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Bożena Alejziak*

Work experience of tourism and recreation students and the level of social competence. Selected issues

Abstract. The aim of this article is to present results of a study concerning the level of social competences displayed by students of tourism and recreation and how it relates to their work experience. The author hypothesized that the fact of being employed could help to differentiate between different levels of social competences in the student population. Factors such as the length of work experience, positions held, work abroad, internships, and voluntary work were analysed. The study was based on quantitative and qualitative data collected using such tools such as the Social Competence Questionnaire and the Questionnaire for Self-Assessment of Student's Professional Achievements in order to identify forms of professional activity among the respondents. Full-time students of tourism and recreation were found to have an average level of social competences, and their work experience, considered as a form of social training, did not differentiate between different levels of social competence. No statistically significant correlations were found between the level of social competence and internships at secondary schools, internships at university, work experience in general and in tourism and recreation in particular, and voluntary work. Also, positions held did not differentiate the level of social competence. It could therefore be concluded that the respondents' work experience was too short to have a measurable effect on the level of their social competences, which take much more time to develop and depend on personal and environmental factors.

Keywords: social competences, professional activity, students of tourism and recreation

JEL Codes: L83, O15

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1. Introduction

Next to knowledge and skills, social competences play an increasingly important role in the current labour market and the tourism sector. Not only do they facilitate effective interaction with the social environment but they also determine how well employees adapt to new and changing conditions, how quickly they react in difficult situations, and how resistant they are to stress.

A high level of social competences is one of the most important criteria that tourism companies consider when hiring employees, who are expected to have frequent, direct interactions with people (Giddens, 2004), and their actions significantly affect the usability of the final intangible product (Berry & Lampo, 2004; Goldstein, 2003). In a knowledge-based economy, human capital, i.e. people's knowledge, skills, and social competences, constitutes the basis for values that are important from the perspective of customer needs (Bednarska & Olszewski, 2015: 367). The ability to establish, maintain and end human relations, as well as behaviours that are adjusted to specific situations, learned, and controlled by the individual, are essential for direct interactions with people (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). Social competences involve the ability to form emotional bonds with other people, to build, develop and maintain relationships, as well as to elicit social support. They largely determine the quality of delivered services, which is confirmed by labour market forecasts predicting their growing role (Deming, 2017). A high level of social competences displayed by employees, who constitute the intellectual capital of an organization, is one of the key factors that affects its competitiveness, especially if the company provides tourism and recreation services (Sharpley & Poster, 2003).

Social competences are defined as the ability to cope with social situations and are essential for direct, open, and friendly relations with customers and other people from the company's internal and external environment. They are also considered to be a good predictor of professional and life success. Social competences are an essential for a person's effective functioning in society and in social adaptation (Argyle, 1998; Bobrowska-Jabłońska, 2003; Borkowski, 2003; Goleman, 1997).

Employers often negatively assess the professional preparation of university graduates in terms of their social competences. In particular, critical remarks are directed to some fields of education (Wierzejska, 2016), including tourism and recreation (Alejziak, 2014; Burzyński, 2018, pp. 43-154). The problem persists, even though the development of social competences is an inherent part of academic education (Bereźnicki, 2011; Nowakowska & Pietkiewicz, 2016, p. 56; Recommendation of the European Parliament…, 2008). According to the Bologna System, universities should not only prepare students to perform work but, above all, to be able to perform professional tasks in specific social conditions (Ciechanowska, 2014, p. 56; Sławiński, Chłoń-Domińczak, & Kraśniewski 2015, p. 36). Therefore, social competences (in addition to knowledge and skills) should be acquired during formal, as well as non-formal and informal education.

However, it should be noted that it is very difficult to acquire social competences as they are often associated with social sensitivity, openness to others, negotiation skills, empathy, assertiveness, and communication skills. The level of social competence is not only related to individual circumstances (Nęcka, 2003; Schneider, Ackerman, & Kanfer, 1996) but is also influenced by environmental settings, where social training plays a key role (Argyle, 1999; Matczak, 2001). Consequently, social training can take place both during formal academic education and in the course of the individual's own activity (Bee, 2004; Hall, Lindzey, & Campbell, 2004; Nowacki, 2004, p. 217; Przetacznik-Gierowska, 2000, p. 62), e.g. by taking up employment.

The notion of social competences is rather ambiguous, as indicated by the many complementary definitions, classifications, and typologies. Most often, the definitions involve interpersonal interactions, in particular, the ability to empathize, cooperate, convince, or resolve conflicts (Jagodziński, 2013). There are a few related concepts, such as social skills (Sęk, 2000, pp. 105-117), social intelligence (Strelau, 2002), ability to make an impression (Goffman, 1981), emotional intelligence (Cherniss, 2000; Hochschild, 2009; Illouz, 2010; Turner, 2008), or interpersonal skills (Ciupińska, 2005; Dickson & Hargie, 2004; Makieła, 2006).

Since there is such a wide range of social competences, the present study is based on the most universal concept involving the broadest scope of social situations, as defined by Matczak (2001), who describes social competences as complex skills that enable individuals to effectively regulate emotions and cope with various social situations. This definition is rather general and comprises competences regulating the effectiveness of behaviour in situations involving:

- intimate contacts;[1]
- social situations;[2]
- assertiveness.

Despite its generality, this concept provides a reliable picture of social behaviour in the student population.

Therefore, the study aimed to determine the level of social competences displayed by students of tourism and recreation and its relationship with their professional experience. It was hypothesised that social training in the context of

[1] Close interpersonal relationships involving a high degree of self-disclosure on the part interaction partners, in face-to face or indirect situations.

[2] Situations in which a person is likely to be observed or assessed by others; the Polish term used by Matczak (2001) is "ekspozycja społeczna" (social exposure).

professional work might differentiate between different levels of social competences of BA and MA students of tourism and recreation.

To understand the variation in the level of social competences of responding students, one has to, on the one hand, to recognize the role of higher education, which is supposed to prepare students for employment in the tourism and recreation industry and, on the other hand, the role of work experience, which students often start to accumulate already during the course of their studies.

It is worth noting that the nature of work experience acquired by full-time university students differs from that gained by young working adults who do not study. To obtain an insight into the issue of work experience and its impact on the level of social competences, quantitative and qualitative data were collected about:

– work experience and type of positions in tourism and recreation as well as other industries;
– completed internships;
– voluntary work;
– foreign vs. domestic employment.

The main research question was formulated as follows: What is the relationship between professional activity of students of tourism and recreation and their level of social competences?

To further clarify the problem, three detailed research questions were put forward:

1. To what extent does the experience of higher education differentiate between students of tourism and recreation in terms of their level of social competences?
2. To what extent does work experience differentiate between students of tourism and recreation in terms of their level of social competences?
3. To what extent does the type of positions held so far affect the level of social competences of tourism and recreation students?

2. Method

In order to meet the research aims the following qualitative and quantitative tools were applied:

1. **The author's Questionnaire for Self-Assessment of the Student's Professional Achievements (QSASPA)** to determine the level and scope of students' professional experience, i.e., work experience, positions held in tourism

and other industries, internship length, foreign vs. domestic employment, volunteer work.[3]

2. **Matczak's Social Competences Questionnaire (SCQ)** (Matczak, 2000) to determine the level and scope of students' social competences in three areas:

– effectiveness of behaviour in social situations;
– effectiveness of behaviour in situations requiring assertiveness;
– effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations.

The SCQ is a standardised psychological tool used for analysing selected aspects of social competence. It has been tested for validity and reliability. The SCQ contains self-description questions about social activities (60 items) and other, non-social activities (30 items).[4]

The statistical analysis was carried out using Statistica 10 statistical software from Statsoft Polska. Intergroup differences were examined using Student's t test for independent variables, Mann-Whitney's U test (when sample sizes were too small or when the data were not normally distributed), ANOVA single-factor analysis of variance (to compare more than two groups) and MANOVA two-factor analysis of variance to examine the group × sex interaction. Correlation was analysed using Pearson's r and Spearman's rho tests. The test results at the level $p < 0.05$ were assumed to be significant and those at the level $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.001$ were assumed to be highly significant.

The study was conducted in 2019. The questionnaires were distributed among full-time students of tourism and recreation from the University of Physical Education in Krakow. Participation in the study was voluntary. Of the 660 students enrolled in this area of study, 442 completed the SCQ and 551 – the QSASPA, thus the sample can be regarded as representative of the population of students at this faculty.

[3] These areas are of interest from the point of view of the analyses presented in this article; however, the QSASPA takes into account a much wider area of students' professional development including formal education (type of secondary school completed, class profile, professional plans, motives for undertaking higher education in the field of tourism and recreation, knowledge of foreign languages, educational, professional, sporting achievements, professional interests and the area of non-formal education (qualifications acquired outside the formal education system implemented in the form of courses and training and acquired entitlements confirmed by a diploma or certificate). The above questionnaire included 5-point Likert scale questions and a whole range of open-ended questions concerning young people's views on their own professional development.

[4] To facilitate the interpretation of the results the author consulted with Katarzyna Supernat, M.Sc. Katarzyna Supernat, assistant at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, University of Physical Education in Krakow (Poland).

3. Results

The field of tourism and recreation is dominated by women, who account for 73% of all students. The majority of students completed comprehensive secondary schools (74.21%), while the remaining quarter were graduates of technical secondary schools (25.79%). More than half of all respondents (55.6%) described their income level as average, over a quarter (27.4%) – as low, and 17.0% – as high.

3.1. Students' level of social competences

As far as social competences are concerned, preliminary analysis of the Social Competence Questionnaire (SCQ) consisted in calculating the results obtained for the following scales: Intimate Contacts Scale (ICS), Social Situations Scale (SSS), Assertiveness Scale (AS), and the total raw score (Total RS). The results were normalized into sten scores, with a mean of 5.5 and a standard deviation of 2 for the student population. The average sten values for all scales were between 5-6 sten, indicating an average level of competence in the student population, which is in line with the reference group of Matczak's study (2001) – see Table 1.

