguishers), scope 2 (electric) and scope 3 (Water consumption, services), were calculated and the obtained values are available in Table 10.

Table 10. Kapsamlara göre karbon ayak izi miktarları

Scope type	Carbon footprint (tCO2e)
Scope 1	262.073
Scope 2	0.268
Scope 3	5.1274
Total	267.4684

Carbon footprint amounts from scopes are given in Table 10. Carbon footprint percentages according to scopes are given in Figure 4.
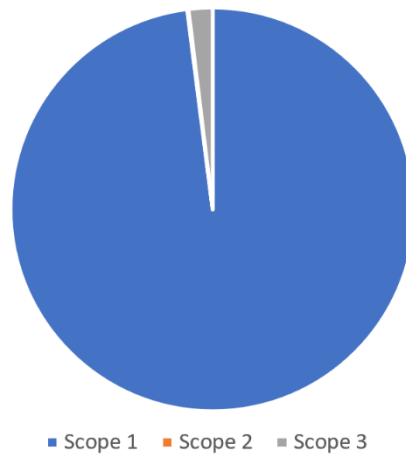
Figure 4. Carbon footprint percentages by scope

When Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 are evaluated together, it is seen that the amount of carbon footprint originating from Scope 1 is higher. Sources of emissions from Scope 1 include natural gas consumption, diesel and gasoline fuel consumption, as well as fire extinguishers. When the emission sources in the college were compared, it was determined that the highest carbon footprint was due to natural gas consumption within scope 1 (97.98%). Subsequently, it was determined that the carbon footprint was caused by existing vehicle shuttle within scope 3 (1.917%). Finally, it has been determined that the carbon footprint is caused by the existing electricity consumption within scope 2 (0.1%). It is stated that there are 2 reasons for the low carbon footprint caused by electricity consumption. The first is that the equipment used in lighting is LED, and the second is that there is no need for lighting fixtures due to the long lighting time of the day in our geography.

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ENHANCEMENT IN-GROUP COHESIVENESS – NEW ASPECT IN THE TAXONOMY OF IDENTITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES (THE CASE OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY)

Nazi Pharsadanishvili

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Georgia)

Anastasia Kitiashvili

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Georgia)

Abstract

The main aim of the current study is to present the negative social identity management strategies used by the poor group of people living in Georgia. The qualitative and quantitative research was conducted with the participation of socially vulnerable citizens in order to explore the social identity theory in the targeted group. As a result of the research, the negative social identity management strategies, such as social creativity, individual/social mobility and enhancement in-group cohesiveness were identified. There was also adapted the scale of measuring negative social identity management strategies, which is related to Social Vulnerability Status. A novelty of the study is considering the enhancement in-group cohesiveness as a negative social identity management strategy. The study gives interesting potential to other researchers to continue studying new taxonomy of negative social identity management strategies withing other vulnerable groups. In addition, our findings help us understand identity management strategies better, revealing important insights for efforts to reduce poverty and support community development.

Key words: *In-group cohesiveness, Negative social identity management strategies, Poverty*.

Introduction

In general, when analyzing poverty, less emphasis is put on its social and psychological dimensions, as they are difficult to measure. However, studying poor peoples' identity and their behavioral strategies is crucial for creating the relevant policy about strengthening their capabilities in the process of combating poverty.

In Georgia, the group of poor obviously includes the people registered in the unified database of socially vulnerable families, who receive some financial assistance as the social assistance in the form of subsistence allowance. This group is called as socially vulnerable. Based on the application made by the family to the Social Services Agency, the social agent visits the place of residence and fills in the "Family Declaration". After processing the information reflected in the latter, the family will be awarded a rating score, which determines how much will be the monthly amount of money that the family will get as the social assistance.

While identity management strategies have been extensively studied in various settings, the unique challenges faced by vulnerable groups like individuals living in poverty warrant a focused investigation. It should also be mentioned that the poverty coping mechanisms are directly connected with the types of negative social identity management strategies used by the people living the poverty.

Thus, the aim of the current study is to investigate the social identity and negative social identity management strategies of people living in poverty in Georgia. Specifically, the study has the following objectives: 1. Identifying the dimensions related to negative social identity management strategies in the population with socially vulnerable status; 2. Creating the research instrument for negative social identity management strategies related to the status of the social vulnerability (defining the items necessary to develop the research instrument for negative social identity management strategies).

Conceptual Framework

Poverty is stigmatizing condition. The additional "burden" for people with low socio-economic status is knowing that society is stigmatizing them because of their own financial situation (Lott, 2002).

Moreover, stigma has serious negative effects on the selves of stigmatized. In describing self-stigma, the authors rely on the types of stigma highlighted by Herek and point out that stigma can affect self in three ways: 1) enacted stigma, which implies a negative attitude towards a stigmatized person; 2) felt stigma – realization of stigmatization experience by the stigmatized person and expectations for stigmatization in the future; 3) internalized stigma - acceptance of negative attitudes expressed by society, turning them into part of their own self/identity and giving them personal value, accompanied by a decrease in self-esteem and psychological distress (Herek, 2007; 2009).

In the presence of group stigma, when a stigma relates to membership in a particular group and speaks to the transition between actual and virtual identity, the latter is related to the social identity derived from group membership. The citizens with low socio-economic status are united in one level and represent a separate group of society - the category of socially vulnerable population.

In the theory developed by Tajfel and Turner (1978), social identity is considered in close connection with membership in any particular group. According to social identity theory, the group plays the crucial role in the formation of a person's self, in the process of his or her self-determination. According to social identity theory, membership in a specific social group is accompanied by the positive or negative content connotations. Therefore, the social identity can also be positive or negative depending on how the referent social group is evaluated. In the theory of social identity, the large part is also devoted to the analysis of how they deal with the damage associated with the formation of a negative social identity (low self-esteem, self-oppression, etc.). There are basically three types of strategies: 1) social/individual mobility; 2) social creativity; 3) social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The social/individual mobility means being separated (identified) from a low-status group and leaving it (at least, reducing identification with it). It is a strategy that operates entirely on a personal level, aiming to increase individual, not group, well-being. In contrast, the social competition is a collective/group strategy that involves the direct competition with an out-group to enhance one's own group status (Turner & Brown 1978; Tajfel 1978). The goal of this strategy is to achieve the positive social identity and is used by group members when the level of identification with the group is high. As for the strategy of social creativity, it involves changes of the context of social comparison. At this point, the sense of positive social identity is achieved without a real change in social group status. This strategy includes a wide range of reactions, some of which are highly individualistic, while others are aimed at improving group identity.

For analyzing the negative social identity management strategies in the context of poverty, the research conducted in Turkey by Serap Akfirat, Filiz Comez Polat and Unsal Yetim (2016) is very interesting. The population living below the poverty line participated in the research. In this research all of the strategies identified by Tajfel and Turner (1979) were also demonstrated in the case of poor people living in Turkey. According to the research, the participants tended to move to higher status groups when the existing social structure was unstable and the boundaries of another group were perceived as transcendent/penetrating.

The research participating the East Germans after the German unification is also interesting to be mentioned. There were tested the predictions by social identity theory and relative deprivation theory concerning preferences for strategies to cope with a negative in-group status position. The study revealed that the relative deprivation theory components explained the collective responses, whereas social identity theory constructs were related to individual strategies (Mummendey et al., 1999).

In the research of children with socially vulnerable status in Georgia and in their narratives, there is revealed the social identity laden with sharply demarcated negative content related to the "poor". To escape from living in poverty, most children named active, individual/social mobility behavioral strategies (e.g., a lot of work, having a job) (Kitiashvili & Pharsadanishvili, 2018).

As Verkuyten and Reijerse (2008) discuss in their article socio-structural variables influence on the identity management strategies that people adopt. So, the importance of studying social identity theory separately in specific groups and countries is important for making proper conclusions.

Research Methodology

Current study presents one the parts of the results of the PhD research project of one of the authors. At the beginning, the qualitative study was conducted. This approach considered to be reasonable to investigate the content of social identity and types of negative social identity management strategies demonstrated by the citizens with socially vulnerable status living in Georgia. In addition, the rich material obtained from in-depth interviews would form the basis for the items needed to construct the scale.

The second part of the research was quantitative and aimed developing the scale measuring negative social identity management strategies of people living in poverty.

Research Participants: 17 in-depth interviews were conducted through a pre-prepared semi-structured interview guide. All respondents were registered in the "Unified Database of Socially Vulnerable Families". Due to the fact that potential respondents belonged to a special category which was not easily accessible, it was decided to use non-probability sampling techniques: convenience sampling and snowball sampling. All ethical principles were followed. After that thematic analysis was done. The transcripts were also given to an independent expert for decoding. To evaluate the consistency between the evaluators, the kappa coefficient was calculated among 182 coded phrases in SPSS 21, kappa = .74, p <.05.

263 respondents with socially vulnerable status (female - 184, male - 79; age - M = 44.4, SD = 16.5, Min = 17, Max = 85) participated in the quantitative part of the research. 251 of them are Georgians, 8 - Armenians, 3 - Russians, and 1 - of other nationalities. Non-random sampling methods were used as the target group of the research belonged to the vulnerable group of society. All respondents were registered in the "Unified Database of Socially Vulnerable Families" because of living in poverty. The average annual duration of socially vulnerable status for respondents was 5.4, SD = 4.6 (Min = 1, Max = 20), the average monthly duration (those who have status for only a few months) - 4.6, SD = 2.6, (Min = 1, Max = 9). The residence area, educational status and economic situation of the respondents are presented in the tables №1, №2 and №3 (Pharsadanishvili & Kitiashvili, 2023).

Table №1. The distribution of respondents according to the areas of residence

Cities	Percent of the sample (%)
Tbilisi	44.5
Telavi	20.2
Zugdidi	6.5
Ozurgeti	6.1
Kutaisi	1.5
Gori	.8
Other areas	20.5

Table №2. Educational Status of the respondents

Educational Status	Percent of the sample (%)
Full general education	41.1
Vocational education	27
Higher education	12.9
Basic education	10.3
Incomplete higher education	6.5

Table № 3. Economic situation of the respondents - frequency distribution

Economic situation	Percent of the sample (%)
We don't have enough money for food	41.2
We have enough money for food, but not for the clothes	37.4
We have enough money for food and clothes, but not for the expensive things such as fridge or washing machine	20.2
We can afford to buy expensive things such as fridge or washing machines	.4
We can afford to buy everything we need	.8

Procedure: Significant difficult was to find contact information about research respondents. To fill out the questionnaires, we mostly went to free canteens, where only citizens with socially vulnerable status go to get food every day. Although the beneficiaries of free canteens were only people living below the poverty line, we were also asking them if they really had the status of socially vulnerable to be sure they were eligible for the study. 67 respondents refused participating in the study; the reasons of refusal were connected with undesirability of reading long questionnaire without getting direct benefit from it. All ethical principles were followed. The purpose and benefits of the research were explained to the participants; written and verbal consent was also obtained from all of them. Anonymity was guaranteed

Research Instruments: The questionnaire consisted of instructions followed by a demographic block and then the measuring instruments. There were 14 questions in demographic block measuring respondents' sex, age, residence, nationality, education, marital status, number of family members, income, economic situation, duration of socially vulnerable status, employment status. After that the respondents were filling different scales including the scale of Negative Social Identity Management Strategy.

Data processing: Quantitative data processing program SPSS 21 was used to perform the procedures required for the statistical analysis of the research. The confirmatory factor analysis was performed using programs - lavaan: R program for structural equation modeling (Rosseel, 2012) and IBM SPSS Amos 19.

Results

Social identity of people living in poverty (qualitative study results)

As a result of the analysis of the interviews, there was found that the population living in Georgia, with socially vulnerable status, perceives that there is a stigma towards them in the society. In the context of the internalized stigma, it was clearly revealed that the stigmatizing experiences were integrated as the part of their identity. They were mentioning about the feeling of shame, damaged self-esteem and falling into a "low level" of oneself. As shown by transcript analysis, the respondents with social vulnerability status might experience negative treatment and humiliation. On the other hand, in the case of internalization, they regard the above experiences as shameful for themselves. They believe that their self-respect is hurt and that they have "fallen low" ("*You know what I have noticed? That I am already down there and it hurts. I feel that I have slid not only one step, but several steps down*", 57-year-old woman).

Negative Social Identity Management Strategies

Description of the Qualitative Research

With the approach of deductive thematic analysis, the transcript analysis revealed the following two negative social identity management strategies from Tajfel and Turner's theory (1978): social creativity and social/individual mobility. In addition, as a result of the transcript analysis, the inductive thematic analysis revealed another strategy, which we called the enhancement in-group cohesiveness.

Social Creativity Strategies: As a result of the analysis of the interviews, social creativity strategies combine the topics such as: reducing the importance of a low-status attribute (having less money, having a socially vulnerable status), giving priority to other, more positive characteristics, promoting them (e.g. „*Do you know how it is ?! This status has never been uncomfortable for me. Because money has never been important to me, not even in friendship, not in any relationship*" female, 19 years old); the in-group social comparison; out-group descending social comparison; attribution of low status to external factors.