A two-factor analysis of variance was used to determine differences in the level of social competences between the groups, i.e., bachelor's and master's students, broken down by sex. Interestingly, the results of the analyses of all variables did not show statistically significant differences between the groups, i.e., between students of particular years of study, sex and the interaction of group × × sex ($p > .05$) (Cohen, 1988; Miles & Shevlin, 2001; Cohen et al., 2003).

3.2. Work experience and social competences

Professional experience is one of the factors determining graduates' entry into the labour market and shaping their social competences, which are particularly important in the tourism and recreation industry (Alejziak, 2014). A high level of social competences is not only a desirable quality in the labour market (Agran et al., 2016), but contributes to a better quality of work (Hochwarter et al., 2006) and is associated with higher wages (Ferris, Witt, & Hochwarter, 2001). It is also worth noting that the tourism and recreation industry involves a wide range of activities (hospitality, catering, tourist services, etc.), which are related to many functions and positions.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the results of the SCQ questionnaire in the studied groups

Scale SCQ	Statistical measures	BA 1			BA 2-3			MA			Total		
		females ($N = 82$)	males ($N = 33$)	total ($N = 115$)	females ($N = 149$)	males ($N = 45$)	total ($N = 194$)	females ($N = 96$)	males ($N = 37$)	total ($N = 133$)	females ($N = 327$)	males ($N = 115$)	total ($N = 442$)
ICS	Mean	46.8	45.0	46.3	46.7	47.6	46.9	45.7	44.7	45.4	46.4	45.9	46.3
	SD	6.1	7.0	6.4	6.4	5.3	6.1	5.2	5.8	5.4	6.0	6.1	6.0
SSS	Mean	54.1	53.0	53.8	52.6	50.1	52.0	52.1	52.1	52.1	52.8	51.6	52.5
	SD	9.6	10.0	9.7	9.3	10.3	9.6	7.5	7.3	7.4	8.9	9.4	9.0
AS	Mean	49.1	49.4	49.2	47.8	47.2	47.7	47.0	47.6	47.2	47.9	48.0	47.9
	SD	8.3	9.3	8.6	8.6	7.7	8.4	7.2	7.1	7.1	8.1	8.0	8.1
Total RS	Mean	181.8	178.3	180.8	179.2	176.4	178.5	176.4	176.0	176.3	179.0	176.8	178.4
	SD	24.1	27.6	25.1	23.9	23.3	23.7	19.3	20.4	19.5	22.7	23.6	22.9

Explanation of abbreviations:
BA 1 – students of the 1st year of BA studies
BA 2-3 – students of the 2nd and 3rd year of BA studies combined
MA – students of the 1st and 2nd year of MA studies combined
SCQ – social competence questionnaire
ICS – competences determining the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations
SSS – competences determining the effectiveness of behaviour in social situations
AS – competences determining the effectiveness of behaviour in situations requiring assertiveness
RS – raw score
M – mean
SD – standard deviation

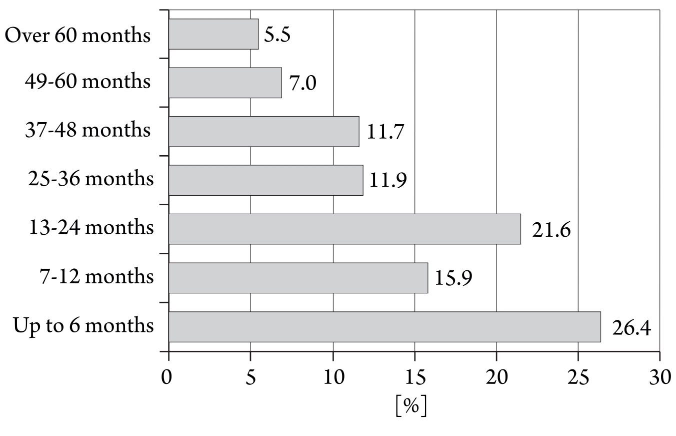
Source: own study.

The prospect of **working abroad** is naturally attractive to people working in the tourism industry. However, it involves the challenge of having to adapt to cultural differences while fulfilling professional duties. Mobility and talent management are considered to be the future direction (Churchward & Riley, 2002; Tolkach & Tung, 2019). For this reason, employers, who have great expectations regarding social competences, also value **professional experience gained abroad** more highly than participation in study abroad programmes (Kay & DeVeau, 2003; Van Mol, 2017). Therefore, professional experience is one of the most relevant factors that shapes social competences and is highly evaluated by employers.

The task of determining the respondents' scope of professional experience posed a challenge and was based on insights derived from the analysis of the professional development path. The respondents were asked to describe their professional experience to date, as if they were writing their CVs. The analysis of responses was complicated by the variety of answers provided by the respondents. It also required a careful categorisation of written statements into logical, homogeneous groups. The aim was to determine the length of work experience of the students in various industries (up to 6 months; 7-12 months; 13-24 months; 25-36 months 37-48 months 49-60 months; over 60 months), including tourism and recreation (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) and their positions.

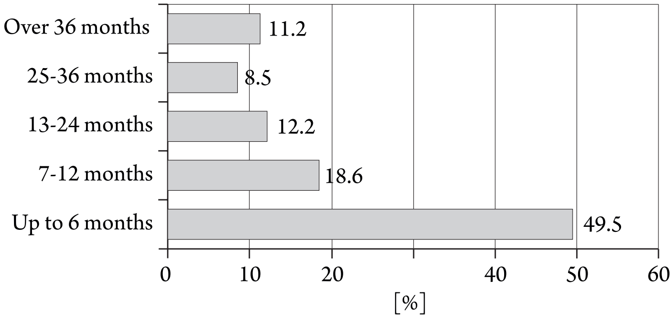
It was assumed that work experience and job position, particularly in situations where direct contact with people is required, are related to varying levels of social competence.

Fig. 1. Respondents' work experience in general



Source: own study.

Fig. 2. Respondents' work experience in tourism and recreation



Source: own study.

It was found that one in four students (26.4%) worked for less than six months and one in five (21.6%) for 13-24 months. The results for other lengths of work experience are as follows: 15.9% for 7-12 months, 11.9% for 25-36 months and 11.7% for 37-48 months. Comparatively few respondents had more than three years of work experience: 7% worked for 49-60 months, and 5.5% for over 60 months. As can be expected, work experience of the respondents increased with age: in the first year of BA studies, most respondents (48.8%) had less than half a year of work experience, while those in MA programmes (40.4%) had already worked for over three years.

Students who choose to study tourism and recreation are also likely to have careers in tourism services. However, work in such areas, as well as in other industries, requires specialist competencies, including social competences. Therefore, the respondents were asked about their work experience in general and in the area of tourism and recreation. It was found that some respondents had already worked in the area of tourism and recreation. However, compared to the total number of all students with a history of previous employment, they were significantly less numerous (188 vs. 402). Also, their work experience was much shorter compared to the majority of respondents: almost half of them (49.5%) had worked in the industry for less than six months, while another 18.6% – for 7-12 months. Thus, only approximately one in ten students had a relatively long job experience in their field of study.

Regardless of the year of study, approximately half of all students (62.2% of 1 BA; 50.6% of 2-3 BA; 41.7% of MA) had worked in tourism for less than half a year, and approximately one in ten students – for three years (8.1% of 1 BA, 10.1% of 2-3 BA, and 13.9% of MA).

Another aspects analysed in the study was the relationship between social competences and professional experience gained from internships attended during the period of study, where students could "gain first-hand professional experience" (Beggs, Ross, & Goodwin, 2008). Internships are a key component of higher education (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006).

The majority of respondents (41.9%) took part in a one-month internship, nearly one in five (19.0%) – in a two-month internship; longer internship periods were much less common: 10.0% – 3 months, 3.1% – 4 months, 2.5% – 5 months respectively. The period of internship can last from one month in the case of 3rd-year students, who graduated from a comprehensive secondary school, up to five months in the case of 2nd-year MA students who graduated from technical secondary schools.

The correlation analysis between the length of internship in secondary school, during the studies and the length of work experience in general, or the length of work experience in tourism and recreation, and any of the three competence scales of the SCQ, did not reveal any statistically significant differences. The result may be somewhat surprising; however, the length of internships (from one to five months) and the length of work experience in tourism and recreation (mostly up to six months) and other industries (slightly longer) seem to be too short to differentiate between different levels of social competences.

3.3. Volunteering

Volunteering is an interesting form of gaining professional experience.[5] Depending on its duration, it can be a one-off, systematic, or long-term activity. It can also involve different domains and forms of activity, such as sport, hospice care, work, senior citizens, Internet, international settings (workcamps, European volunteering under the Erasmus+ programme, missionary trips). Specific tasks can vary greatly, and individuals interested in this form of activity make their choices based on their skills, interests, and personal aptitudes.

Volunteering is an excellent opportunity to acquire practical skills and develop social competences that can be useful in future professional careers (Jeżowski, 2018, p. 5 and 11; Kulig-Moskwa, 2013; Veleva et al., 2012). The most frequently mentioned ones include teamwork, communication skills, self-confidence, the ability to listen, responsibility, understanding of social and cultural relations,

[5] According to the Act on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteering (Ustawa z dnia 24 kwietnia 2003 r. o działalności pożytku publicznego i o wolontariacie, Dz. U. Nr 96, poz. 873), a person is regarded as a volunteer if they voluntarily, consciously, and without remuneration, engage in work for the benefit of persons, non-governmental organisations and institutions operating in various social areas. The act also specifies a list of tasks classified as voluntary activity.

problem-solving skills (*Youth Volunteering...*, 2008). In the survey, one in 3 students of tourism and recreation (30.10% of 1 BA; 41.10% of 2-3 BA; 28.80% of MA) reported having participated in volunteering activities. Provided below are some of the responses given in the questionnaire:

> "I have worked for a short time with Caritas helping the homeless," "I was actively involved in volunteering in high school, the work consisted in helping to organize fairs for the poor," "for three consecutive years in the technical school I took part in 1 or 2 days of volunteering work that involved helping at slow food fairs in Cracow," "I worked in an association *Open Cages* to improve the conditions of breeding animals," "I was a volunteer during World Youth Days", "I took part in the volunteer work that organized trips to senior citizens' homes where we could talk and listen to them. Moreover, I also helped at festivals for people with disabilities," "I worked as an assistant at the "Mobile Tourist Information Point" in Olkusz and helped with the organization and implementation of the "Night of Museums" in the local cultural centre," "I worked as a volunteer at a children's home where I helped children with their school work," "I was a volunteer at a social welfare home," "I was a volunteer at a single mother's house, where I took care of the children, organized animations and games, gave support to the children," "I worked as a volunteer during the food collection, during the Noble Parcel Action," I was a volunteer during the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity."

As in the case of work experience and internships, volunteering did not differentiate between students in terms of social competences ($p > 0.05$), although it is commonly believed that people who perform volunteering work have a high level of social competences.

It can be argued that the lack of correlations may be due to the nature of the work performed, which may not have involved intensive relationships with other people (e.g. participation in slow food fairs, assistance at a tourist information point, etc.). In addition, the above experience was too short, and the assistance provided was rather short-term (action), and therefore was not associated with differential levels of social competences.

3.4. Professional experience in selected positions and social competences

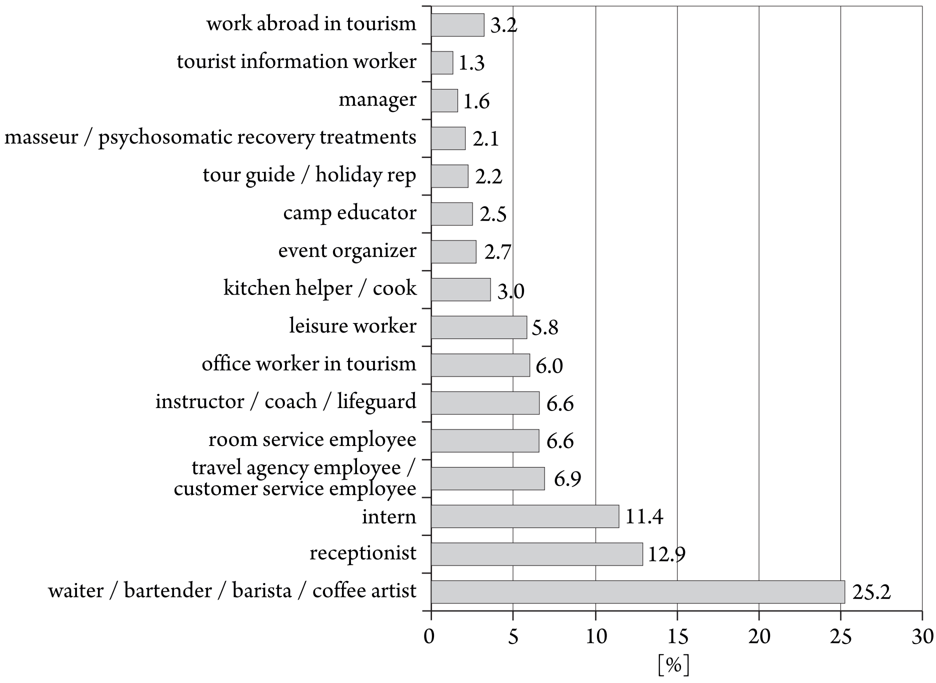
Apart from professional experience, the students of tourism and recreation were also asked about jobs held to date. It was hypothesised that work performed by the respondents, in particular work involving direct interactions with consumers, might be associated with differential social competences. The list of jobs performed by students and their work experience was created based on the analysis of their professional development path and responses to open-ended questions. Jobs were divided into two basic groups:

- jobs performed in tourism services and recreation industry;
- jobs performed outside the tourism services industry.

The analysis of jobs performed **in the tourism services and recreation industry** (Fig. 3) yields an interesting observation. Although only half of all students with a history of past employment had worked in such jobs, the number of different jobs listed in this group was twice as big (N = 634 vs. N = 319) and included the following: a waiter / bartender, a barista / coffee artist (25.2%), and a receptionist (12.9%). Fewer respondents reported working in customer services or as salespersons (6.9%), as room service employees (6.6%), as instructors/ coaches / lifeguards (6.6%), as office workers (6.0%). 11.4% of respondents had gained work experience during an internship.

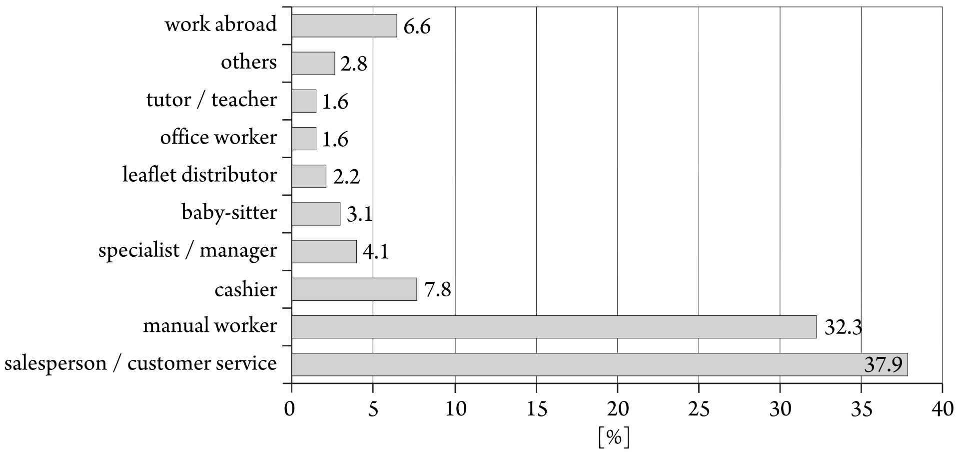
The analysis of the structure of professions indicates that most of them are operational positions that do not require high or specialized qualifications. It is particularly visible for gastronomy, where a quarter of all students had worked, and for room service and kitchen helpers. The characteristic feature of most of the jobs undertaken by the students, besides physical effort, is a direct contact with the customer (a waiter, a receptionist, sales/customer service, a leisure time animator, a camp educator, a tour guide/a resident). Performing such jobs often becomes a life lesson for a young person because working with a client is quite de-

Fig. 3. Jobs in the tourism and leisure industry, performed by respondents



Source: own study.

Fig. 4. Jobs outside the tourism and leisure industry



Source: own study.

manding, and it teaches the young person patience, respect, and humility, which in the social context is an essential factor of personality development.

When it comes to jobs **outside the tourism industry** (N = 319), (Fig. 4), the biggest number of respondents worked as salespeople, in customer service departments (37.9%) or as manual workers (32.3%). 7.8% worked as cashiers (7.8%). Some also took up work abroad (6.6%), and the vast majority of them had worked as manual workers (at construction sites, in warehouses, picking vegetables, fruits, and flowers). If we count those who worked abroad in the tourism industry (3.2%) (mainly washing dishes in restaurants, as waiters, bartenders, leisure time animators), it turns out that nearly one in ten students had foreign work experience. Jobs outside the tourism industry were also considered because young people who leave their everyday environment enter into numerous social and intercultural interactions, which can differentiate their level of social competence.

In summary, work experience has a considerable influence on students' professional development and their future career, as pointed out by a number of authors:

– J.L. Holland believes that an individual, while comparing their own "self" with the specific requirements of various professions, accepts and rejects various options to make a final choice (Bańka, 1995, p. 139; Holland, 1958; Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2003, p. 38),

– E. Ginzberg finds that young people who enter the period of realism (stage III) and are at the stage of searching, can modify their interests and their search for a place in the labour market consists in narrowing professional goals and excluding certain professions (Ginzberg, 1984; Muszyński, 2010, p. 91; Pisula, 2009, pp. 104-105;),

– D. E. Super argues that adolescents, who enter the second stage of exploration (15-24 years old), are engaged in self-discovery, and to this end, they take up various professional roles to try them out and to finally find their own professional path (Gurba, 2001; Hornowska & Paluchowski, 1993; Łyszkowska, 2010, p. 215; Super, 1984).

Thus, the experience of doing various jobs in tourism and recreation or other industries is an element of shaping one's self-image, finding one's place in the labour market, and an important developmental factor in the social sphere, as presented below.

Based on the results of the SCQ, and the length of work experience in the tourism/recreational industry, it can be concluded that the ES score of respondents who had worked as **kitchen assistants / cooks** (19)[6] were significantly higher ($t(445) = -2.173$; $p = 0.030$) ($M = 57.2$, $SD = 8.0$) than those of students who had not worked in such positions ($M = 52.3$, $SD = 9.0$). The analysis of their career paths revealed that they had had other jobs, such as: receptionist (6), waiter/bartender (10), cleaner/room service employee (5), salesman/customer service employee (5), and manual worker (4).