Social/individual Mobility Strategy: The part of the respondents mentioned that they preferred to have the socially vulnerable status, even if they have the low-income job and enough resources. Some of them actively try to improve their education, find different types of jobs, and thus, improve their socio-economic status (e.g., „*When you are socially vulnerable, you should have some plan, for example, I am getting the scholarship. You should not sit at home, nobody comes to you for suggesting any job",* male, 20 years old).

Enhancement In-group Cohesiveness Strategy - We combined the content presented by the respondents about strong cohesiveness to people with socially vulnerable status, enhanced contacts and material or social support for each other (e.g., "*We do not want rich people, we cannot understand them*", female,37 years old). We think that this behavioral strategy can be considered as an effective negative social identity management strategy, because by combining together and helping each other, citizens with socially vulnerable status try to cope with life difficulties connected to their status, create an acceptable social support network and avoid stigmatization source.

The Results of the Scale Development (Scale Expert Evaluation, and Psychometric Analysis)

2 of the 30 items formulated based on the content of the in-depth interview analysis were removed from the scale as a result of expert evaluation. 28 item scale participated in the pilot research.

The principal components analysis (PCA) was performed. Initially, the compliance of the data was checked. The correlation table showed that the correlation coefficient between the components was low (.257). In this case, we should not expect the significant differences in the results between the Varimax and Oblimin rotation methods, so we used Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) = .77, which is higher than the recommended value of 0.6 (Pallant, 2013). Bartlett's test

of sphericity is statistically significant, p <.05, which confirms the appropriateness of dividing data into factors. To make conclusions about the number of factors, we relied on the Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalues is above 1), the scree plot graph, and the parallel analysis (MonteCarlo PA). Therefore, there was decided to make separation of three components.

The three identified factors explained 35.47% of the variability (18.4%, 10.5%, 6.5%). After removing certain items, this figure has increased and reached 44.6% (21.3%, 14.1%, 9.1%). After the items were analyzed, 11 items were removed from the scale. 11 items were removed from the scale as a result of analyzing the substantive relevance of the item with regard to the cross loading, low factor loadings and also the content relevance of the item to the dimension of the strategy was taken into account (items removed are:1, 2, 4, 5, 6,11,12,14, 15, 17, 23). As a result, fifteen items remained on the scale. From these, 4 items relate to the social/individual 28 mobility factor, 5 items relate to the enhancement in-group cohesiveness factor, and 6 items relate to the social creativity strategy.

Table №4. Scale of Negative Social Identity Management Strategies Related to Socially Vulnerable Status: Principal Component Analysis (PCA) (1 - Creativity, 2 – In-Group Cohesiveness, 3 - Individual Mobility; the main loads on the factor are indicated in bold. The items are abbreviated).

Items	Pattern coefficients			Structure coefficients			Com	M (SD)
	1	2	3	1	2	3		
q18_25. Nothing is bad in holding the status of socially vulnureble.	**.797**	.065	-.189	**.750**	.158	.038	.601	5.38 (2.08)
q18_21. I don't see anything negative i holding the status of status of socially vulnurebile.	**.682**	.024	-.039	**.674**	.105	.156	.456	5.34 (2.11)
q18_3. We are poor, but warm, than ric people are.	**.639**	.254	-.114	**.637**	.330	.069	.483	5.00 (2.16)
q18_9. The important thing is honesty, not the status.	**.596**	-.067	.166	**.636**	.003	.336	.434	6.13 (1.57)
q18_27. Understanding with one anoth more important in the social relationshi than money.	**.549**	-.054	.220	**.605**	.111	.377	.414	5.57 (1.90)
q18_7. Money is not important for soci relationships.	**.510**	-.220	.178	**.535**	-.159	.323	.365	4.67 (2.29)
q18_26. I prefer to have relationships v the same people .	.140	**.790**	-.161	.187	**.806**	-.119	.682	3.73 (2.34)
q18_22. I would rather to have contact socially vulnerable people.	-.093	**.722**	-.102	-.031	**.760**	-.128	.603	3.79 (2.25)
q18_13. We, as socially vulnerebale people, are trying not to have any contact with rich people.	-.066	**.597**	.009	.066	**.589**	-.009	.351	3.28 (2.22)
q18_28. Socially vulnerable people are escaping themselves with helping one another.	.067	**.577**	.239	.203	**.585**	.259	.413	4.59 (2.19)
q18_20. We, as socially vulnerebale people, are very different from rich people.	.047	**.560**	.162	.159	**.566**	.177	.353	4.71 (2.20)
q18_24. I am trying to work hard.	-.055	.074	**.748**	.167	.069	**.733**	.544	4.99 (2.12)
q18_10. I am trying to have my own income. \	.048	.029	**.714**	.255	.036	**.727**	.532	5.55 (1.93)
q18_19. I am trying my children to study well.	-.033	-.044	**.728**	.170	-.047	**.718**	.519	5.58 (2.01)

| q18_18. We, as socially vulnerebale people, can improve our economic situation with the help of active actions. | .105 | .062 | **.640** | .295 | .075 | **.670** | .464 | 4.47 (2.19) |

The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS Amos 19 program to empirically examine the factor structure of the negative social identity management strategies model. The model fit is initially evaluated according to the chi-squared statistical criterion. According to the data, $\chi2$ (87) = 274.9, p = .000. The examination of the alternative indices revealed that the fit value between the hypothetical and observational models was not good (GFI = .877; CFI = .764; TLI = .715; RMSEA = .09). At this time, it is advisable to check the data of the modification indices, however, so far it is important to make sure that the logic underlying the model is correct. Although we have studied the advisability of dividing the existing factors during the qualitative research and principal component analysis (PCA), we still began to wonder whether there was an error in the theoretical reasoning behind the separation strategy model, which is related to average value of fit model. The only possible option was to divide the factors into broader groups - individual and group level factors. We have left the constituent items of individual mobility as a strategy at the individual level. We have combined the 26th, 20th, 22nd, 28th, 13th and 3rd items in the group strategy. After conducting the confirmatory factor analysis, we obtained lower values for this two-factor model (CFI = .724; TLI = .656; RMSEA = .115).

Therefore, we considered it reasonable to check the data of the three-factor model modification index. We have seen alternatives to covariates between observations and latent variables. Covariation was performed on two scales – between the errors in the social creativity scale e1 –e2 (equivalent to items 25-21) and e3-e6 (equivalent to items 3-27), and the error in the in-group cohesiveness scale e7 –e8 (equivalent to items 26-20). As a result, we have obtained better fit values. $\chi2$ (84) = 221.4, p = .000; GFI = .901; CFI = .827; TLI = .784; RMSEA = .07.

Figure № 1. A three-factor model of negative social identity strategies related to socially vulnerable status
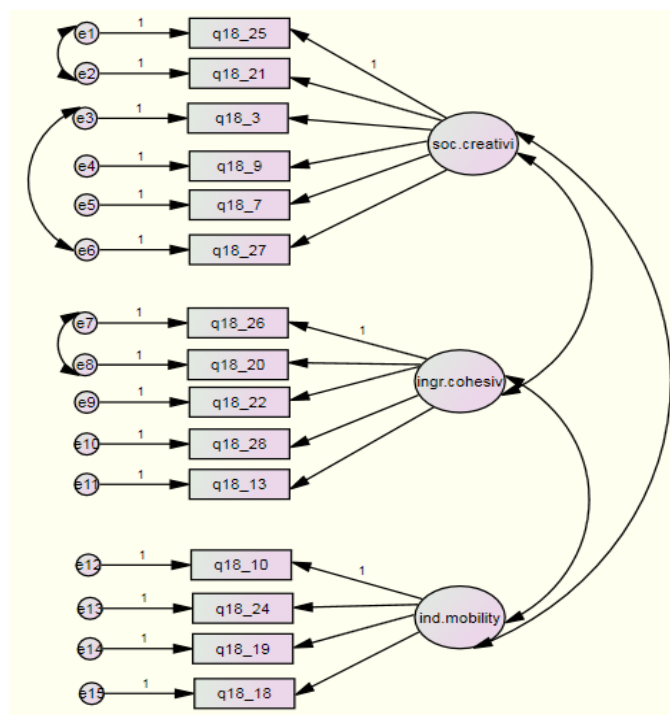
The overall scale's Cronbach's alpha is .72 (15 items) (M = 4.89, SD = .9), which is acceptable indicator.

Table № 5. Internal consistency, mean and standard deviation of the factors of negative social identity management strategies related to the socially vulnerable status.

Factors	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha	M (SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Creativity	6	.70	5.3 (1.2)	-.83	.35
In-group cohesiveness	5	.68	4.04 (1.5)	-.05	-.85
Social/Individual mobility	4	.68	5.1 (1.4)	-.74	-.14

Table N6. Correlations between negative social identity strategies/factors related to socially vulnerable status

	Social Creativity	In-group cohesiveness	Social/Individual mobility
Social Creativity In-group cohesiveness	.143*		
Social/Individual Mobility	343**		
** p ≤ .01; * p ≤. .05			

Discussion

In the socially vulnerable group, there are three main strategies used to deal with negative feelings arising from the formation of negative self-image. These include individual/social mobility, social creativity, and enhancement in-group cohesiveness.

In the original theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979), enhancement in-group cohesiveness as a strategy for managing negative emotions stemming from a negative social identity is not discussed separately. It is logical for low-status stigmatized groups to enhance the in-group cohesiveness as a separate strategy, because by bonding together and strengthening contacts with each other, they meet the need for social contact without interacting with the out-group that burdens them with stigmatizing experiences. As discussed above, the internalized stigma is accompanied by a fear of impending stigmatization and even avoidance of contact. Consequently, socially vulnerable citizens, during the process of stigma perception, try in every way to resort to self-defense mechanisms, one of which is to reduce contacts with the out-group at the expense of enhancement in-group cohesiveness.

The researches on the use of strategy of in-group cohesiveness by stigmatized group has not been conducted yet. In this regard, the research on overcoming the stigma of women involved in prostitution with HIV is noteworthy, where the enhancement in-group cohesiveness is considered in response to stigma (Carrasco, Nguyen, Barrington, Perez, Donastorg & Kerrigan, 2016).

It should be noted that all three strategies are used quite intensively by socially vulnerable citizens. This result is not uncommon, as existing theoretical concepts and researches on negative social identity management strategies also state that the different strategies can be used simultaneously, regardless of whether they are individual or group (Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish & Hodge, 1996). However, it is important to recall Taylor and McKiernan's (1984) five-step model of intergroup relationships, according to which people first resort to social mobility strategies, and when attempts to move to a high-status group become unsuccessful and impossible, engage in other group-level strategies (Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish & Hodge, 1996).

It should be noted that the social competition strategy outlined in Tajfel and Turner's original theory (1982) did not manifest itself in the Georgian context at all. This is absolutely logical because the current social and political context no longer implies the so-called the "working class" movements and the attempts of revolutions for social change. Therefore, the classification given in the theory needs to be revised to take into account the specific study group and the socio-political context.

Niens & Cairns (2003) also argue in their article that focusing on identity management strategies to cope with social change, social identity theory is often reviewed. However, this theory has some limitations and more future studies should be conducted to explore the theory deeply.

Conclusions

In the socio-psychological researches conducted in Georgia, negative social identity management strategies have not been studied so far. By elucidating the mechanisms through which individuals navigate their social identities within their communities, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of poverty dynamics and informs the development of targeted interventions aimed at strengthening social cohesion. In this regard, the significant results have been obtained not only locally in Georgia but also internationally. In particular, we mean the distinction of the in-group cohesiveness strategy and the attempt to incorporate it into the taxonomy of negative social identity management strategies. It is true that the best results were not obtained as a result of empirical examination of the factor structure of this model, but the indicators are acceptable. This forms the basis for further research in this direction and for exploring the feasibility of adding in-group cohesiveness as a strategy. One of the limitations of the paper is also related to the fact that it was possible to conduct research on larger selection of socially vulnerable people.

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DIGITAL LEARNING ECOSYSTEM AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A 4-UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE

Roya Anvari, Farideh Moradi
School of business and administrative studies, The University of Georgia Georgia
Ali Shirvani
School of Management, Isfahan university
Iran

Abstract
In today's era, universities operate within a highly interconnected global landscape, which is increasingly accessible via virtual platforms, decentralized institutions, and an information-driven economy. The capacity of a university to leverage its reputation, ranking, and networks plays a pivotal role in attracting and retaining students, researchers, staff, and industry collaborators. This underscores the significance of engaging with local, national, and global communities to achieve success. This article critically examines existing literature on the digital ecosystem within the realm of education. Various studies have explored aspects such as digital ecosystem dynamics, innovation, communication channels, technology integration, and human capital considerations, aiming to elucidate effective strategies for creating and operating within this evolving landscape. The analysis delves into key themes and focal points within the concept and practice of digital ecosystems, with particular emphasis on academic initiatives as catalysts for ecosystem development and relationship cultivation. Furthermore, the article addresses the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing digital resources in Iran, while highlighting initiatives undertaken by leading universities to foster digital ecosystems. Ultimately, it provides managerial insights into potential future trajectories in this domain.