It was also found that students who had worked as **salesmen in tourism/customer service** (44) had a significantly different level of social competence compared to other respondents. Interestingly, they scored lower on all scales of the SCQ (ICS: $M = 44.1$; $SD = 6.3$; SSS: $M = 49.9$; $SD = 8.5$; AS: $M = 45.1$; $SD = 7.6$; Total score: $M = 168.6$; $SD = 20.5$) than respondents without such experience (ICS: $M = 46.5$; $SD = 5.9$; SSS: $M = 52.7$; $SD = 9.0$; AS: $M = 48.2$; $SD = 8.1$; Total result: $M = 179.2$; $SD = 23.0$). ICS: $t(445) = 2.436$; $p = 0.015$, SSS – differences not entirely significant: $t(445) = 1.947$; $p = 0.052$, AS: $t(445) = 2.321$; $p = 0.021$, Total score: $t(445) = 2.845$; $p = 0.005$. As in the case of kitchen assistants/cooks, respondents who had worked as salespeople in tourism/customer service had also worked in other jobs: a waiter/bartender (8), a cashier (3), and a receptionist (3).

Another job that differentiated the students in terms of social competences was that of **a tour guide / holiday rep** (14). Respondents with this kind of work experience scored significantly lower on the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations (ICS: $M = 41.4$; $SD = 5.2$ vs $M = 46.4$; $SD = 6.0$) ($t(445) = 3.003$; $p = 0.003$). Also, the overall social competence score (total score) for this group of students tended to be lower ($M = 167.8$; $SD = 17.8$) than that for other respondents ($M = 178.6$; $SD = 23.0$) ($t(445) = 1.679$; $p = 0.094$), although the result was entirely significant. However, these students had also worked as waiters/

[6] The number of people who have worked in a given position is provided in brackets.

bartenders (4), recreation instructors (3), leisure workers/camp educators (4), sales persons/customer service (3), manual workers (3).

Differences in the level of social competence were also found in the group of students who had worked as **event organisers** (18) (ICS: $M = 50.7$; $SD = 5.1$; SSS: $M = 56.5$; $SD = 9.4$; AS: $M = 51.9$; $SD = 8.8$; Total result: $M = 193.2$; $SD = 23.0$) and other respondents (ICS: $M = 46.1$; $SD = 6.0$; SSS: $M = 52.3$; $SD = 9.0$; AS: $M = 47.7$; $SD = 8.0$; Total result: $M = 177.7$; $SD = 22.8$). These students had higher scores on social competence (ICS: $t(445) = -3.153$; $p = 0.002$, SES – differences not entirely significant: $t(445) = -1.903$; $p = 0.058$, AS: $t(445) = -2.080$; $p = 0.038$, Total result: $t(445) = -2.750$; $p = 0.006$). The analysis of their career path also reveals they had also worked as sales persons /customer service (11), waiters /bartenders (3), security officers at mass events (1), a manual worker (1), a baby sitter caretaker (1), and an elderly caretaker (1).

No significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in the level of social competence were observed for the following jobs:

– students who had worked as **receptionists** (82) tended ($t(445) = 1.722$; $p = 0.086$) to have lower but no significant differences in competencies regarding the effectiveness of behaviour in social situations (SSS) ($M = 50.8$, $SD = 8.6$) compared to other jobs ($M = 52.8$, $SD = 9.1$). In addition, they tended to ($t(445) = 1{,}829$; $p = 0.068$) to have higher but no significant differences in competencies in the effectiveness of behaviour in assertive situations (AS) ($M = 48.2$, $SD = 8.1$) compared to other respondents ($M = 46.3$, $SD = 7.7$). It should be noted, however, that students with previous work experience as receptionists had also worked as waiters (33), kitchen assistants (5), salespersons/ customer service in a travel agency (21), maids (19), physical workers (15), leisure workers (4), recreation instructors (7), and office workers (8).

– students who had worked as **managers** in tourism (11), tended to have lower but no significant differences in competencies in the effectiveness of behaviour in situations requiring assertiveness (AS) ($M = 42.9$, $SD = 6.3$) in comparison with other respondents ($M = 48.0$, $SD = 8.1$), $Z(445) = -1.936$; $p = 0.053$. Respondents who had been employed as receptionists had also worked as waiters/bartenders (3), recreation instructors (3), manual workers (2), and receptionists (2).

No statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were found for the following occupations: leisure time worker, camp educator, waiter/bartender/barista/coffee artist, room/cleaning service, office worker in tourism, tourist information worker, instructor/coach/rescuer, massage therapist/operator. Also, the fact of working abroad did not differentiate between respondents in terms of their social competences.

The analysis of non-tourism jobs performed by the students indicated that those who had worked as blue-collar workers had significantly higher scores relating to effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations (ICS: $M = 47.7$, $SD = 5.8$ vs.

$M = 45.9$, $SD = 6.0$; $t(445) = -2.546$; $p = 0.011$), effectiveness of behaviour in social situations (SSS) ($M = 54.4$, $SD = 8.8$ vs. $M = 52.0$, $SD = 9.0$; $t(445) = -2.316$; $p = 0.021$) and on the overall level of social competence (Total score) ($M = 183.4$, $SD = 21.9$ vs. $M = 176.9$, $SD = 23.1$; $t(445) = -2.422$; $p = 0.016$). It was also found that these respondents had additional experience having worked as receptionists (27), waiters/bartenders (21), leisure time animators (6), recreation instructors (6), maids (6), camp educators (5), tour guides, holiday reps (5), sales persons/customer service (5), kitchen helpers/cooks (5).

As for other jobs outside the tourism industry (a child caretaker, a salesperson/customer service, a cashier/tax cashier service, an office worker, and others), no significant differences in the level of social competence were found ($p > 0.05$).

4. Conclusions

Work in the tourism and recreation industry involves frequent interactions with people, in which employees have to establish and maintain relationships, and therefore, need to display a high level of social competence. Previous research has revealed changes that have been occurring in the way entrepreneurs run their businesses regarding human and career management, and social competences are particularly important for professional success (Cherniss, 2000; Dickson & Hargie, 2004; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). In addition, social competences affect performance and help employees achieve results that are above the average (Cherniss, 2000). However, in order to 'become competent' in a particular skill, a person has to understand it cognitively, master it behaviourally, receive feedback, use it frequently until it becomes an entirely natural activity and is integrated into their behaviour (Dickson & Hargie, 2004; Znajmiecka-Sikora & Kędzierska, 2011, p. 28). A low level of social competences limits one's effectiveness in the labour market but can be developed through purposeful actions (Cherniss, 2000; Muralidhar et al., 2016; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002).

The study described in the article was based on the assumption that higher education should prepare students for entering the labour market and should be a form of social training. It was also hypothesized that students' social competences develop as their studies progress, which means that at the end of the studies, graduates should have achieved a high level of these skills. The study findings did not confirm this hypothesis: students of tourism and recreation who responded to the survey obtained average scores on all SCQ scales. However, they did not score extremely low, either, which is a positive result for those working in the tourism and recreation industry.

Interestingly, a similar result was also obtained by Wierzejska (2016), who surveyed students of social disciplines (psychology, journalism) and technical studies at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. She found that university education provided, at most, an average level of social skills, including abilities of establishing close interpersonal relationships, handling social situations or pursuing their own goals by exerting or resisting influence.

The average results regarding social competences obtained in the study may result from the fact that some of the educational outcomes in the area of social competences are typically psychological (personality), and can be measured by means of the SCQ, while others are more pro-social and ethical, and are related to the performance of professional tasks in an industry related to the field of study.

It is worth noting that students are still in the initial phase of their careers (Suchar, 2003, p. 17). Moreover, it has long been known that students do not necessarily develop the highest level of social traits (Riggio, Watring, & Throckmorton, 1993). It is not only valid for Polish students but also, for example, Turkish students, who exhibited a moderate level of social anxiety (Koc, 2019) and a low level of cultural sensitivity (Yurur el al., 2018).

What is more, professional work and experience acquired during the studies provide opportunities for social training, during which they can develop specific professional and social skills. The author hypothesized that the length of work experience, jobs held, internships, and volunteering might have a differential influence on students' level of social competences. This hypothesis was not confirmed. These factors were not found to differentiate between levels of social competences in the group of tourism and recreation students. Surprisingly, in the analysis of the relation between the level of social competences and the type of jobs performed, it turned out that students who had worked as blue-collar workers had higher scores on the ICS (competences determining the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations) and SES (competences determining the effectiveness of behaviour in social exposure situations), and in total than those who had not worked in such jobs.

Also, students take up different jobs while looking for their dream job that fits in with their interests and skills. As a result, correlation discrepancies occurred. Most respondents had worked in catering, hotels, travel agencies, in the recreation industry, and had done various jobs outside tourism and recreation. It should also be underlined that the sample consisted of full-time students. Therefore, it is difficult to compare their work experience to full-time employees who have done a given job for several years.

In summary, it can be concluded that the development of social competences is a long-term process that depends on personality and environmental factors.

For this reason, educational and professional experiences are merely stages of social training that enable students to keep developing their social skills, largely depending on their motivation and willingness to change their personality.

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Aktywność zawodowa studentów turystyki i rekreacji a poziom kompetencji społecznych. Wybrane zagadnienia

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest prezentacja badań diagnozujących poziom kompetencji społecznych młodzieży akademickiej studiującej na kierunku „turystyka i rekreacja" oraz ich interakcji z doświadczeniem o charakterze zawodowym. Założono bowiem, iż podjęcie pracy zawodowej, gdzie uwzględniono takie czynniki, jak: długość stażu pracy, pełnione stanowiska, praca w kraju lub za granicą, praktyki zawodowe, praca w wolontariacie, może różnicować poziom kompetencji społecznych studentów. W tym celu zastosowano ilościowe i jakościowe metody badań, na podstawie których ustalono, że studenci turystyki i rekreacji prezentują przeciętny poziom kompetencji społecznych. Nie wykazano także istotnych statystycznie zależności między poziomem kompetencji społecznych a stażem praktyk w szkole średniej, stażem praktyk na studiach, stażem pracy w ogóle, stażem pracy w turystyce i rekreacji oraz pracą wolontariacie. Z przeprowadzonych badań można wyciągnąć wniosek, że staż pracy badanych studentów jest jeszcze zbyt krótki, aby różnicował on kompetencje społeczne.