Keywords: *digital ecosystem, digital learning, academic initiatives, virtual platforms, technology integration*

I. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the education system plays the most important role in the sustainable development of countries, and its optimization is the first measure that governments consider in their long-term plans. The leaders of this optimization are the Scandinavian countries, and one of the factors of the prosperity and stability of these countries today is this factor. Criticisms have been coming to the education system for many years that education is not based on the correct basis and the education system should be reformed. However, except for the studies that were conducted about ten years ago and stopped about six years ago, there has been no significant change in Iran's education system. They only changed the names of the classes and even the number of courses and the time a person must study to get to the university did not change. Digital education has become a common concept in today's world. The revolution we are facing has turned traditional and one-way education into interactive and constructive education. This development has been used in many public and private educational institutions and is considered a reliable solution. The educational and research mission of a university in the present century, effective interaction is both internal and more vital, more interconnection with the outside world, which brings sustainable growth to the university (Anderson, 2008; Anvari, Vilmantė, & Janjaria, 2023). Therefore, with all these interpretations and understanding the importance of ecosystem development and development of relations, we will proceed to the actions of selected universities in this area.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To describe the new ecosystem of educational resources, it is necessary to mention some of the increasingly evolving learning and teaching methods.
A.   The Main Trends in The Education Sector in Iran: Implications and Challenges

In the early 1960s, educational content was crafted and produced utilizing mainframe computers. By the 1970s, computer-based educational systems began employing small computers for instructional

purposes. The advent of these computers in the late 1970s and early 1980s provided professors and students with greater autonomy over the creation and dissemination of educational materials. When students participate in the design process of educational materials, the role of professors transitions from merely imparting information to facilitating its acquisition. Minicomputers played a transformative role in the development and delivery of educational materials, enabling professors to create course materials using writing systems and granting students the flexibility to learn at their convenience. Initially, computers in education were primarily utilized by the military for employee training, while educational institutions concurrently utilized televisions for educational purposes (Shirzad, Rajaepour, & Mahram, 2022). The emergence of microcomputers in the early 1970s marked a shift toward microcomputer-based learning systems. However, due to the disconnected nature of minicomputer systems, there were limitations in developing and sharing instructional materials, and they lacked support for features such as sound, video, and special effects. As educational technology progressed, teachers gained the ability to create learning materials more efficiently and with greater control. Until the late 1970s, traditional face-to-face classrooms predominated, after which instruction gradually transitioned to a more personalized format incorporating self-study assignments, videotapes, and software. With advancements in technology, group classes are increasingly evolving into individualized instruction. The convergence of internet and mobile technology has propelled e-learning into the next generation.

A generation that allows teachers to design and present educational materials for students who live in distant geographical locations or cannot attend schools for some reason. The processing power available in these technologies empowers teachers to better meet the needs of individuals (Shirzad et al., 2022).

•The educational system in Iran has evolved over time, initially following a different approach from what is currently observed. With the introduction of Western educational methods and the establishment of schools, a new system emerged where teachers became central figures. In contrast to traditional Iranian schooling, Western schools typically feature fixed classrooms, allowing students to easily locate their teachers according to a predetermined schedule. This setup offers several advantages, including the convenience for both students and teachers, as teachers can conduct their work and studies in the same space and have access to necessary resources. Consequently, teachers tend to invest more effort into maintaining and improving their classrooms, creating a conducive learning environment. This mirrors historical practices in Iran, where teaching often took place in the professor's residence, facilitating practical demonstrations, such as medical treatments. However, in modern Iran, where classrooms are student-centric, there's often a lack of student engagement due to disinterest in the schooling process. Lack of attention to new and new theories in the field of education- For several years, UNESCO has compiled a document in which it has classified people's intelligence in different ways, and it no longer measures a person's intelligence only with an IQ test. After that, literacy also has various forms. In this category, we see literacies such as: communication, emotional, financial, media, education and computer literacy, each of which is necessary and vital for life in today's age (Vágvölgyi, Coldea, Dresler, Schrader, & Nuerk, 2016).

•Neglecting emerging educational theories is evident in the realm of academia. Over the years, UNESCO has curated a dossier categorizing human intelligence diversely, moving beyond the sole reliance on IQ tests. Similarly, literacy encompasses a spectrum of skills, including communication, emotional awareness, financial acumen, media literacy, educational proficiency, and computer literacy. Each of these facets is indispensable for navigating contemporary life. Despite a 12-year English language curriculum, students graduating from theoretical fields often find themselves lacking practical skills. This deficiency hampers their ability to excel in university, where specialization is essential. Unfortunately, the courses offered in theoretical fields lack distinctiveness, highlighting broader issues of ineffectiveness within the education system (Shirzad et al., 2022).

B. What is Digital Ecosystem?

The advent of digital business brings about substantial transformations within organizational business ecosystems, rendering them more expansive and intricate, necessitating a refined digital strategy. Engaging in ecosystem activities enables organizations to adapt and thrive in an increasingly expansive digital landscape. To meet the escalating demands of customers, organizations have broadened their offerings of products and services to unprecedented levels compared to their historical operations (Jacobides, Lang, & Von Szczepanski, 2019).

In this manner, they've established partnerships with various organizations, including competitors, to form networks aimed at delivering more tailored offerings and services. These business ecosystems,

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born from such collaborations, are poised to shape the global digital economy in the forthcoming era (Valdez-De-Leon, 2019). Securing a position within these ecosystems holds paramount importance for organizations, as it can yield significant value. In the coming decade, organizations will not define their business models solely by differentiation from traditional approaches, but rather by their efficacy within emerging ecosystems comprising diverse businesses across industries. As competition intensifies, numerous industries will increasingly forge new, expansive, and dynamic alliances within the evolving digital ecosystem. In this digital ecosystem landscape, the primary business model revolves around full customer orientation, enabling customers to enjoy a seamless experience accessing a wide array of products and services through a unified digital gateway without exiting the ecosystem (Li, Badr, & Biennier, 2012; Weill & Woerner, 2015). Digital ecosystems are composed of diverse actors offering multidimensional digital solutions that involve multiple industries and are accessible through digital channels. The trade relationship between contributors to the digital ecosystem is through paper or digital (or both) contracts. These agreements formally determine payment methods and other business considerations related to services provided, the rules governing the ecosystem, and how access to the data produced within it is determined. Strengthening relationships in ecosystems, in turn, makes it possible to better meet the growing expectations of customers. Organizations operating within digital ecosystems can enhance their services and customer experiences by collaborating with third-party firms to gather and analyze extensive customer data. This collaboration enables them to offer integrated digital experiences and a wider range of services to their customers within the ecosystem (Palmié, Miehé, Oghazi, Parida, & Wincent, 2022). Success in participating within these digital ecosystems hinges on the swift acquisition and development of requisite management skills and capabilities by organizations. The emergence of ecosystems has made changes in the market landscape in terms of forming unexpected alliances between organizations, discoloration of boundaries between different industrial sectors, and how business leaders manage communications within ecosystems (Schaffnit, 2020). In digital ecosystems, organizations can collaborate in cooperatives. Organizations' relationships to each other in a digital ecosystem can take many forms. Some of these relationships are transactional and informal, such as those based on Application Programming Interface (API) that allow systems to cooperate with each other to perform simple operations (Karhu, Botero, Vihavainen, Tang, & Hämäläinen, 2011). Other relationships are more formal and complex, and they conclude service-level agreements and agreements to secure sovereignty and other managerial matters. Some of these relationships may also be established with organizations that are in some ways considered rival to one another. To be successful, an ecosystem must offer an encouraging value that is relevant to various businesses operating on it, because creating multiple and complex connections in an ecosystem requires large amounts of energy and resources. Due to the many questions raised in collaboration with third-party companies in the fields of cybersecurity, intellectual property, data ownership, privacy, profit sharing, compliance with customer regulation and management, it is important to select the right teams in the organization to operate in ecosystem. These teams require people with technical skills and expertise in technology integration, infrastructure, applications, and digital services (Pipek & Wulf, 2009). Due to the importance of the role of API in ecosystems, some organizations have begun to create API centers. These centers oversee the design and development of API in the organization and how they connect to third-party companies. By establishing ecosystem communication management teams, organizations can monitor their performance within the ecosystem by measuring key performance indicators and indicators agreed upon by all organizations in the ecosystem. In order to develop the capabilities required for effective management of an organization's activity in an ecosystem, tools should be developed to create a balance between standardization of activities and flexibility in cooperation with partners in the organization. It should also be put on the agenda to promote the culture of cooperation through developing protocols, designing incentives and developing tools that encourage eco-organizations to work together to promote ecosystem development (Yamamoto, 2018).

A 2019 comprehensive Boston Consulting Group (BCG) study, in which 40 digital ecosystems have been studied, identified four important factors that have changed how organizations interact with each other in new digital ecosystems:

• Geographical diversity of participants - Digital ecosystem partnerships include different actors from different locations, which means cooperation between organizations with large geographical distances and different languages.

• Focus on inter-industrial cooperation - In many ecosystems, the required expertise comes from different industries.

• Flexible trading structures- In digital ecosystems, more flexible trade structures are used than joint ventures and long-term alliances such as contractual communication and platform-based partnerships to enable faster response to changing preferences of customers, new technologies, emerging threats from competitors and changes in existing regulations.

• Creating value in reciprocal and continuous- In a strong digital ecosystem, the focus is on creating value on a continuous basis, and all participants benefit from the activity within the ecosystem and communication with each other.

In order to select an appropriate ecosystem, BCG has identified three types of digital ecosystems that organizations should focus on activities within an ecosystem that is appropriate to the organization according to their strategic objectives and capabilities. Three types of digital ecosystems identified by the BCG are: Digitizer network, Platform and Super platform (Moyer & Burton, 2016; Timokhova et al., 2022). Digital ecosystems are defined based on the depth and range of potential collaborations between the actor sets. Each participant represents part of the final solution designed in the ecosystem or provides part of the capabilities required to develop the solution. The power of the digital ecosystem is that neither participant alone needs to possess or work with all the components of the final solution, and that the value produced in the ecosystem is more than the sum of the value generated by each participant in the ecosystem. According to Gartner's 2017 definition, the digital ecosystem consists of a group of actors (organizations, people and objects) working with standard digital platforms to achieve mutual goals that benefit all (Yamamoto, 2018). They have recommended the following key things for organizations to develop or operate in a strategic digital ecosystem: Creating an open and cooperative culture; Welcome change; Business model redesign; Promoting digital technologies.

C. Academic Initiatives in Digital Ecosystems

Today, universities are located in a complex and interconnected global environment that is becoming increasingly accessible through virtual events, decentralized institutions, and the information-driven economy. A university's ability to leverage its reputation, ranking and relationships is key to attracting and retaining students, researchers, staff and industry partners, and how local, national and global communities interact and perceive the university's ability to achieve success. The educational and research mission of a university in this century is the effective interaction of both internal communication and the more vital issue, more communication with the outside world, which brings sustainable growth for the university. Therefore, with all these interpretations and understanding the importance of creating an ecosystem and developing relationships, we will continue to discuss the actions of selected universities in this field (Feliciano-Cestero, Ameen, Kotabe, Paul, & Signoret, 2023; Godin & Terekhova, 2021; Koebnick, 2021; Shishmano, Popov, & Popova, 2021).

• University of Lincoln

In its digital strategy, the University of Lincoln introduced five areas that it operates under those areas. "Creating Digital Communities" is one of the key areas that is here sharing knowledge to ensure that everyone can benefit from developing expertise at the university. Establishing an open and flexible university that supports collaboration in different fields, regardless of borders, and uses existing assets and knowledge to promote education digitally is an approach in this strategic field.

The objectives of the university in this area are to encourage the staff and students to share their knowledge, methodology and achievements in the best interests of the university and the larger community as well as the enthusiastic participation of the staff and students in the scientific societies that are inspiring and capable. Also, given that the University of Lincoln's Strategy Document names strong partners and employee partnerships as a principle, it can be said that the University seeks to take advantage of local and regional opportunities which can play a fundamental role throughout the region. Creating an environment for graduates to work in jobs in the area after their studies, and even supporting new businesses, is one of the university's goals in this area.

Encouraging employees to move within the university and even exchange with the industrial sector informs the university that their training and research is up-to-date. Establishing a more important role in the life of stakeholders, strengthening relationships with industry and leading partners, and encouraging senior staff to interact with at least one local organization are the university's missions in this area. At the same time, the university created new opportunities for student engagement and research by growing international industrial collaboration.

Increasing the number of partnerships with businesses; increasing the number of global opportunities for staff and; students through university and business partners; increasing the number of functional learning programs; increased income from consulting activities; increased presence in relevant organizations and organs; increasing university-affiliated companies; increasing the number of employees eager to move and exchange with industry.

One of the criteria for university success is to achieve the objectives of this field. Table 1 summarizes the University of Lincoln's digital strategy.

Table 1: Key Objectives in University of Lincoln's Digital Strategy.