Słowa kluczowe: kompetencje społeczne, aktywność zawodowa, studenci turystyki i rekreacji

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Transnational partner meetings in the face of the pandemic – the case of Strategic Partnerships implementing international projects

Abstract. During the pandemic of COVID-19 the work on projects that require team working has changed. The face-to-face meetings, with the physical presence of participants, were moved to virtual space, enforcing the change in the way of project partners' communication. The aim of the paper is to indicate the risks in the area of transnational project collaboration resulting from replacing face-to-face meetings with virtual mobility, from the skills' development perspective. The authors of the paper explain the mechanisms of transnational projects and present how the change of communication towards purely virtual mode may affect the development of skills needed in effective project collaboration and transcultural communication. The discussion is based on the review of the available literature on the challenges of global project teams, the instrumental case study combined with the analysis of statistical data on organisations' participation in European Strategic Partnerships within Erasmus+ Programme and authors' experience gained through participant observation of transnational meetings conducted in the period of 2018-2020. Project partners' participation in face-to-face meetings fosters their personal development and contributes to effective transnational collaboration. The great variety of cognitive, personal, social and communicational skills that face-to-face meetings elicit, and thus contribute to the quality of transnational project team collaboration in the multicultural environment depend on physical presence and interaction of partners. Replacing real presence of project partners with their virtual attendance reduces chances for these skills to be developed and thus may negatively influence the quality of the project collaboration. Taking into account the value that the real presence of project partners brings to international partnerships as well as the development of project team members, it is worth considering, as soon as the pandemic situation allows it, returning to planning and organizing face-to-face international partnership meetings.

Keywords: strategic partnerships, virtual teams, pandemic, transnational meetings, intercultural communication, sustainable development

JEL Codes: F69, O15, O22, Z19

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1. Introduction

The lockdown and social distancing, which are the consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, have highlighted the importance of social contacts. It is not only the question of relationships with family, friends and collaborators. In the age when the whole world has become a global village thanks to the ease of travelling, we miss social contacts that extend far beyond our local community or culture. Given the fact that virtual contacts are becoming increasingly routine, we are beginning to appreciate the value of journeys involving encounters with other cultures in face-to-face contacts. This realisation can be observed in all aspects of our lives: from tourism to international collaboration. All these activities have one thing in common: willingness to learn from other people. For ages philosophers, like Aristotle (Steel & Primavesi, 2012), psychologists and sociologists pointed out that cognition was the driving force of human activity. From the epistemological perspective, the more contacts with various people, the better, wider and deeper our learning can be. It is especially important for professionals, who are often in search for the most optimal solutions, taking into account various perspectives, respecting diverse points of view and accepting different working styles in the process of solving a problem. This combination of factors in professional work is the basis for the idea of transnational, project-based work. The aim of the article is to indicate the risks posed to skills development in the area of transnational, partnership collaboration resulting from replacing face-to-face meetings of project partners with virtual ones, as a result of restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Project based collaboration and Strategic Partnerships

Projects existed long before project management was defined as a profession. In 2500 BC the pharaohs of Egypt built the pyramids. Another example of an engineering project is the Great Wall of China, most of which was completed in the eraly 3rd century BC. Projects have always accompanied the development of human civilisation, although the history of project management is relatively new, with roots in the beginnings of the 20th century. There are numerous definitions of a project. Generally, a project can be defined as a "a sequence of unique, complex, and connected activities that have one goal or purpose and that must be completed by a specific time, within budget, and according to specification" (Wysocki, 2014, p. 4) or as "a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result" (*Project Management Institute*, 2013, p. 3). Although projects may involve a single individual, they are more productive when a group of collaborators is working on the problem.

The continuing process of European integration and rapid globalisation have been important drivers of growing collaboration between organisations from different regions and countries. The European Union supports transnational collaboration and provides funds for establishing strategic partnerships. "They are called 'strategic' because they aim to contribute to the achievement of policy priorities and have a wider impact, they break new ground, they bring different areas together, they promote change for the better" (European Commission, 2015, p. 6).

This article is based on the analysis of educational projects conducted within the Erasmus+ Programme in the period 2014-2020. Participation in the programme is open to schools, universities, associations, foundations, employers' organizations, entities involved in activities directed at social groups in need, as well as analytical centres and research institutes. Projects are implemented by strategic partnerships consisting of institutions from at least three different countries entitled to participate, so called programme countries. These include all member states of the European Union and 7 non-EU countries: North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey, Serbia, Great Britain. As defined by the European Commission "strategic partnerships aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level" (European Commission, 2020, p. 100). They range "from simple cooperation projects between small scale organisations (like schools or informal groups of young people) to rather sophisticated and large-scale projects focusing on the development and exchange of innovative outputs in all fields of education, training and youth" (European Commission, 2020, p. 122). The European Commission recommends that strategic partnerships should be composed of diverse organisations contributing their experience and know-how in specific fields, addressed by the project. A variety of organisations involved in a partnership and their complementary expertise are likely to lead to achieving high quality project results and thus more effectively respond to problems important for the EU countries. The duration of such projects ranges from 6 to 36 months, based on the objective of the project and on the type of activities planned over time. Partners in the partnership are led by the applicant organisation. By the virtue of the mandate signed by all partners, the applicant organisation is authorised to represent the partnership during project implementation.

Strategic partnerships supporting innovation can receive funds to develop intellectual outputs that are tangible deliverables of the project (such as curricula, pedagogical and youth work materials, open educational resources, IT tools, analyses, studies, peer-learning methods, etc.). Another important category of eligible activities are 'Transnational Project Meetings', which are face-to-face meetings between project partners, organised for implementation and coordination purposes (European Commission, 2020). The meetings are typically organised in 3-6 months intervals with physical participation of all partners' representatives and each time hosted by a different partner organisation.

3. Skills in intercultural management

The variety of specialisations and cultural backgrounds that partners contribute to a strategic partnership ensures that a wide scope of aspects and perspectives can be taken into account during project work. On the other hand, managing international projects conducted by partners located in remote parts of the world, often in different time-zones, speaking different languages and following local calendars of cultural or religious festivals is likely to present numerous challenges. Successful managers of international partnerships are aware of these challenges and are able to benefit from the intercultural dimension of their project teams. Binder (2007, p. 24) states that "global project managers need to recognise how different attitudes, beliefs, behavioural norms and basic assumptions and values can influence collaboration among team members coming from multiple countries, and learn how to adapt their leadership style to the different cultures involved in the project". Work in intercultural environments also requires good communication skills. Jens Allwood (2013, pp. 34-35) emphasizes the importance of being cautious about stereotyping and generalizing based on cultural background. Cultural differences may impact the way the same communication is understood by project members coming from various countries. This is why it is clear that in addition to knowledge of the field, various skills are required from project team members to work successfully in the project environment, including management, teaching and communication skills.

According to Proctor and Dutta (1995, p. 18), skills can be defined as "goal-directed, well-organized behaviour that people acquire through practice". Of the many existing skills models, the one proposed by Kantambu Latting and Ramsey (2005) focuses on intergroup competences and is based on the approach involving three categories of skills: self-related, interpersonal (based on relations), contextual (building on critical thinking and consciousness) and organizational. Following this approach, the authors of this article identified four categories of skills that are crucial in educational projects, since they are related to four main spheres of interest regarding project work: cognitive, personal, social and communication skills. It is also possible to distinguish intercultural skills, but in this case, culture was not treated as a separate category, as it is inherently associated with international cooperation and is manifested in all other skills. The typology is shown in

Table 1. Typology of skills required in project-based work environment of international partnerships

Cognitive skills	Personal skills	Social skills	Communication skills
• Getting to know cultures in their own environment • Learning nonverbal signs • Learning cultural-dependent nonverbal signs • Peer learning • Ability to contextualize theoretical knowledge • Ability to put theory into practice	• Long distance planning • Self-organization (self – management) • Ability to divide the work between personal and team work • Team management • Holistic approach to working • Responsibility for the working environment • Focusing on tasks • Self-awareness, self-esteem • Pursuing innovation	• Ability to negotiate • Assertiveness • Empathy and ability to recognize needs of others • Responsibility for the team in teamwork • Ability to build the network • Understanding of working and living style of others	• Contextualization of communication • Nonverbal communication • Communication with other cultures • Participation in intercultural dialogue • Fostering and eliciting various standpoints

Source: own study on the basis of Kantambu Latting and Ramsey (2005).

Table 1 and further referred to in Table 4, where specific skills developed in the process of preparing and participating in transnational meetings are presented.

The skills mentioned above play an important role not only in joint preparation of projects' intellectual outputs, but also in project management, including its important aspect related to transnational meetings.

4. Virtualisation of project work

The growth in Internet accessibility, combined with the rapid development of ICT[1] and a simultaneous decline in the cost of communication encourage organisations to shift towards increased virtual work and implementation of global projects with other partners. This is achieved by means of global virtual teams, which can be defined as "teams comprised of individuals from various geographic locations and/or cultural backgrounds who rely on communication technology to interact with one another to some degree" (Carter et al., 2014, p. 225). Teams involved in transnational partnerships within EU Programmes are not entirely virtual, because, apart from virtual work, they also need to meet face to face to exchange experiences, ideas and build upon opportunities that physical presence

[1] Information and communications technology.

and interaction with members from other countries and cultures offer. This form of collaboration can be described as hybrid teams, which use a combination of computer-mediated and face-to-face communication, depending on which one serves better to achieve their goals (Griffith, Sawyer, & Neale, 2003). Face-to-face transnational meetings are embedded in this type of intercultural and European cooperation between various types of organisations from multiple countries. They have a positive impact on the exchange of knowledge, provide opportunities for learning about other cultures as well as experiencing and promoting European values and ideas. Physical presence of partners help to manage projects in a more efficient way. According to Rita Mulcahy the lack of face-to-face meetings of team mambers results in the possibility of increased conflicts, has a negative impact on the productivity of project activities, but also influences other factors that may cause changes in the schedule and increase of project costs (Mulcahy, 2005).