Strategic Area	Key Objectives
Creating Digital Communities	- Encourage knowledge sharing among staff and students
	- Foster enthusiastic participation in scientific societies
	- Establish strong partnerships with local and regional organizations
	- Create opportunities for graduates to work in the area after studies and support new businesses
	- Encourage staff mobility within the university and collaboration with the industrial sector
	- Strengthen relationships with industry partners
	- Increase international industrial collaboration for student engagement and research
	- Increase partnerships with businesses
	- Provide global opportunities for staff and students through university-business partnerships
	- Expand functional learning programs
	- Increase income from consulting activities
	- Enhance university's presence in relevant organizations
	- Increase university-affiliated companies
	- Promote staff mobility and exchange with industry

• University of Adelaide
The University of Adelaide, in the technology strategy document, uses multiple columns to build its digital future. One of these pillars is "Managing Relationships and Interaction with Communities". The University of Adelaide has a holistic view of every student, whether current or graduate students, or return to college as lifelong learners. The ability of communication management for the university provides support for current and future students, professional and academic staff, researchers, industry partners, alumni and university patrons. It also provides support for the university's Internal and External Relations Management Program from partnership, research interactions, industry services and future collaboration. On the other hand, the university strives to use its knowledge to connect its academic community with international graduates and to participate only in the future, regardless of its role on the world stage.

The primary objective of this column is to effectively manage relationships between industry and foreign stakeholders within the university context. It encompasses various groups such as students, researchers, employees, and foreign stakeholders, facilitating more personalized, efficient, and coordinated communication, marketing efforts, absorption processes, and other related activities.

Key actions undertaken by the university in this domain include (Table 2):

•   Enhancing the capacity for managing relationships and interactions with academic, regional, national, and global communities effectively.

•   Offering a holistic view of student information throughout their academic journey within and outside the university, thereby enhancing the university's understanding of diverse groups at all stages of education and upon graduation.

•   Leveraging new technological capabilities to support campaign management, business development, opportunity identification, and targeted marketing for talent acquisition and employment.

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These initiatives are integral to the university's efforts in this crucial area. Additionally, the university aims to gather accessible, searchable, and pertinent data at both individual and group levels to better anticipate the needs of students, researchers, and other internal and external stakeholders. The University of Adelaide's technology strategy, Digital Future, aims to provide technological solutions for future endeavors, emphasizing the importance of innovative, sustainable, and scalable initiatives aligned with the university's growth plans.

Moreover, the university's strategy not only addresses current community needs but also prepares for future challenges, opportunities, and expansion.

The key constructs that the university has envisioned in its digital future include connecting to the global world of ideas, attracting talent, future-shaping research, teaching fit for the contemporary century, and the beating heart of Adelaide. (Here, the heart of Adelaide means turning this university into a center for the social and economic growth of the city of Adelaide that brings development, creativity and innovation at the regional, national and global levels) digital experience, smart campus, teaching and learning and Research, communication management and interaction with society, data, analysis and insight, digital work environment and the key basis of technology such as cyber security and information technology infrastructure are among the enablers of this university. Each of these enablers covers the issues described below.

•   Digital experience refers to the seamless interaction among various stakeholders within the university ecosystem, comprising present and prospective students, faculty, researchers, industry collaborators, alumni, and supporters. It entails easy access to customized technology via a unified and engaging platform. This enhanced digital experience encompasses all facets of student engagement—from enrollment to graduation and beyond, encompassing academic and professional staff experiences as well (Koh & Kan, 2020).

•   Assessment, teaching and learning. Access without time limit to the content of the course in digital format Preparing students for the future work environment through technology-based, collaborative and experience-based approaches. Digital learning environments inside and outside the university campus with virtual classes and offers to support the culturally diverse student body around the world. Using technology to support providing more flexible and personalized choices to students and academics by designing and delivering curriculum, authentic, reliable, accurate and digital assessments as well as flexible academic timetables and calendars.

•   Research Technology: This encompasses technologies and services designed to facilitate the attraction, support, and retention of skilled researchers in critical academic fields. It also includes tools and services aimed at managing and delivering research on a global scale, enhancing the overall researcher experience, promoting research collaboration, and optimizing implementation strategies. Additionally, it involves specialized, high-performance computing for research, effective research data management solutions, and secure research facilities. Furthermore, it includes technologies and tools intended to bolster business research and foster partnerships with industries.

• Data, Analytics, and Insights: This involves the provision of reliable, accurate, timely, and easily accessible data and insights to enhance evidence-based decision-making university-wide. For instance, it includes facilitating early intervention and responsiveness in areas such as student mental health and well-being as part of the university's holistic support framework

Data governance and analytics platforms provide a single view of stakeholders for decision-making and tailored marketing capabilities.

•   Relationship management and interaction with the community. Strengthening the ability and effective management of relations and interaction with the academic, regional, national and global community. Providing a comprehensive overview of students' data across their academic journey both within and beyond the university, enhancing the institution's comprehension of diverse student demographics at various educational stages and upon graduation. Implementing new technological advancements to facilitate campaign management, business expansion, opportunity identification, and targeted marketing efforts aimed at attracting and retaining talent.

•   Intelligent campus. Physical settings where human presence and technological infrastructure converge to deliver enriching experiences for the academic community. Emphasizing greater utilization of buildings, campus grounds, and online platforms for learning, interaction, and communication among students, faculty, and stakeholders at local and global levels.

•   Digital workforce. Implementing technologies to actively engage and manage talent, streamline staff workflows, enhance collaboration and communication, and integrate with various systems and data sources to foster operational efficiency.

•   Improving the employee experience by enabling a flexible and fluid workforce, as well as fostering improved and easier communication and collaboration, freeing up more time for more important work.

•   Technology infrastructure. Key platforms and technologies that provide a flexible, secure and sustainable foundation and can provide technological Alternative approaches like digital platforms for managing communication and enhancing user experiences aim to deliver interactive and worldwide technologies and engagements for students, scholars, faculty, staff, and external collaborators.

Table 2: Summary table of the University of Adelaide's digital strategy.

Strategic Supports	Key Objectives
Managing Relationships and Interaction	- Facilitate personalized communication and support for students, staff, researchers, and stakeholders
with Communities	- Enhance capacity for managing relationships effectively
	- Offer holistic view of student information
	- Leverage new technologies for campaign management and targeted marketing
Digital Experience	- Ensure seamless interaction across various stakeholders
	- Provide easy access to technology via unified platform
	- Enhance digital experience throughout academic journey
Assessment, Teaching, and Learning	- Provide digital access to course content
	- Prepare students for future work environment through technology-based approaches
	- Support flexible and personalized learning options
Research Technology	- Facilitate attraction and retention of skilled researchers
	- Enhance research collaboration and global delivery
	- Provide specialized computing and research data management solutions
Data, Analytics, and Insights	- Provide reliable and accessible data for evidence-based decision-making
	- Facilitate early intervention in areas like student mental health
Intelligent Campus	- Utilize physical and online spaces for learning and interaction
	- Enhance experiences for students, faculty, and stakeholders
Digital Workforce	- Streamline workflows and enhance collaboration among staff
	- Improve employee experience through flexible work arrangements
Technology Infrastructure	- Provide flexible, secure, and sustainable technological foundation
	- Implement digital platforms for communication and engagement

• Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences
Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences is a medium-sized higher education institution with more than ten thousand students in five faculties and is the result of the widespread trend of the 1960s in West Germany towards training more engineers and middle-level managers. Factors such as the growth of the number of students, especially at the undergraduate level, the location of this university in a rural area and the growing ratio of first and second generation immigrants, lead this university to digitalization and internationalization (Kehm, 1999). The digitization strategy of this institution is currently focused on the main administrative structures and processes. In line with moving towards digitization and internationalization, this university has done the following: Digitization, which has

recently been considered as an important strategic goal in this university, its implementation is associated with the following:

University-wide approved macro goals. A multi-project approach to create digital capability and competency development centers (teaching and learning, management, internationalization, asset and facility management).

Decision making on priorities (at the department and department level) based on urgency and demand with an emphasis on faculty initiatives.

A framework for diverse projects overseen by a coordinated central platform.

The challenges facing digital transformation in this university are: Governance and coordination; transparency and mainstreaming of initiatives and processes in departments; advising and aligning efforts at all levels; also, this university considered two things before determining the priority in choosing digital platform tools:

Methods of purchasing software at the level of the European Union; and choosing between open-source software or commercial software. Finally, by specifying its challenges and priorities, this university has developed the following goals and strategies in different departments:

Goals, strategies and priorities; Optimizing communications; Speeding up certain processes; Increasing the transparency of operations; Efficient management of the student life cycle; Improving student services; Providing new benefits to users by providing sufficient information; Achieving quick wins and successes without risking losing dynamism and mobility by defining multiple multi-dimensional projects seems to be the rationale for setting priorities. Regarding new processes in the future, these things are controlled by coordination mechanisms.

• Marketing Strategies

This university has strong educational, research and transfer missions, but not just a region for itself. Marketing activities and channels include: Marketing for students and attracting international students applying for a degree is done through the national websites of this country and social media and advertising campaigns.

University website- The activity of this university in major international educational exhibitions.

Participation in the exploratory trips aimed at the country by the non-profit organization; management and processes.

The main processes of this university that are prioritized for digitization in the first wave:

• Student Lifecycle Management (Applications, Enrollment and Status) and Services (ICOMS Initiatives)
• Exams and course management
• Financial Management
• Asset management
• Document Management

The following table include the list of prioritized processes for this university:

Table 3: Prioritized Processes for Digitization at Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences

Process	Description
Student Lifecycle Management and Services	Includes applications, enrollment, status tracking, and ICOMS Initiatives
Exams and Course Management	Management of exams and course-related processes
Financial Management	Management of financial processes and resources
Asset Management	Management of university assets
Document Management	Management of digital documents and records

As mentioned earlier, the main focus is on the digitalization of classic administrative processes and specific functions. Education, learning management, research and transfer are moving towards digitization with a focus on e-learning, knowledge management, learning support and project organization. Structural and intersectoral changes in the main processes (for example, those connecting teaching and research with management) that prepare the university for overall digitalization seem to be assigned to the second stage of the reform.

• **Queen's University**

This university was the first university in Canada to grant scholarships to its students. Queen's University presented a two-year framework for its digital transformation in 2018. This framework considers the following goals: provide perspective community participation and collaboration in

developing a shared understanding of digital opportunities. create an integrated and aligned view of needs and development across portfolios. creating a foundation implementation of key information technology enablers establish digital strategy governance. propulsion creation gathering information about digital needs and priorities creating a decision reference for digital investments (Zaki, 2019). The digital strategy defines the university's vision for its core mission of learning and research through a digital lens. This digital program includes digital research infrastructure, digital learning ecosystem and fundamental enablers including management and administrative systems. Digital planning is as much about technical infrastructure as it is about human resources, policies and processes. This framework refers to the following:

• Environmental Monitoring: The Digital Planning Project Group conducts environmental monitoring of digital strategies in higher education, identifying emerging and salient themes among the developing strategies in public and private organizations.

• Engaging Campus People and Agents: As an initial stage of engagement and engagement, in March and April 2018, the Digital Planning Group will support conversations to understand how digitization is happening in higher education, particularly at Queen's University, and clarify what principles, policies, processes, and processes need to be in place. and priorities to be considered in the university's digital review center.

• Development of guiding principles for Queen's Digital Strategy

• Creating a digital maturity model to position Queen's University in the digital journey

Identifying digital governance models

The guiding principles for the digital strategy of this university are stated below.

• Vision Alignment: Digital strategy goals and resource allocation should be aligned with the university's vision for the student learning experience and research priority, and the specific priorities of faculty members and the university.

• Community: The university envisions a digital future driven by the university community, one that enhances the human experience on campus and around the world.

• Transparency: Using digital opportunities, this university will offer learning and research opportunities to the world with privacy and ethics (Godin & Terekhova, 2021).

• Inclusivity: Our digital environment will be designed with diversity and equitable access in mind and will encompass the needs of all disciplines and fields of study.

Innovation: The University will capitalize on advances in technology with a digital strategy that is adaptive (changes) over time and the creativity that is evident in Queen's teaching and research.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper is a general literature review, with an informative purpose, that aims to explore recent and relevant literature in digital universities. There are very few studies that have investigated digital transformation in education in Iran. Therefore, we searched for universities that engaged in a digital planning process and examined a variety of issues such as access to data, artificial intelligence, and providing a high level overview of the digital landscape associated with universities.

IV. CONTRIBUTION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Advancing along the journey of digital transformation extends beyond merely employing digital technologies in work procedures; it necessitates a shift in mindset, the re-education of individuals, and a change in organizational attitudes (Anvari, Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė, & Janjaria, 2023). Nowadays, beyond technological prowess, the prevalence of individuals possessing a digital mindset shapes an organization's digital progression. Consequently, fostering a digital mindset can be identified as the primary stride in the process of digitalization. To instill a digital culture among organizational leaders and key personnel, a tailored program for enhancing individuals' digital competencies is imperative.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Digital transformation has an umbrella approach in the organization and affects all departments and layers of the organizational structure. Therefore, it is necessary to consider digital transformation training courses for different departments and layers of the organizational structure with different and appropriate approaches. As evidenced in literature, a significant challenge within Iran's education sector is the inadequacy of delivering education that precisely aligns with the evolving needs of

society, thus hindering its efficiency and effectiveness. In another words, the need for macro view instead of micro view. There are many challenges to the implementation of digital resources. Some other problems in this section are given below: Lack of attention to the continuity of education and higher education; lack of strong relationship between higher education and industry; lack of relationship between higher education and society; the lack of relationship between higher education and skill development and work environment; the problem of escape and the need to attract and maintain brains; not handing over some units to the public and the private sector; the non-competitiveness of universities and the activities of professors in them; the selection of the professor and the illiteracy of some selected people and the failure of recruitment; rely on memory; lack of attention to information technology; lack of transparency and single policy for entering information in different departments; society's insistence through parliamentarians on the establishment of independent university units instead of paying attention to the establishment of branches affiliated to prestigious universities. Finally, the authors suggest future work need to be carried on actions of selected universities in the field of student digital experience and digital transformation and the business model of universities in Iran.

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NON-PARTICIPATION OF GRADUETES OF THE SOCIAL WORK IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Monika Melytė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution

Laima Milkintaitė
Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education Institution

Abstract
The problem of non-participation of graduates in the labour market prevails in the field of social work. Non-participation in the labour market is equated with non-employment on the basis of the available education in social work area. Although social work studies are carried out by most higher education institutions, to which not a small number of graduates enter every year, but the need for social workers in the labour market remains. The aim of this study is to analyse the non-participation of social work graduates in the labour market. The study involved 8 social work graduates who graduated from X higher education institutions and did not enter the labour market in accordance with the acquired profession. According research data, non-participation is influenced by changing motivation to work in the studies process, which influences dissatisfaction with professional activities.
Keywords: *graduate, labour market, non-participation in the labour market, social work.*

Introduction
Recently, much attention has been paid to topics related to social problems. The social worker's activities seek to solve the social problems of persons experiencing difficulties, analyse the causes of their occurrence, look for the most suitable ways to change social change in the client's life and a better quality of his life (Kreivinienė, Rimkus, 2017; Apgar, Dolan, 2024). It Is argued (Laureckis and other, 2015; Sehnbruch, Velasco, 2024). that, especially in the regions, there is a shortage of social workers who have the necessary competences to carry out such work.

According to the statistics data (Oficialiosios statistikos departamentas, 2022), the number of social work graduates is increasing slightly every year, for example, in 2022, 713 graduates received higher non-university education, and 224 graduates received a university degree in Lithuania. The number of graduates shows that a fairly large number of students successfully complete these studies every year, but the need for employees in the social work is not satisfied and a stable growth in vacancies for specialists in this profession is still observed. According to employment statistics over the past 10 years (2012-2022), it is noted that the average employment rate according to the education received in social work is only 30,75%.

The lack of involvement of social work professionals was discussed more often already in 2019, when the need for specialists in this field increased significantly (Buzaitytė - Kašalynienė et al., 2019). The concept of non-participation in the labour market is often used when it comes to the level of unemployment and the lack of specialists. According to Kolmar (2021), in social work, non-participation is equated with non-employment according to the education received. So, observing the need for specialists, it is very important to find out why they do not choose the place of social worker's job or leave it.

It is likely that this problem would be partly solved by a significant increase in the salaries of specialists and better working conditions for working people. However, motivation to work is also very important in the process of involvement in the labour market (Nikolajenko, 2019). Therefore, it is important to find out how the motivation to work of graduates in the studies process changes, as well as to reveal individual motivation factors, aspects of motivation and job satisfaction. Although the motivation to work is also significant in the social sphere, another extremely important object is the factors that lead to non-participation in the labour market.

It is argued that subjectively named reasons for non-inclusion are of paramount importance. Various reasons for not entering the labour market are distinguished: the social work sector is dominated by low wages and long working hours (Zheng and other, (2022). For these reasons, graduates get a job in another field where these conditions are met. The workload also determines the process of not entering the labour market. According to Mehta and Nuamah (2020), the workload is associated with the choice of work activity. The social worker prepares various documents, is obliged to know the legislation and regulations related to the profession, and the work

process itself requires a lot of responsibility. This also leads to the non-involvement of graduates in the field of social work.

In Lithuania, this topic has been studied very little, while interest and detailed analysis are observed abroad. Lithuanian authors examine the causes and factors of non-participation, but do not analyse the process. Buzaitytė-Kašalynienė and other (2019) identified the reasons why graduates do not get involved in social work. Dinse and Rice (2021), Zheng and other (2022) studied the factors of involvement and exit to/ from the labour market, the barriers between engagement and exit in social work, and the attitude of graduates to the work cycle. According to Kolmar (2021), various reasons for non-inclusion, which are determined by the environment and personal qualities, are distinguished. Rimkienė and other (2018) examined the influence of the choice of profession on a person's life, the peculiarities of choice, i.e. how the social, psychological and economic state of the graduate depends on the choice, sought to single out what factors are significant in the right choice of study program and what are characteristic of choosing a non-interested learning program – it is noticed that Lithuanian authors seek to clarify the non-involvement of graduates, but too little insight into the emerging situation is observed. However, no studies are being carried out in Lithuania, on the basis of which it would be possible to clarify the process of non-participation and the causes that lead to it.

Research problem. Although the growing demand for social work specialists in the labour market and the sufficient number of successful graduates have become apparent, it still remains unclear why graduates who have completed social work studies do not enter this professional field and the need for the labour market in this area is not met, although the ratio of the number of students to the number of graduates is considerable. Therefore, the following **problem questions** are raised: What determines the non-participation of graduates of social work studies in the specialty they have acquired? What factors affect the non-inclusion of graduates in the labour market?

The research object is graduates' non-participation by their profession in the labour market.

The purpose of the research is to analyse the non-participation of social work graduates in the labour market.

Research objectives: 1. To discuss the reasons for the non-participation of graduates of the social work program in the labour market. 2. To find out the internal factors of non-participation of graduates in the labour market. 3. Identify external factors of non-participation into the labour market.

Research methods: analysis of scientific information sources, structured interviews, qualitative content analysis.

Research methodology and organisation

The qualitative research was employed to implement the purpose and objectives of the research. To achieve the objectives of the research, the data collection method – a structured interview – was used. The selected forms of research data collection were: online interviews using calling by phone or video and audio tools through video chat systems 'Messenger'. The data processing method applied in the research is the qualitative content analysis.

The research instrument is a structured interview questionnaire. During the structured interviews, case managers answered 13 open-ended questions. They were aimed at finding out the reasons for the choice of social work studies, changes in motivation to learn at the beginning of their studies and halfway through the study process, factors that influenced the non-participation of graduates in the labour market in the field of social work, the link between the decision not to enter the labour market and wages and workload, changes that could determine the decision of graduates to enter or return to the labour market in the field of social work. The questions are consistently.

The procedure for conducting the research. Verbal consent was obtained from the study participants to participate in the interview. All interviews were conducted remotely – contacting the study participants took place using information technologies – a mobile phone and a Messenger. The answers given by the informants were recorded using an audio recorder on a mobile phone.

The following ethical principles of social work were applied in the course of the research: the value and dignity of a person, benevolence, justice, honesty, the principles of free self-determination are respected. During the investigation, the safety of the investigator and the subjects is ensured. During the investigation, personal information (place of work, name, surname, age) was not required (Žydžiūnaitė, Sabaliauskas, 2017). In a confidential manner, the survey participants were encoded: I1 − I8. The average duration of an interview is about 10 minutes.

The research sample. The study involved 8 social work graduates who graduated from X higher education institutions and did not enter the labour market as social workers. Graduate years 2007-2019. Informants were selected using a convenient sample. The requirements for informants are social work graduates who do not have work experience in the social field, have successfully completed their studies, but have chosen a different profession. The education of informants is higher non-university. The age of the informants is from 27 to 59 years old, the average age is 47 years.

Research results

The study analysis why social work graduates who have successfully completed the study process do not participate in the labour market as specialists in social work. First of all, the reasons for choosing social work studies were asked about. This can help predict the likelihood of graduates entering the labour market or encourage further delving into the motives for not getting involved (see Table 1).

Table 1. **Choosing a social work study program**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Motivation and expectations	Quality organization of studies based on practice	15
	Promising and in-demand specialty	15
	Personal reasons	8

One of the reasons for choosing a program of study in social work, informants named the organization of studies, which is based on practical activities. It is noticed that when choosing studies, it is desired that they be organized on the basis of the organization of practical activities and classes, as this helps to acquire practical skills and work experience. According to informants, practical activities help to *"<…> touch on working with clients <…>"* and provide opportunities to learn how to realistically solve problems faced by clients. During the internship, it is possible to get acquainted with clients and the specifics of work *("I wanted to get to know them, to delve into their situations <…>"*). According to Lepeškienė, Žuromskaja (2012), the choice of profession does not have to be a random choice, but motivated in order to become a high-level professional who assesses the significance of work. The study also emphasized that the choice of social work studies was determined by the expectation that the study process will be based on practice and this will help to prepare well for this activity.

The choice of the study program of informants was influenced by the prospects of work after obtaining the appropriate education. The study of social work turned out to be promising with a great need in the labour market. It also seemed like an attractive specialty, the specialists of which are in great demand in the labour market and a noticeable shortage of specialists. It is also pointed out the fact that social work was a new professional field and was also relevant to the choice. According to Elvhage, Liedgren (2015), the novelty of the specialty is a minor factor that has a bearing on engagement, but is relevant when choosing a professional path. Informants also pointed out that their choice was influenced by the novelty of the professional field: *"it was a novelty"*; *"<...> a new area of learning"*.

When choosing social work studies, various personal reasons were also important for informants. According to Kolmar (2021), personal reasons determine the process of choice. Informants named the desire to get to know people with disabilities, their qualities, skills, emotions and the specifics of the work itself. This is what led to the choice of social work program.

Thus, the choice of the profession of a social worker is determined by a very wide range of motives. Although the studies were chosen purposefully and completed, they are not included in the labour market. So, the question is what can influence this (see Table 2).

Table 2. **The inability of social work graduates to enter the labour market**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Reasons for not getting a social worker's job	Workload	20
	Not interested in professional activities	19
	Unsatisfactory salary	16
	Specifics and requirements of professional activity	15

As one of the factors that causes non-participation is the workload. According to Kiaunytė and Žadeikytė (2017), there is an indeterminate workload in social work. The data obtained during the study confirmed this opinion of the author. It turned out that in the opinion of graduates*: "<…> social workers have too much workload"*; they are given an excessive number of customers *"too many customers"*; the work is dominated by a large amount of work *"workload <…> was one of the most important factors in the process of non-involvement".*

The causes of unemployment can be very different and most often depend on each individual. According to Kolmar (2021), limited professional ambition limits the possibilities of involvement. The results of the study state that the inattention of graduates is influenced by the lack of interest in the profession and the lack of ambition for activity: *"I realized that I could not imagine myself in this activity"*; *"<…>came the realization that I really don't want to work just on paperwork"*.

It is indicated that familiarity with the work also has implications for non-involvement. Chukwu and other (2020) argues that dissatisfaction with a professional activity is related to its specifics and knowledge of work. The significance of getting acquainted with work for non-participation is confirmed by the following statements made by the study participants: "*There are a lot of documents at work", "<…> a constant lack of time, an abundance of <…> work, so the client is left with less and less time", "<…> there is a lack of elementary communication with the client"*; *"<…> is not satisfied with the specifics of the work", "<…> the volume of work is improperly distributed, the workload is too high <…>"*, "the <…> low payment for the work performed", *"<…> some of the assigned jobs are not included in the posts of social workers"*. According to Stremauskienė and Žibėnienė (2014), social workers face difficulties at work when working with clients. The main difficulties are customer resistance and a complex work environment. This is also supported by the participants of the study, who argue that in the activities of social workers there is a psychologically difficult environment: a *"difficult psychological environment"*.

There is also a named and disappointment in the profession. Kašparkova and other (2018) argues that disappointment in the profession affects the lack of involvement. This is also confirmed by the following statements revealed during the study: *"Social work is not so attractive"; <…> "very impractical specialty"*; *"<…>when I went to my final practice, I saw a lot of gaps in the specialty"*.

Salary have been identified as a factor that drives non-participation too. According to Pohlan (2019), economic rewards are considered extremely significant for not entering the labour market. This is also reflected in the results of this study: *"Salary is considered one of the most important factors at work"*. According to informants, it would be difficult to survive on the salary of such a social worker *"<It would be difficult to survive on such a salary"*.

Also, the requirements that are imposed on employees are considered significant for non-involvement. George, Chattopadhyay (2015) argues and informants tell the author that social workers have extremely high demands at work: *"<…> managers make extremely high demands"*; *"Managers do not value their employees"*; *"Employers don't choose people with disabilities, they don't look at them very much like that"*.

So, the greatest importance for the unemployment of graduates is the workload, remuneration for work, the specifics of professional activity, high requirements for employees, lack of interest in professional activity and disappointment in the profession.

It was also explained how the motivation for working in the future profession changed during the study process (see 3. table).

Table 3. **Motivation for inclusion in the labour market during studies**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements

Expression of motivation	Changing in the process of study	20
	Stable during the learning process	9

It is noticed that in social work there is a change in motivation, which affects the choice to engage in the field of work. According to Albercht and other (2015), the change in motivation is associated with non-participation in the labour market in social work. The existence of a change in motivation is also confirmed by the data collected during the study. It was argued that the motivation of the informants in the learning process changed: *"<...> changed in every course"*; *"<...> the farther away, the more negative it became"*; *"<...> every day got worse and worse"*. Also, when proving changes in motivation, it is noted that graduates do not have motivation for this activity: *"<...I have no motivation for this activity"*; *"<...I lost motivation <…>"*. To substantiate changes in motivation state that it is difficult to maintain the stability of motivation: *"The most difficult keep motivated"*. Motivation is one of the main factors that is associated not only with work efficiency or successful integration in the labour market, but also with a successful learning process (Gottfried and other, 2013). This reveals the connection between motivation and the learning process: *"studies did not motivate to achieve good results"*.