5. Methods

The considerations presented in the article are based on the review of the available literature on the challenges of global project teams, instrumental case studies (Langley & Royer, 2006) and the analysis of statistical data concerning participation in European Strategic Partnerships between 2014-2018 (latest available data). Case studies reviewed by the authors include a purposeful sample of international projects implemented between 2014-2020 by Strategic Partnerships within the Erasmus+ Programme and describe experiences gained through participant observation of 23 transnational meetings held in 2018-2020. The authors analysed the way face-to-face meetings enabled participants to develop skills that are important for transnational project collaboration in the field of education and sustainable development. The skills mentioned above are practised during face-to-face meetings, which involve a lot of communication, exchange of knowledge as well as multicultural contacts, particularly in international project teams. The main problem is discussed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when most project work, including partner meetings, is conducted online. While this is definitely a more cost-effective option, it brings risks to global projects based on transnational collaboration and exchange of people, ideas and know-how. The COVID-19 pandemic is a relatively recent phenomenon. The literature so far lacks an overview of its possible impact on the social aspects of international cooperation, especially regarding threats to sustainable development projects.

6. Results

6.1. Growing interest in partnership transnational cooperation

The analysis of available statistical data related to international projects carried out by Strategic Partnerships within the Erasmus+ Programme (Key Action 2) from its start in 2014 until 2018 (latest available data) shows an increasing trend in the number of such partnerships. One key element in this form of collaboration is the transnational exchange based on short-time mobility of the staff involved. This form of international collaboration between organisations from multiple countries attracts more organisations each year in Europe, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. International projects carried out by strategic partnerships within the Erasmus+ Programme (KA2)

Year	Projects contracted		Organisations participating		Organisations participating as Coordinators		Organisations participating as Partners	
	Total	Poland	Total	Poland	Total	Poland	Total	Poland
2014	1732	123	9 823	no data available	1732	123	no data available	no data available
2015	1910	143	10 988	632	1910	143	9 078	489
2016	2374	200	13 164	777	2374	200	10 790	577
2017	2842	225	15 538	1053	2842	225	12 696	828
2018	3662	271	18 505	1287	3662	271	14 843	1016

Source: based on Erasmus+ Statistics, https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics_en

In 2018, in all of Europe over twice as many projects submitted by KA2 Strategic Partnerships were contracted as in 2014 – the starting year or the Erasmus+ Programme. For projects contracted in Poland the growth is even higher and amounts to 120%. In total, 88% more organisations were involved in Strategic Partnerships under the Erasmus+ programme in 2018 than in 2014. Details about participating organisations per country are available starting from 2015. Between 2015 and 2018, the number of Polish organisations participating in Strategic Partnerships conducting Erasmus+ KA2 projects grew by 104%. The growing trend can be observed regardless of whether organisations play the role of a coordinator or that of a partner.

The thematic scope of projects undertaken by organisations participating in Erasmus+ is wide. The authors have selected 7 Strategic Partnerships within the

Erasmus+ Programme, in the field of education, which meet the following criteria: focus on tourism and sustainable development, with the participation of at least one organization from Poland, representing both finished projects as well as ongoing ones. In the case of finished projects, the additional criterion was the label of a success story or a good practice awarded by the European Commission. The projects, with their partnerships, aims and further reference, are presented in Table 3.

The above sample of Erasmus+ projects involved 45 organisations from 18 countries and included over 25 face-to-face transnational meetings. The possibility of organising face-to-face meetings, which are an inherent part of this type of collaboration, without the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 lockdown, contributed to the success of transnational collaboration and made it possible to achieve high quality results.

6.2. Impact of the pandemic on transnational project meetings

Globalisation of project work accompanied by rapid development of supportive ICT increasingly prompts project teams to opt for virtual collaboration. The prospect of replacing face-to-face meetings with virtual ones has obvious economic benefits. It was also a perfect solution given the lockdown restrictions during the pandemic making it impossible to hold face-to-face meetings of project partners. Under the circumstances, shifting towards virtual meetings was inevitable and enabled project teams to continue project work. However, long-term replacement of face-to-face meetings with on-line communication may pose a serious threat to the added value that physical presence and teamwork bring to EU transnational projects and skills development of their team members.

Based on observations made while attending transnational project meetings before the outbreak of the pandemic and comparing them with online project meetings organised after March 2020, the authors conclude that the latter format may make it difficult for project team members to develop numerous skills necessary for successful project collaboration. The analysis addressed the main aspects of project team meetings, which are crucial in project management planning and are associated with the nature of international projects (like e.g. time or geographical coverage). Selected aspects of face-to-face and virtual meetings were compared. In the next step, the authors focused their attention on skills that are developed particularly during face-to-face meetings and whose development is severely limited during online meetings. These skills are important for

Table 3. Selected international projects implemented between 2014-2020 by Strategic Partnerships within the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of education, focused on tourism and sustainable development

Title	Participating countries	Number of organisations in the partnership	Project goal	Project status	Awards by European Commission	Link
TRY: TRansition Youth – sustainable development and local entrepreneurship (Transnational Youth Initiative)	Spain, Poland, Italy	3	The main aim of the project was to prepare youth groups for being engaged in local society activities, and a practical training of local entrepreneurship based on the rules of sustainable development.	finished	success story & good practice	http://try.4youth.pl/
ecoPROFESSION – Strategic Partnership for adjusting systems of vocational education to the challenges of the green economy	Germany, Italy, Poland	8	The partnership's aim was to elaborate innovative attitudes, curricula and apprenticeship programs for 3 occupations key for the partnership: food production, building services, renewable energy sources, in 3 language versions.	finished	good practice	https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2015-1-PL01-KA202-017172
Youth Marketing Policy Makers for Sustainable Development	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, FYR of Macedonia, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia	11	To increase the creativity of young people and to contribute to developing the capabilities of civil society organizations in the youth field through gaining marketing management knowledge about the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental benefits.	finished	success story & good practice	http://youmust.org/index.html resultsavailableat:https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/573098-EPP-1-2016-1-MK-EPPKA2-CBY-AC-PALA

Table 3 – cont.

Title	Participating countries	Number of organisations in the partnership	Project goal	Project status	Awards by European Commission	Link
Sustainable Consumption and Production in Social Life	Estonia, Italy, Poland, Romania, Turkey	5	The project's objective was to raise students' awareness of sustainable consumption and production in social life.	finished	success story & good practice	http://sustainableconsumptionandproduction.weebly.com/
HI-GLOBE – Highlighting the Potential of English Language Learning for Global Education Purposes	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Turkey	6	The objective of the HI-GLOBE project is to enhance the potential of English-language learning for Global Educational purposes.	ongoing	–	http://www.hi-globe.eu/
A Step forward in Wellbeing in the field of Adult Education – WELLNESS2	Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Italy, Poland	6	The project focuses on ensuring wellbeing in the learning environment in adult education. Wellbeing of learners, teachers and training managers is the basis for effective teaching and learning.	ongoing	–	www.projectwellness.eu
Access IT: Innovation for Accessible Tourism in Natural and Rural Areas	Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Spain	6	The project aims to build capacity of EU tourism SMEs operating in natural and rural areas to bridge accessibility gaps through stakeholder co-design of innovative solutions for tourism products for customers with specific access requirements.	ongoing	–	http://accessitpro.eu/

Source: Erasmus+ Project Results Platform, https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/

Table 4. Aspects of transnational partner meetings affected by the pandemic and its impact on skills development

Selected aspects of transnational meetings	Situation before the pandemic	Situation during the pandemic	Skills developed in the process of face-to-face meetings rather than during virtual events
Preparation			
Time	• Date of the meeting usually announced several months in advance to enable all partners to find a suitable two-day slot	• Requires less advance notice as it is easier for partners to book 1-4 hours than two working days plus travel, as is the case in face-to-face meetings • Different time-zones of participants need to be taken into account	• Long distance planning • Ability to negotiate • Assertiveness
Frequency	• On average there are four partnership meetings in a two year project. The meetings are held in approx. six-months intervals	• Can be made the same day, but partners need to confirm their availability owing to health and organizational risks resulting from the pandemic.	• Long distance planning • Self-organization • Ability to divide the work between individual work and teamwork
Geographical coverage	• Each meeting is usually organized by a different partner in the partnership and takes place in a different country	• Irrelevant as the meeting is held online	• Contextualization of communication
Logistics	• Obligations of the host: preparations of the venue and accommodation infrastructure • Obligations of the participants: travel arrangements	• Obligations of the host: preparations of communication platform that will be used for the meeting and granting access to all participants • Obligations of the participants: equipment to conduct the on-line meeting (computer, internet access, earphones etc.)	• Team management skills • Self-organization • Holistic approach to working • Planning of wellbeing in team work (ability of recognizing the others' needs)
The actual meeting			
Way of conduct	• Hosted by one of the partner organizations in its country	• Online with the use of ICT	• Responsibility for the working environment
Duration	• Typically two working days plus travel time	• Agenda often shortened to one day (usually three-five hours)	• Focusing on tasks • Knowledge of the working style used in different cultures
Social aspect	• All partners meet in person	• Virtual presence	• Non-verbal communication, ability to communicate outside the personal comfort zone. • Ability of networking for cooperation

Table 4 – cont.

Selected aspects of transnational meetings	Situation before the pandemic	Situation during the pandemic	Skills developed in the process of face-to-face meetings rather than during virtual events
Cultural aspects	• Partners need to use non-verbal communication. They are learning to read face expressions – in addition to speech, they also pay attention to the behaviour of other partners • Partners observe the hosts acting in their home-culture environment	• Communication is largely limited to verbal communication • The partners do not have an opportunity to observe anyone in the home-culture environment. This affects the process of communication • Partners are focusing on understanding words, not people	• Non-verbal communication • Cognition of cultural-dependent nonverbal communication • Contacting other cultures • Intercultural dialogue • Holistic approach to people in the team-working • Cognition of cultures in their real environment
Focus of participants	• Advance planning, travel to the meeting place and being together with all participants in the same venue is conducive to focus entirely on the planned agenda	• Working from home, which in many countries is the recommended or even expected option, requires people to be able to divide attention, which can be distracted with aspects not related to the ongoing meeting, such as taking care of other household members or unexpected issues of every-day life	• Focusing on tasks • Responsibility for the group you work with
Quality of communication	• Direct communication between partners in the working language of the project (in most cases in English) • Personal interaction	• Dependent on the quality of the Internet connection and the participants' equipment. • Interaction is difficult	• Non-verbal communication (mutual understanding) • Ability to contextualise communication • Networking building • Peer learning
Innovation	• Openness, direct presentation and brainstorming of new ideas	• ICT may limit the exchange of ideas and discussions with the involvement of all participants	• Pursuing innovation • Fostering and eliciting various standpoints • Assertiveness • Nonverbal communication and perception of nonverbal signals
Personal visits to local organisations related to the project subject	• Fully possible and thus providing an opportunity to exchange experiences, good practices and know-how between the countries	• Impossible	• Ability of contextualise the work planned in theoretical way • Ability to put the theory into praxis • Knowledge of working style of institutions in other cultural environment
Social activities	• Social meetings apart from the work (lunches, dinners, trips, etc.)	• Meetings limited strictly to work-related aspects	• Understanding of working and living style of others • Holistic approach to the process of cooperation

Source: own study.

successful project collaboration and for the promotion of values underlying the Erasmus+ Programme: mobility of people, thoughts and ideas. The results of the analysis are summarised in Table 4. It contains a list of skills that can be acquired or developed by attending face-to-face meetings, skills which are less likely to be used during virtual meetings. The table is divided into two main sections that correspond to the major phases of project work regarding communication in the form of transnational meetings.

The first phase is the meeting preparation. It requires mainly personal and social skills (see Table 1). Before the pandemic, the host of a face-to-face meeting was mostly occupied with on-site preparation, but all partners had to plan their trip, accommodation, take part in the planning of meeting activities, while the amount of effort required to prepare an online meeting is comparatively minimal. The planning of a face-to-face meeting involves more situations that require partners to reach a compromise, exercise assertiveness and be able to recognize the needs of others.

The second phase corresponds to what happens during the meeting itself. Because of the variety of matters that arise during meetings, there are many different skills that can be developed in the process of direct communication between people. Probably the most important factor is the variety of ways in which participants can communicate. Apart from the possibility of practice language skills, which is also present in online communication, the overall context, including nonverbal communication, plays an important role. Online meetings focus on verbal messaging, at the expense of gestures and face expressions, which are also very important in multinational partnerships and can be noticed only during a face-to-face meeting. The complexity of communication involves other groups of skills: personal, social and cognitive ones.

What is also important from the multicultural perspective is the ability to put communication and the working process in the cultural context. During a virtual meeting partners usually limit themselves to using the project working language, which is mostly English, while in direct contacts they are able to use other languages and experience non-verbal communication used in other cultures. This is extremely important for establishing common space for teamwork that accommodates different working styles. This aspect of transcultural communication is almost impossible to be developed without the partners' physical presence.

Of course, Table 4 does not include all skills that can be developed during face-to-face meetings, such as responding to a crisis situation or a conflict, but is shows the most common ones that could be observed by the authors.

7. Discussion and conclusions

Globalization has many consequences, not only of an economic nature. One of them is the ease and speed with which problems and crises spread across the globe, which requires transnational and supra-cultural action. It is for this reason that initiatives such as Erasmus+, one of EU's flagship programmes are so important.

European organisations tend to show a growing interest in becoming actively involved in transnational Strategic Partnerships offered under the Erasmus+ Programme. Between 2014 and 2018 the number of KA2 strategic partnership projects contracted in Europe more than doubled. One of the principles of the programme is the exchange of people, cultures, ideas and thoughts (European Commission, 2020). The physical mobility of staff involved in the projects constitutes a cornerstone of this kind of international collaboration. The idea of exchanging people and thoughts, however, involves the need to develop skills in intercultural communication. In the era of globalization, it is not possible to have intensive development without international cooperation. This in turn requires taking into account diverse cultural environments of participating partners, especially regarding communication and mutual expectations (Abudi, 2013).

The global crisis caused by the COVID-19 epidemic has forced people to maintain social distancing and shift towards virtual communication. Thanks to the easy access to information and communication technologies, transnational projects have been able to continue their work but entirely virtually. However, the widespread virtualisation of communication within transnational strategic partnerships has created a serious risk to the value that physical presence of project partners brings to EU projects. Face-to-face meetings, involving personal contacts and direct exchange of ideas between project partners, are a great opportunity to build good relations, establish trust and mutual understanding between project partners from geographically and culturally diverse areas. That added value of face-to-face meetings can hardly be achieved in the case of virtual meetings. Preparation and participation in face-to-face transnational project meetings is conducive to the development of participants' cognitive, personal, social and communicational skills. Replacing physical presence of project partners with their virtual attendence limits the opportunities for these skills to be developed and thus may negatively influence the quality of project collaboration (Mulcahy, 2005, p. 280). Online communication inhibits the development of a number of competences necessary not only for intercultural dialogue, but also for efficient management of projects created by international teams. This is particularly important given the fact that project results should be universal enough to enable their implementation in any European country or outside of Europe. International partnerships that focus on transculturalism and target global issues, like tourism or sustainable development, need to complement their virtual collaboration with the possibility of project partners meeting physically in order to develop deliverables in the physical environment of transnational space; otherwise, results will only be created in the artificial space of virtual reality.

Although the transition to the virtual sphere reduces costs and thus may be a tempting long-term solution for many organisations even after the pandemic is over, the experience of recent years shows that in our activities, productivity should increasingly give way to the quality of transnational collaboration. That is why, as soon as possible, we should revive the idea of direct cooperation in face-to-face meetings, even if it requires the allocation of funds to cover travelling expenses. One should not underestimate the variety of cognitive, personal, social and communicational skills that face-to-face meetings activate, thus contributing to the quality of transnational project team collaboration.

In the light of the above, it seems useful to continue the research how the long-term shift from face-to-face transnational meetings to virtual ones may affect the quality of results implemented by European partnerships.

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Transnarodowe spotkania partnerskie w obliczu pandemii na przykładzie Partnerstw Strategicznych realizujących międzynarodowe projekty

Streszczenie. W czasie pandemii COVID-19 praca zespołowa o charakterze projektowym uległa zmianie. Spotkania współpracowników zostały przeniesione do rzeczywistości wirtualnej, co wymusiło zmianę stylu komunikowania się w partnerstwach. Celem artykułu jest wskazanie zagrożeń, z perspektywy rozwoju umiejętności zespołu projektowego w obszarze ponadnarodowej współpracy projektowej, wynikających z konieczności narzuconego przez pandemię COVID-19 zastąpienia rzeczywistych spotkań mobilnością wirtualną. Autorzy artykułu wyjaśniają mechanizmy międzynarodowych projektów partnerskich i prezentują, w jaki sposób pełna wirtualizacja komunikacji może wpłynąć na rozwój umiejętności ważnych z punktu widzenia międzynarodowej współpracy i komunikacji. Rozważania przedstawione w artykule opierają się na przeglądzie literatury poświęconej wyzwaniom globalnych zespołów projektowych, instrumentalnym studium przypadku, analizie statystycznej aktywności Partnerstw Strategicznych na przykładzie unijnego programu Erasmus+ oraz doświadczeniach autorów zebranych z wykorzystaniem metody obserwacji uczestniczącej podczas spotkań międzynarodowych przeprowadzonych w latach 2018-2020. Uczestnictwo partnerów projektowych w realnych spotkaniach sprzyja ich rozwojowi osobistemu i przyczynia się do efektywnej współpracy ponadnarodowej. Zastąpienie rzeczywistego uczestnictwa partnerów w spotkaniach ich wirtualną obecnością ogranicza szanse na rozwój wielu umiejętności poznawczych, osobistych, społecznych i komunikacyjnych uczestników międzynarodowych zespołów projektowych, a tym samym może negatywnie wpłynąć na jakość współpracy. Biorąc pod uwagę wartość, jaką realna obecność partnerów projektu wnosi do międzynarodowych part-

nerstw, oraz jej wpływ na rozwój członków zespołów projektowych, warto rozważyć powrót do planowania i organizacji spotkań partnerstw międzynarodowych w realnej rzeczywistości, kiedy tylko sytuacja związana z pandemią na to pozwoli.