As a factor determining the change in motivation, external circumstances are considered, which lead to the non-employment of graduates in accordance with the education received. Albercht and other (2015) argues that the stability of motivation, which is conditioned by other external factors, can stimulate the process of non-inclusion. It is noted that external circumstances that are characteristic of the activities of social workers can lead to motivational changes. According to the results of the study, it can be seen that during the acquaintance with the work process, the motivation of informants for activities began to change. It is argued that the working circumstances that the informants became familiar with were the aspect that determined the change in motivation. The informants pointed out that: *"Motivation for work diminishes when you realize what a responsible and important job for society you have to do"*.

It is important to note the fact that in the ranks of graduates of social work not only changing motivation prevails, but also the stability of motivation is found, which is associated with the expression of motivation in the learning process. It is also important to mention the fact that there are 3 motivational work approaches that are characteristic of social work professionals: involvement in work, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lambert and other, 2022). It is argued that the stability of motivation is influenced by personal and organizational circumstances. The stability of motivation is supported and the author's opinion is confirmed by the results of this study. Based on them: *"I really had the motivation"*; *"Motivation has not changed during the learning process"*, *"the motivation was there and it was positive"*; *"remained positive until the very moment of graduation"*; *"at the end of my studies, motivation remained stable"*.

It is also important to note the fact that when assessing the motivation of students, an important aspect is considered to be interest in the chosen field of science. Interest in the chosen program of study shows the motivation of the graduate for work (Gang, 2017). The obtained research results revealed that the stability of motivation is determined by proper motivation for activities and the formation of a positive attitude towards activities during the study process. The study participants indicated that their motivation for the activity: *"remained positive until the very moment of graduation"*; *"the motivation was there and it was positive"*.

It is argued that the motivation to learn is the basis for the learning process, which ensures the stability of motivation throughout the learning process (Arkhireyeva, 2015; Nikolajenko, 2019). It has been established that motivation for work is significant not only in the process of employment, but also during the learning process. According to Nikolajenko (2019), motivated individuals tend to delve deeper into the learning process, strive for better learning outcomes, are interested in study subjects, seek to gain not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical experience, which they successfully apply in the work. It is argued that the learning process of interest affects the positive motivation for activity. During this study, informants also claimed that motivation for activity was associated with satisfaction of the learning process and valuable studies that interested: *"I was motivated to learn"*.

It is emphasized that the motivation for activity also depends on the peculiarities of the work. The peculiarities of the activities of a social worker are revealed on the basis of the employee's motivation for work (Kavaliauskienė, Nikolajenko, 2017). The relationship between satisfaction with activity and motivation for work is also confirmed by informants, who stated that: *"remained positive until the moment of graduation"*; *"at the end of my studies, motivation remained stable"*. The

informants also pointed out that they also have motivation for the job at the moment: *"I still have some motivation for the job"*; *"positive and so far"*. It is claimed that the motivation remained throughout the learning process: *"While I was studying it, the motivation was there"*.

It can be argued that the motivation for participation in the labour market as a social worker in the learning process has evolved for some informants, and some have maintained stability. However, the lack of entry into the labour market was due to other internal and external factors.

Disillusionment with the profession is one of the factors that led to the unwillingness to look for a job as a social worker (see Table 4).

Table 4. **Disappointment in future professional activity during studies**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Factors influencing disappointment	Organization of the learning process	10
	Causes and financial difficulties of the person	7
	Dissatisfaction with professional activities	5
	Practical activities	2

According to Busque−Carrier and other (2021), the organization of the learning process is of the greatest importance for disappointment in the profession. This statement was also confirmed by the obtained research data. According to informants, the learning process led to their frustration with professional activity: *"An uninteresting learning process"*; *"<…> lack of interest in learning"*. Also, the difficult learning process played a role in this process, which informants identify as a factor that caused frustration. It is claimed that during the learning process there were: *"difficult lectures"* and *"difficult to learn"*. Also, participants identified a lack of interest in the learning process. Informants argue that: *"It wasn't interesting"*; *"It wasn't interesting to learn"*; *"didn't like it"*. In addition, it is important to mention the fact that in social work, manifestations of frustration with professional activity are observed even during the learning process. Then, when students get acquainted with the profession, clients, tasks, functions and roles performed in the activity, delve into the specifics of the work, then a professional fracture occurs, during which frustration with future professional activities arises.

Financial difficulties and personal reasons are also named. According to Kolmar (2021), non-involvement can also be influenced by personal qualities and life difficulties. It is claimed that employees who feel dissatisfaction and frustration with the professional field are prone to changing professions. These factors complicate the position of specialists in the social sphere in the labour market. In the course of the research, a very variety of personal reasons became clear, which led to the disappointment of graduates with future professional activities during the learning process. The results of the study showed that the frustration was influenced by the family situation: *"the problems of the young daughter encouraged the suspension of studies"*.

According to Jung (2018), the microclimate within the organization and the dynamics of the group are of paramount importance in not entering the labour market. The study participants experienced the following problems of microclimate and group dynamics in the learning process: *"The professors had a prejudice against me, I felt frequent bullying and hostile attitudes"*; *"the incorrigible behaviour of the teaching staff towards me and other students"*; *"the problems of the young daughter encouraged the suspension of her studies"*; *"available disability"* and etc.

During the investigation, it turned out that the financial difficulties experienced played a role in the emergence of frustration. Frustration with the profession is considered the emergence of a connection between motivational factors and labour factors (Busque−Carrier and other, 2021). This is also confirmed by informants: *"when I had to face financial difficulties"*; *"finances"*. Financial rewards for the work performed play a crucial role in the process of satisfaction with activities, therefore, experiencing financial problems and low wages affect the occurrence of dissatisfaction. Frustration is also described as work values, motivational beliefs, and gaps that are inherent in a career context and interfere with the positive assessment of performance.

Dissatisfaction with professional activities is also named. It is noticed that the exit of dissatisfied employees to other professional areas affects the productivity of enterprises providing social services. The lack of specialists is associated with the quality of services provided and the availability of services to customers. According to Zuchowski (2016), frustration with the profession

is associated with knowing the specifics of work. And according to informants: *"knowledge of work"*; *"customer diversity"*; *"specifics of work"*; *"customer knowledge"*; *"familiarity with work"* and *"the most difficult in the face of professional difficulties"*. According to Strydom (2014), in social work, there is a widespread lack of involvement in the field of work and frequent staff turnover due to the fact that the activities carried out in their complexity affect the change of work, burnout and the intention to change the profession.

As another factor that affects discontent, practical activity is considered. Then, when students get acquainted with the profession, clients, tasks, functions and roles performed in the activity, delve into the specifics of the work, then an occupational fracture occurs, during which frustration with the future professional activity arises. It is also important to note the fact that the satisfaction of the psychological needs of the employee and the condition associated with the prospect of self-determination help to assess the level of dissatisfaction of the employee with the activity. It is during practical classes that it is possible to assess the level of satisfaction with work activities and determine the possibilities of involvement in activities. It is argued that practical activities can influence the choice of a graduate to change his professional field. According to Apostol and other (2022), practical activities during acquaintance with work promote a change in the field of work. And according to informants: *"Practical activities"*; *"<…> again practice".* These statements help to understand the significance of practical activities in the event of a change in the professional field. Practical activities and classes help to get acquainted realistically with the activity and its specifics. During this process, work problems are revealed, different groups of clients and difficulties at work are encountered. All this affects the frustration of graduates with professional activity.

Thus, the decision of graduates not to enter the labour market according to the acquired social work profession may also be determined by dissatisfaction with the study programme (see Table 5).

Table 5. **Dissatisfaction with the study programme and the process as one of the factors of non-participation in the labour market**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Unfulfilled expectations during studies	Organization of the learning process	17
	Interpersonal relationships	5
	Psychological preparation	3

One of the reasons that is significant for not entering the labour market is with the organization of the learning process. According to Aversana and Bruno (2018), dissatisfaction with the study process is influenced by an improperly organized learning process. The informants said that in the learning process for them: *"<…> wanted more active activities"*; *"There was a lack of practical classes"*. The need to get to know the work with clients in a realistic way has also come to the fore, and thus it would be possible to delve into the problems and situations of customers, introspection, the ability to delve deeper into the emotions, qualities, behaviour and mindset of customers would appear. Dissatisfaction with the program of study is considered one of the more important factors that are relevant for not getting involved in labour activity in accordance with the acquired profession. Interest in the activity and its possibilities promotes active involvement in the field of work in the desired field of work. Dissatisfaction with activities is often used when it comes to the growing need for specialists and the voluntary decision not to participate in the professional sphere. Dissatisfaction is caused by various individual reasons. According to informants, dissatisfaction with the studies was due to: *"<... a lot of concentration on the theory"*. Informants say that the study programs are too broad, there is too much effort to teach the student, despite the fact that the study program is too complicated and uninteresting for them, and there are too many subjects in the program and this does not provide students with anything useful and informative, since only a dry theory is conveyed.

According to Aversana and Bruno (2018), in the ranks of social work graduates often talk about dissatisfaction with the profession. It is associated with reflections that relate to professional identity, theories and values that are important in the development of a personality. The factor of greatest importance is considered to be the relationship between professional practice and theory during the learning process. It is argued that the proper combination of these aspects increases the interest in the study process and improves learning outcomes. For informants in the learning

process *"<...> there was a great lack of real work with clients*", "too little practice". Excessive concentration in the theoretical part is also observed: *"a lot of theoretical subjects"*.

Also, as another reason that affects dissatisfaction with the professional field is considered interpersonal relationships in a group. The fact that introspection and interpersonal relationships are very important in social work is indicated. According to Jung (2018), disrespectful behaviour increases the percentage of non-participation into the labour market. According to informants: *"there must be empathy and respect in social work"*; *"<…> if you behave egoistically during your studies"* and *"humiliate others and feel like a godsend"*. Interpersonal relationships are considered one of the main factors that affect satisfaction with professional activity. Interpersonal relationships deteriorate when competition between members of a group or organization increases. Also, for interpersonal relationships, the psychological and emotional state of members, character traits are important, and the most important thing in interpersonal relationships is considered to be behaviour that complies with the norms and does not violate the rights and dignity of other members. For discontent, the attitude towards other members of the group is important. According to the informants, in the learning process they lacked empathy and respect for the members of the group. Members of the group compete with each other, strive for recognition and honour, and encourage disrespectful behaviour.

Another of factors causing dissatisfaction is considered to be too little psychological preparation for studies and this personal need is not fully satisfied during studies. According to Aversana and Bruno (2018), it should also be noted that a component of the professional activity of a social worker, which is very significant for non-involvement, is poor psychological preparation. Informants say that in the process of study they saw a need for psychological preparation of graduates. Psychological preparation is associated with an adequate commitment to activity, and the factor that promotes non-involvement – psychological unpreparedness – affects the poor possibilities of preparation for work. According to informants, given the difficult working conditions, psychologically difficult environment, difficult clients and their situations, it is important to realize the significance of psychological resilience. A specialist who is not properly prepared in a psychological sense is not able to competently perform the assigned functions, is interested in the client and the process of providing assistance, and is inclined to change the professional sphere, as he experiences dissatisfaction. Study participants say that: *"it is difficult to work with problematic clients"*. Also, psychological preparation is associated with preparation for activities. This is also claimed by informants, who point out that: *"it is psychologically difficult to prepare for this"*. For greater inclusion in the labour market, satisfaction with the profession is necessary, which is associated not only with relations within the group and its dynamics, but also with the implementation of the need for psychological preparation.

In order to achieve greater satisfaction with the choice of studies and involvement in the labour market, social work study programmes and areas of process improvement have been identified (see Table 6).

Table 6. **Improving the program and process of studying social work**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Areas of change	The need for practice	7
	Subjects	6
	Psychological preparation	4
	Learning conditions	4
	Knowing of the profession	3
	Motivating students	2

The adaptability of learning, which meets the expectations of graduates, has more effective results for inclusion in the labour market according to the available education (Kwon, 2021). In order to achieve a more perfect learning process, it is important to find the right methods that are effective for the student and have a positive impact on engagement (Elsherbiny, Al Maamari, 2021). Informants pointed out that in order to achieve higher quality and more effective studies, it is important to increase the frequency of practical activities during the learning process. Informants say that during the learning process there is a greater need for practical activities. It is also important that practical activities are as diverse as possible, because during them students would

have the opportunity to work with different groups of clients, get acquainted with the specifics of the work and realistically touch on the solution of individual situations.

As another area of change that needs to be changed in order to achieve better quality studies, the subjects being taught are identified. According to informants, an excessive volume of subjects is observed in the program of study of social work, but the need and importance of theoretical subjects are not taken into account when organizing the study process. It is also important not only to properly distribute the volumes of the subjects taught, but also to provide educational material with interest. During the course of learning, the study participants lacked the subjects of psychology, which they considered important in the activities of social workers. According to Kwon (2021), the organization of the study process, which is focused on the needs of the student, is effective for the organization and the labour market. It is argued that the planning and coordination of the study programme, which is based on proposals for the improvement of the student learning process, has a more effective effect on the assimilation of knowledge, higher learning outcomes and is characterized by the usefulness of acquiring personal skills that are allocated to work activities, and promotes the processes of inclusion in the labour market.

It can be seen that in order to achieve a more qualitative study process, it is necessary to increase psychological preparation for social work students. According to Zuchowski (2016), psychological preparedness and the creation of better learning conditions are significant for greater inclusion in the labour market. According to informants, psychological preparation is important for social work graduates. It is stated that in the learning process it is important to properly prepare graduates for work activities. Taking into account the needs and expectations of students, interest in the learning process increases, systematic learning and an increase in the level of knowledge are promoted, and the increase of personal abilities through organizational methods of adaptability of the learning process.

For graduates of social work, learning conditions are also important. According to Chukwu and other (2020), insufficient or not properly targeted training has implications for dissatisfaction with the learning conditions created. It is noted that the improvement of studies is associated not only with learning conditions and adaptation of the environment, but also with the satisfaction of personal needs and the organization of special trainings in order to reduce the exclusion of persons with disabilities and the absence of discrimination during the learning process. The data of the study revealed that during the studies of graduates, adequate educational conditions for persons with disabilities were not fully provided. During the training, the personal needs of students were also not taken into account. As an important motive, the need for various seminars and trainings, which are aimed at group members and the community in which people with disabilities study, has been identified as an important motive. In order to achieve an effective study process and its proper assessment, it is important to develop appropriate learning programs that respond to the needs of students and to create appropriate conditions for learning.

Also, in the field of change is indicated the knowledge of the profession. According to Apostol and other (2021), knowledge of the profession strengthens the connection between the student and professional activities. It is argued that knowledge of the profession should be important for achieving a better quality of studies. According to informants, the knowledge of the profession is also significant for quality studies. This concerns not only the satisfaction of personal needs, but also knowledge of the specifics of the activity. The participants of the study say that in the learning process, familiarization with clients and their groups is important. Then one gets acquainted with the specifics of work, which is characteristic of working with different groups of clients. Also, getting acquainted with the profession, real work with the client also takes place, emerging problems are studied, and solutions are sought. And with the cat and with the working environment and its specific features.

Involvement in the activity is usually based on the acquisition of the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies during the learning process (Amann, Kindler, 2021). Active knowledge of activities, analysis of clients and a variety of practical activities are of the greatest importance in the process of graduates' involvement in the labour market. The experiences that are acquired in the process of studying social work through education and professional practice help to integrate graduates into the labour market. Given the difficult working conditions, heavy workloads and improperly assessed monetary remuneration for the work performed, it is necessary to change the requirements of work, improve the working climate and promote inclusion in the field of social work activities.

Involvement in activities is conditioned by various factors. Social work graduates who successfully completed the study process, but did not enter the labour market according to the available education, also singled out different reasons that were significant for their non-employment in social work (see Table 7).

Table 7**. Changes that may lead to the involvement of graduates of the social work study program in the labour market**

Category	Subcategory	Number of statements
Areas of change	Working conditions	7
	Salary	4
	Nothing would change the decision	4

The involvement of social work graduates in the labour market would be conditioned by a change in working conditions. According to George and Chattopadhyay (2015), improving working conditions would encourage the involvement of graduates. Informants also emphasized the role of this change in deciding to get involved. According to informants, working conditions are difficult in social work, so it is necessary to improve them.

There is also an emphasis on salary. Increasing salary is considered as a motivational factor that influences satisfaction with the activities carried out. According to Jarche (2014), the increase in wages would affect participation in the labour market. According to informants, for social workers: *"There should definitely be a change in salary"*. Sufficient and fair payment for the work performed is also important: *"the most important change should be a dignified salary"*. According to the informants, their decision to enter the labour market would change with an increase in salary.

It is important to note the fact that according to the results obtained during the study, some informants would not change their decision not to enter the labour market even after various changes occurred. Informants argue that: *"I don't think change would lead to anything"*. It also points out that no change would affect the decision: *"No matter what changes, I know for sure that I would never do such a job"*. One of the informants pointed out that no matter what the salary is, but his choice for this motive would not change: "*Even 2000 can pay, I would not go to work such a job"*.

Summarising the research results, it can be concluded that the choice of studies is influenced by the organization of studies, perspective, personal reasons, interest in the profession, desire to help, learning outcomes and the pursuit of education. During the studies, after getting acquainted with professional activities, factors of non-participation became apparent, such as uninterest in the profession, unsatisfactory salary, workload, work specifics, requirements and disappointment in the profession. It is noticed that the lack of motivation for work, its changes in the learning process, disappointment in professional activity, which is associated with the organization of the learning process, personal reasons and financial difficulties, dissatisfaction with the profession and practical activities, also played a role in the process of non-participation. In order to achieve a better assessment of the study program, it is important to change the following areas of the study process: more frequent and longer internships, a smaller volume of subjects taught, the need for psychological preparation, familiarization with the profession and motivating graduates for work. It is also important to mention that in order for the participation of graduates, it is necessary to change working conditions, increase wages and reduce workloads. Given the complexity of the work, correction is necessary when reviewing the time of work. Involvement can also be due to greater psychological preparation of graduates for work.

Conclusions

1. The qualitative research revealed the following reasons for not participation in the labour market are distinguished: unsatisfactory wages, workload, specifics of professional activity, lack of interest in professional activity, high demands on the employee, disappointment in the profession.

2. The research revealed that non-participation of graduates in the labour market is influenced by internal factors. According to informants, the greatest importance for non-participation is the changing motivation for work in the studies process, which affects dissatisfaction with professional activity. The available personal qualities that are not suitable for this profession are

also important. The failure to meet personal expectations during the learning process, disappointment in the profession is also important.

3. The non-participation of graduates in the labour market is also influenced by external factors. Informants emphasized that the most important external factor for not getting a job is the wrong organization of the studies process. According to informants, also indicated these factors: interpersonal relationships, insufficient psychological preparation for activities, the need for practical activities, inadequate studies conditions, poor external students' motivation.

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THEORETICAL APPROACH TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH LEARNING: CONCEPTUAL HOLISTIC LANGUAGE LEARNING MODEL

Mindaugas Kavaliauskas

Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija / Higher Education institution

Annotation

In today's globalized environment, proficiency in English is not just an advantage but a necessity for professional fields. Traditional language learning methods often do not prepare individuals for the subtleties required in professional communication, highlighting the need for innovative teaching, and learning models. Despite the availability of English language resources and institutions, many learners lack the practical skills needed for their professional fields, creating a significant gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

The problem spans education, linguistics, and professional development, encompassing issues like the lack of personalized learning, insufficient focus on practical application, and inadequate real-world immersion and feedback. The article aims to present the holistic conceptual model that addresses these shortcomings by integrating practical experiences, individualized learning plans, and real-world context into the curriculum, emphasizing the importance of ongoing assessment and feedback, and aligning language learning with learners' professional specialties to enhance motivation and relevance.

Key words: *professional English, language learning, conceptual holistic language learning model*

Introduction

The conceptual model of purposeful teaching and learning of professional English language should set the stage for a deep dive into the intricacies and methodologies that enhance the acquisition and application of English language skills in professional settings. The theoretical framework of this model is rooted in the idea that language learning, particularly for professional purposes, must transcend traditional classroom boundaries to incorporate practical, effective learning strategies tailored to individual needs and real-world applications.

Purpose of the article: The theoretical section of this article aims to lay a solid foundation by delineating the model's components, which include practical effective learning, an individualized approach, the importance of practice and repetition, the immersion in real situations and context, ongoing assessment and feedback, and the integration with specialty subjects. These elements collectively contribute to a holistic and effective framework for professional English learning.

Relevance of the Topic: In today's globalized world, the command of the English language in professional arenas is not merely an advantage but a necessity. As the lingua franca of international business, science, and technology, English proficiency opens doors to countless opportunities. However, the traditional approaches to language learning often fall short in preparing individuals for the nuanced and dynamic demands of professional communication. Thus, exploring innovative teaching and learning models is of paramount importance.

Problem Statement: Despite the ubiquity of English language learning resources and institutions, many learners emerge without the practical skills needed to navigate their professional fields confidently. This gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application presents a significant challenge, underlining the need for a teaching model that bridges this divide.

Problem Field: The problem extends across various domains, including education, linguistics, and professional development. It encompasses issues like the lack of personalized learning, insufficient focus on practical application, and the need for continuous feedback and real-world immersion. Some studies explore effective teaching and learning activities in distance learning programs, including foreign language courses, highlighting the importance of practical exercises in achieving learning effectiveness (Alipichev et al., 2016). The rest of the papers discuss the potential benefits of corpus use for language learners, focusing on the effectiveness of specific training approaches that include

practical exercises to make some learners particularly effective users (Kennedy, Miceli, 2017). Next research identifies several factors influencing the effectiveness of technology-enhanced language learning, including practical exercises and their role in increasing students' technology acceptance for language learning (Zhang, Zou, 2022).

Objectives of the article:

1. To illustrate the significance of integrating practical experiences, individualized learning plans, and real-world context into the curriculum.
2. To highlight the role of continuous assessment and feedback in fostering language acquisition and proficiency.
3. To explore the benefits of aligning language learning with learners' professional specialties, thereby enhancing motivation and relevance.
4. To present a comprehensive model that addresses the shortcomings of traditional English language teaching methods, especially in professional contexts.

Therefore, this article embarks on a critical exploration of a conceptual model dedicated to the purposeful teaching and learning of professional English. By addressing the current challenges in language education and proposing a multifaceted approach, it seeks to pave the way for more effective, engaging, and practical language learning experiences that are directly applicable to professional environments.

Designing the conceptual holistic language learning model

Recently English for specific purposes has become one of the most prevailing forms of teaching English as a foreign language. The concept underlying the term language for specific purposes is closely associated with the teaching of language for professional purposes where students must learn how to use language in their future professional setting. In this context, specific linguistic features of the language used in different specialized fields are emphasized (Milosavljevic et. al., 2015). The language courses for specific purposes are based on vocabulary set and unique language skills that will be indispensable to learners in a specialized field. There is no single approach for all pedagogical situations; there is no curriculum and set of activities that are applicable in all contexts. Therefore, it is of crucial importance in professional English teaching to determine the unique features of teaching and learning and apply them in the development of the curriculum, syllabus, and assessment (Milosavljevic et. al., 2015). Thus, having already oriented a students' education towards a specific area, they should start from **practical effective learning** allowing them to immediately apply the learned knowledge in real life situations. This method helps students master the language skills in a way that they can use them successfully applied in real life or work environment. Professional English language teaching emerges as the dominant approach in line with contemporary priorities such as communicative competence and learner-centered methods (Qasserras, 2023).

Practical effective learning includes:
- ✓ *Communication* expressed through acting, discussion, debate, or even everyday situations such as going to a store or being served at a hotel reception.
- ✓ *Project work* by encouraging working in groups and creating projects or solving together task, e.g. students can present a specific topic followed by collaboration write an article about its study and present a specific professional problem decision.
- ✓ *Specialty lectures* that give students the opportunity to study a specific subject specialist vocabulary and terms that will be relevant in their professional field. That would help them to master the terminology that they would have to use in real life in their work.
- ✓ *Practical exercises* that encourage regular application of acquired knowledge and skills in practice through daily activities, discussion clubs, etc.
- ✓ *Context and situations* learned through real language learning experiences situations and contexts, such as office situations, conferences, or conversations with customers.

Thus, we naturally come across the **individual approach** enabling students to learn according to their individual needs.

It's worth admitting the advantages of small group work include enhanced identification of the needs of the students and development of responsibility and interpersonal skills. According to this approach, teachers need to demonstrate a positive attitude, confidence, and respect for their students, as well as express understanding of students' way of learning. Teachers cannot teach students the thinking process, but they can increase the awareness of their own inner potential through practice of the so-called sub-skills. These sub-skills include analytical thinking, problem solving, deduction, and use of imagination. For these skills to be improved, teachers are expected to adopt the attitudes and approaches of students in various activities in class (Milosavljevic et. al., 2015).

Moreover, every student has his/her own strengths and weaknesses, so it's important to choose teaching methods that meet the needs of each specific student and learning style. A personalized approach helps to get the most out of each student's potential. An individual approach allows the teacher to adapt teaching content and methodology to meet the needs of a particular student, including his professional field, competencies and learning style. By providing an individualized approach, the student can be better considered interests and personal *motivations* for learning. When learning is tailored to the needs and interests of the student, increases his motivation and desire to learn, which helps achieve better learning outcomes.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), many linguists have proven that motivation and attitude are closely related in determining the success of second language learning. Higher levels of motivation and positive attitude will produce more successful language learners and vice versa. To follow Abadi and Darani (2015), literature supports a relationship between attitudes towards language learning and achievement in the language (Masgoret, Gardner, 2003) even more than that of other subjects of the curriculum (Jordan, 1941). Furthermore, gender differences in attitudes towards second language learning have been repeatedly witnessed, positioning gender as an important issue. Povel and Batters study (1985) found that female students had more positive perceptions on the foreign language (Abadi, Darani, 2015).

An individual approach allows more *efficient* use of learning time and resources. When training content is tailored to the needs of the student, it can do a lot to absorb new material and skills faster, because they are directly related to his daily life or professional activities.

An individual approach allows the teacher to create a reasonable and accessible learning environment that helps each student feel at home appreciated and supported. When students feel that their individual needs are understood and appreciated, it increases their self-confidence and promotes success learning.

Previous research has considered the effects of content familiarity and task **repetition** on the second language performance, but few studies have looked at the effect of these factors on learners' engagement in task performance. It was proved that repeating the tasks, however, negatively influenced behavioral and cognitive engagement, although the students felt more relaxed and confident. In addition, the students are more motivated to repeat unfamiliar topics, although they demonstrate more noticeable declines in their frequency of self-repair (an indicator of cognitive engagement) for these topics. These results provided empirical evidence for the relationship between task design and implementation factors and the second or professional language task engagement. Teachers might base repetition decisions partially on learners' familiarity with the topic (Qiu, Lo, 2016).

Repetition is common in language use. Similarly, having students repeat is a common practice in language teaching. After surveying some of the better-known contributions of repetition to language learning, it is proposed an innovative role for repetition from the perspective of complexity theory. It is argued that we should not think of repetition as exact replication, but rather we should think of it as iteration that generates variation. Thus, what results from iteration is a mutable state. Iteration is one way that we create options in how to make meaning, position ourselves in the world as we want, understand the differences which we encounter in others, and adapt to a changing context (Larsen-Freeman, 2018).

Task repetition, defined as *repetition of a given configuration of purposes, and a set of content information* (Bygate, 2001, p. 2) is one of the methodological options in task-based language learning. It is effective for improving aspects of speaking ability such as fluency (Li, Rogers, 2021). Despite the accumulating evidence confirming benefits of task repetition, some teachers are reluctant to use it in their classrooms for fear of its negative impact on learners' perception toward the task (Larsen–Freeman, 2018). Because classroom studies in general suggest that repetition tends to induce boredom (Kruk, Zawodniak, 2020).

Whatever the subject or topic, much of the process of learning relates to accurately recalling and reusing learned information. For anyone trying to learn a new language, there's always lots to remember – grammar structures, word order, vocabulary, pronunciation etc. The list goes on and on. Unsurprisingly, much attention has therefore been given to understanding how students can best retain and recall information. In language learning, the process of spaced repetition has been proven to be highly effective. Frequent practice and repetition are essential to acquire new knowledge and skills. Repetition helps ensure that the skill becomes automatic, and the language is much more natural. It includes:

- ✓ *Reinforcement of skills* that help consolidate skills that students have already mastered. It is not enough to simply learn a new word or grammar rule; need them often use them to become skills that can be relied upon in speaking or writing.
- ✓ *Automation.* Repetition allows students to become more efficient and faster speaking or writing in English because the skills become automatic and no longer required great effort.
- ✓ *Self-management*. Practice and repetition help students understand what specific things they haven't yet understood or mastered enough, allowing them to focus on certain areas in which they should improve.
- ✓ *Maintenance*. The learning process is continuous, and knowledge and skills can lose meaning if they are not regularly practiced and repeated. Repetition helps maintain and strengthen already acquired knowledge.
- ✓ *Correction*. Through repetition and practice, students can spot their mistakes and deficiencies and correct them. This helps them improve and improve their language skills.

Thus, practice and repetition are essential in adult English language learning process, as they help consolidate skills, automate language use and retention continuous learning process, which leads to the successful achievement of learning outcomes. The following configuration of professional English learning – **task-based language teaching –** puts pedagogic tasks as the core unit of planning and language teaching practice. Task-based instruction emphasizes classroom interaction, learner-centered teaching, and authentic language use (Ellis, 2009). Various definitions have been proposed for task. Ellis (2009) refers to the following as the common key features:

• The primary focus should be on meaning, which means that learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterance.

• There should be some kind of gap, i.e. a need to convey information, to express an opinion, or to infer meaning.

• Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) to complete the activity.

• There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language, i.e. language serves as a means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right) (Baleghizadeh, Derakhshesh, 2012).

It's essential to engage in **real-life conversations** to truly become proficient in a language. By immersing yourself in realistic situations, you can really boost your English skills through:

- ✓ *Everyday conversations.* Engaging in day-to-day dialogues is an effective way to acquire colloquial language, idiomatic expressions, and authentic English.
- ✓ *Job interviews.* If you're looking to improve your performance in job interviews or looking for a job within an English company, it can be incredibly helpful to practice various possible scenarios beforehand, giving you time to practice your language skills. This way, you'll be better equipped to communicate your experiences, skills, and future aspirations in a clear and concise manner.
- ✓ *Role-playing debates*. It enhances a student's ability to use persuasive language and sharpen his critical thinking skills by engaging in debates on topics that challenge your thoughts and beliefs.
- ✓ *Travel simulations.* Practicing travel scenarios can assist a student in improving his ability to ask for directions, book accommodation, and communicate with locals.
- ✓ *Storytelling practice.* The form of personal stories or fictional tales can greatly enhance one's linguistic skills and aptitude for storytelling.

- ✓ *Academic presentations.* It enhances a student's ability to communicate in English effectively and coherently in public, consider taking part in academic-style presentations.
- ✓ *Negotiation.* It improves a student's language skills in a business context.

Practicing real life speaking is important for adult English learners because it allows them to develop and enhance their language skills in a practical and meaningful way. While grammar exercises and vocabulary drills are necessary for building a foundation, they do not fully prepare learners for real-world communication.
Additionally, real life speaking practice exposes learners to a wide range of topics and vocabulary, expanding their knowledge and understanding of the English language. It helps learners develop fluency and the ability to think and respond quickly, as conversations often require spontaneous thinking and responses. Thus, learning in real situations and contexts is an important enabling factor for adults to effectively learn English as a major because it gives them an opportunity to practically apply their knowledge and skills in a real life or work environment.
Further component of professional English learning could be defined as a continuous **assessment and feedback**, important to regularly assess students' progress and provide them with clear feedback to monitor their development and identify areas where they need to improve.

Continuous assessment allows teachers to *monitor each student's progress* and individual learning process. It helps in identification learning difficulties, strengths and needs and adapt the teaching content accordingly needs of each student.
Feedback gives students an idea in which area they have already achieved good results and in which areas there are still opportunities for improvement. This helps students *feel valued and motivated* to continue to improve their language skills.
Through feedback, teachers can get information about what students understand better and what subjects they struggle with. Based on this information, the teaching methodology or content can be adjusted so that these better suit students' needs and learning styles.

Feedback encourages *collaboration* between faculty and students as they evaluate progress together and look for ways to improve the learning process. It creates a conducive learning environment where students feel comfortable support and understanding.
Lastly continuous assessment and feedback help students understand what they need to achieve and how to improve their language skills. This gives a clear goal and direction in the learning process. Therefore, continuous assessment and feedback are important skills for adults for learning English, because they help optimize the teaching process, help students feel motivated and supported and enable teachers to meet the needs of students more effectively and aspirations.

Finally, learning must be *integrated with specialty subjects,* i.e. students' major or with their planned career goals. The more the teaching is related to the students' real areas of interest, the higher the level of motivation and efficiency can be reached.
Integration of specialty subjects allows students to learn English, depending on their specific professional field or career goals. It helps them learn language skills faster and more efficiently because the learning content is related to their real life and work.
When the learning content is related to the students' major or professional interests, it increases their *motivation to learn*. Students feel more involved and related to the content of the teaching because they see a direct connection between what they learn and how it can be applied in their daily life or work.
The integration of specialty subjects helps students assimilate faster language skills as they learn to apply language in real situations that are available to them familiar and understandable. This allows them *to learn* faster and *more efficiently* because the learning process is focused on their specific needs and goals.

Integration with major subjects helps students understand how language is used in a specific professional field or activity. This *realistic learning* helps them understand how language skills can be applied in practice, not just at a theoretical level.

Finally, when learning a language that is related to the students' major, they *become more confident* in themselves and their abilities in their professional field. This gives them more confidence when speaking and interacting with colleagues or clients in their professional context. Thus, the permanent integration of specialty subjects into adult English majors learning helps students master language

skills more efficiently and motivated so that they be able to use the language successfully in their daily activities or professional activities.

After defining and discussing the components of professional English learning here could be presented the conceptual holistic language learning model (fig.):
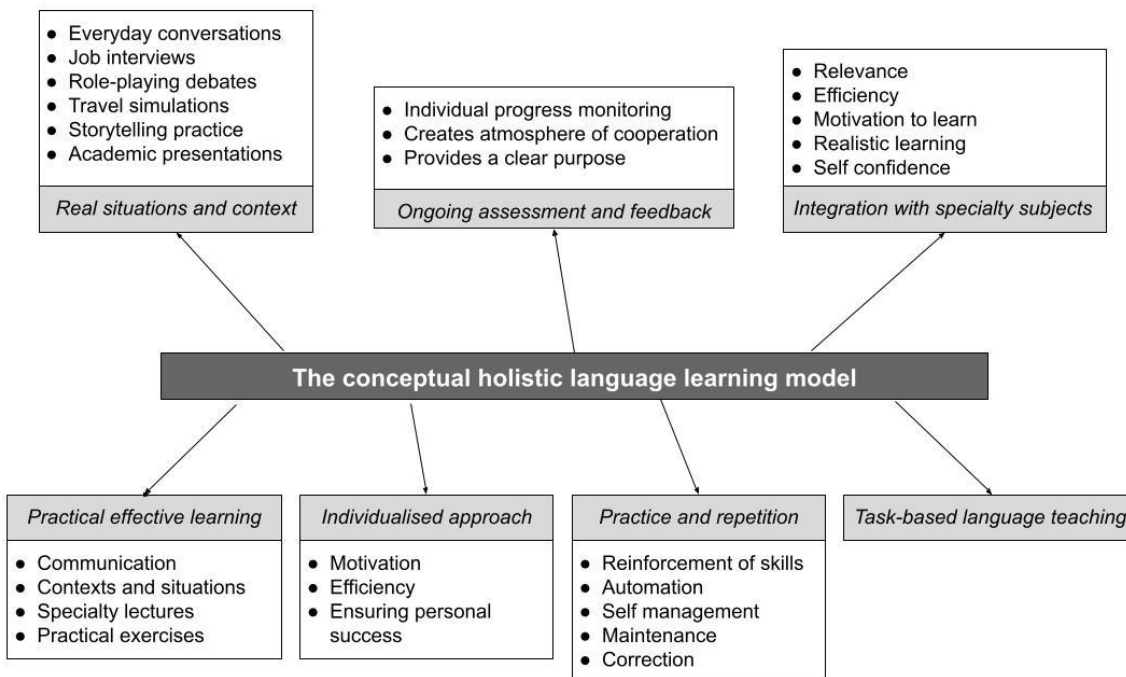

Figure. **The conceptual holistic language learning model**

Conclusions and / or recommendations

The article is dedicated to developing a conceptual model for teaching English for Specific Purposes effectively, particularly focusing on adult learners in a professional setting. The relevance of this topic is underscored by the increasing global integration of markets and the widespread use of English as the lingua franca in professional contexts. As professionals from diverse fields find themselves in situations where English is the primary means of communication, the need for specialized language learning tailored to specific professional needs has never been more critical. The problem addressed by the article lies in the traditional approaches to language teaching, which often neglect the specific needs of adult learners in professional environments. These conventional methods may not fully equip learners with the practical language skills required in their specific fields of work. Hence, the article identifies a problem field in the gap between general English language education and the specialized demands of professional communication. To bridge this gap, the article proposes a comprehensive model focusing on practical effective learning, an individualized approach to teaching, the importance of practice and replication, the significance of real situations and context, ongoing assessment and feedback, and the integration with specialty subjects. This model aims to make language learning more relevant, efficient, and aligned with the learners' professional objectives. The objectives of this theoretical part are manifold. Firstly, it seeks to provide a clear understanding of how practical exercises and real-life applications can enhance the learning process, making it more dynamic and applicable to professional contexts. Secondly, it emphasizes the need for an

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individualized approach in teaching professional English, recognizing the diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and professional requirements of adult learners. This personalized strategy ensures that the learning experience is tailored to meet each learner's unique needs, thereby maximizing learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the model underscores the importance of consistent practice and repetition in language learning, which helps solidify the acquired skills and makes their application more automatic and fluent in professional settings. Additionally, it highlights the role of real-life contexts and situations in teaching professional English, arguing that engaging with genuine professional scenarios can significantly enhance the relevance and applicability of language skills.

Ongoing assessment and feedback are identified as critical components of the proposed model, providing learners with regular insights into their progress and areas requiring improvement. This continuous evaluation fosters a supportive learning environment, motivating learners and enabling adjustments to the teaching process to better meet their needs. Lastly, the integration of specialty subjects within the professional English learning framework is advocated to align language learning with the learners' professional fields or career aspirations. This approach not only enhances the relevance and motivation behind learning but also contributes to the learners' confidence and efficiency in using English within their specific professional domains.

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