Słowa kluczowe: partnerstwa strategiczne, wirtualne zespoły, pandemia, spotkania transnarodowe, komunikacja międzykulturowa, zrównoważony rozwój

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A successive change in the curriculum for sustainable public administration

Abstract. Sustainable development is considered to be one of the most important issues for the future, which is also mirrored in the growing interest in sustainable development in higher education. The change project reported in this article is an example of the efforts made to incorporate sustainability in higher education. The aim of the change project is twofold: the first one is to revise the syllabuses, reference literature, materials, and examinations for courses in Public Administration, so that every course in some way addresses sustainable development. By making sustainable development an integral part of all teaching, the change project highlights how different aspects of sustainability issues are relevant in different contexts. There are three reasons why sustainable development should be explicitly present in all teaching: education for sustainability is important to the university; sustainability is relevant especially for students in Public Administration; and to get all students engaged, education for sustainability requires a pedagogical framework. The second aim of the change project is to lay out the underlying pedagogical framework, which is based on principles found in pedagogical, psychological, and organizational theories. In this successive, integrative approach, the repeated occurrence of sustainability themes in many courses is considered to be a better option than having a single thematic course. In the first phase of the project, during the academic year 2019-2020, three courses were revised to include aspects of sustainability in relation to concepts central to the course.

Keywords: education, curriculum, education for sustainable development, sustainable development in higher education, public administration

JEL Codes: H83, Q01

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1. Introduction

Sustainable development is considered to be one of the most important issues for the future. This is evidenced by the growing interest in sustainable development in higher education. A recent example is the Finnish cooperation for universities, known as Unifi, which published 12 theses on Sustainable Development and Responsibility in November 2020. Thesis no. 4 states: *'Studies in sustainable development are part of all degrees and the continuous learning offered'* (*Theses on sustainable development and responsibility*, 2020). Already in 2011 more than 1400 universities worldwide had signed declarations on sustainability in higher education, but several studies show those commitments have not really been implemented (Grindsted, 2011, p. 29). A challenging issue concerning these declarations is the lack of incentive structures (Grindsted, 2011, p. 29) and the belief that a plan is an action, i.e. that implementation comes by itself.

One of the efforts aimed at improving the conditions for education on sustainable development in higher education is the Regional Teachers' Course on Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education, offered by the Baltic University Programme (www.balticuniv.uu.se). The Baltic University Programme is one of the largest university cooperations in the world, with about 90 participating universities in the Baltic Sea Region. The Regional Teachers' Course has been organized three times, with the last edition held in the academic year 2019-2020, but there were also some predecessors (see Suomalainen, 2016). One of the central matters in the course, which aims at re-thinking the pedagogy for implementing education for sustainable development is the idea of a change project. Each participant plans and performs a project related to their teaching, where something is changed in a more sustainable direction. Examples of earlier change projects can be found in several issues of *Studia Periegetica* (2018/3(23), 2017/1(17) and 2016/1(15)).

This article describes one of the change projects from the Regional Teachers' Course 2019-2020. In this particular change project the aim is to revise the syllabuses, reference literature, materials, and examinations for courses in Public Administration at Åbo Akademi University so that every course in some way addresses sustainable development. Future civil servants and administrators in the public sector must, regardless of their own personal interests, be prepared to handle questions concerning sustainable development. The public sector and its actors are important players in many aspects of the implementation of sustainable development and the inclusion of sustainable development in education for public administration offers considerable potential benefits. Education in public administration should provide tools for working with Sustainable Development Goals (Target #4.7)[1], even for students who are not acquainted with their underlying details. Since not all students are interested in sustainability issues, one of the problems addressed in this article is how to teach in the face of such reluctance. For the sake of clarification for the purpose of this article sustainable development is understood in the light of prevailing definitions including both ecologic, economic and societal sustainability (Rusinko, 2010, p. 251), with technological or political dimensions added at some points.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: the next section presents the aim of the change project, with its detailed description. The project actions and their underlying pedagogical framework are presented and discussed in two subsequent sections, which are followed by a few conclusions.

2. The aim of the change project

The aim of this change project is to revise the syllabuses, reference literature, materials, and examinations for courses in Public Administration at Åbo Akademi University so that every course in some way addresses sustainable development.

The change project is mainly targeted at students attending courses in Public Administration at Åbo Akademi University. A secondary target audience includes teachers, both in Public Administration and related programmes, for whom the project can serve as a model of how the concept of sustainable development can be implemented in teaching.

The **expected outcomes** of the change project are twofold:

– sustainable development is explicitly featured in the course syllabuses as part of the normal content, because questions concerning sustainable development are to be found everywhere, if one just agrees to see them.

– the pedagogical framework underlying the change project is clearly laid out.

The expected long term **result** of the change project: students will have learned how to facilitate the implementation of sustainable development goals, how to lead change towards sustainable development goals and how to work with strategies for sustainable development goals.

There are three **reasons why** sustainable development should be explicitly featured in the courses. First of all, to show why education for sustainability is important to the university. Secondly, to make it clear why sustainability is relevant

[1] For more information about the Sustainable Development Goals and specific targets, see https://sdgs.un.org/goals

for students of Public Administration. Thirdly, to highlight the fact that education for sustainability requires a pedagogical framework.

The **first reason** can be described in terms of what *formal, immediate, applied* and *potential* values the project will bring or add to the university (building on the value creation model by Wenger, Trayner, & der Laat, 2011). The project has a **formal** value (not included in the model): it helps the university fulfil its strategy for the years 2021-2030, which features sustainability as a central part of its vision for 2030: *'Åbo Akademi University plays a significant role in international research and education for the benefit of a sound and sustainable living environment, especially within the shared Baltic Sea region.* [...] *The research contributes to resolving social challenges and meeting the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations.'*

The project has **immediate and realised** values in the form of strengthened knowledge and new insights for the students. Changed practices in lectures, materials and approaches as well as the sharing of project experiences with other university teachers can be regarded as **applied** values of the project. Its **potential** long-term value is a better, more sustainable world, when the model has spread to the whole university and all graduates enter the world outside equipped with their knowledge of sustainable development.

As regards the **second reason**, the public sector and its actors are important players in many aspects of the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (*Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015), towards to a more sustainable future. Although the 17 global goals are broken down into 169 targets and 230 indicators (Sustainable Development Goals, 2015) and should be *'workable and understandable'* (Kofi Annan in Kroll, 2015, p. 9), many of them are still ambiguous, at least at a local level. Public responsibility regarding, say, climate action is a real challenge, especially at local level, and the need for both innovation and implementation is considerable.

There are many sustainability issues in the public sphere. The Finnish work with the Agenda 2030 focuses on a *'carbon-neutral and resource-wise Finland'* but also on a *'non-discriminating, equal and highly skilled Finland'* (*Government Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2017). According to a brand new report from the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Change on transition strategies, the key challenges in Finland relate to *'attitudes and behavioral changes needed especially related to mobility, change towards more plant based diet and consumption patterns in general; role of political governance; aging population and subsequent change in population structure; the development of Finnish forests (and soil) and their role as carbon sinks; technological development and their availability; uncertainties related to (bio-)CCS technologies; economic structural changes; agricultural sector; peat lands and peat use; and new district heat sourcing'* (*Long-Term Strategies for Climate Change*, 2020, p. 12).

Further, there are a lot of other issues concerning sustainability in Finland, which are not part of the Finnish government's plans associated with the Agenda 2030. Such issues, highly relevant for the (local) public administration in Finland and its sustainable development, include, for example, sustainability of public economics, the negative effects of urbanization – or how to sustainably manage administration and services for 'those who were left behind' in rural areas, and sustainability in managing public health issues, plagued first and foremost by diseases of affluence. Other relevant issues include (local) decision-making or how to get (local) decision-makers to think in longer terms about issues that are not of their primary concern (Koskimaa & Raunio, 2020).

If students of Public Administration do not encounter issues related to sustainability during their education and if they do not see how the core knowledge in Public Administration can be used to handle such questions, they will graduate with a big gap between their expectations about the world and the actual reality. In particular, the project addresses the following Sustainable Development Goals: #4 Quality Education, #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, #12 Responsible Consumption and Production, #13 Climate Action and #16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, but administrative concepts, such as the implementation and reasonable use of common resources, can easily be shown as relevant for all 17 goals.

The **third reason** has to do with the importance of a pedagogical framework underlying education for sustainability.

To be able to work in the 21st century, students of public administration must be able to handle sustainability issues, regardless of their own interest in the topic, which is where education for sustainability becomes relevant. Sustainable development is featured in Finnish higher education, in the form of entire programmes and within separate courses (see Karvinen et al., 2015). Still, education for sustainable development in higher education often seems to consist of courses *by* the interested, *for* the interested. That is a good starting point but the fact that *it takes a special interest* may result in a lot of students being left outside. It is unclear whether the majority of students have found their own interests in sustainable development yet. Even though courses build on the broader comprehension of sustainable development (see Ehrström, Wolff, & Sjöblom, 2016), and the way sustainability issues are presented in educational materials has changed over time (Andersson, Öhman, & Östman, 2011), many students (still) understand sustainability in its narrow sense, i.e. as environmental education (see Jickling & Wals, 2007). What is required, then, is a more generally oriented approach.

University teaching does not usually change in giant leaps. The digital leap has been on the agenda for more than 15 years but one can get the impression that it had not really happened until the corona pandemic crises in the Spring of 2020, when most of the education activity moved online as a necessity, not as a voluntary development. Those who had previously used digital forms of teaching will probably remember the corona period differently than those who had less than a week to abruptly find out which tools to use, how to rethink exams and how to reach out to students. There is no reason to believe that a change towards education for sustainability should work differently than any other teaching development processes at universities. University teaching, as well as all other teaching, occurs in a field of institutional complexity with several competing logics (Gullberg & Svensson, 2020). Consequently, sustainability in higher education can be integrated either in a top-down or bottom-up manner (Gontar, 2018, pp. 24-25). The situation can be illustrated in the form of a matrix created by Cathy Rusinko (2010, p. 253), with two dimensions (broad or narrow focus in existing or new structures) forming four alternatives for delivery: integration into existing courses, integration into common core requirements, creation of new courses/programmes or creation of new cross-disciplinary courses/programmes (see also Khalaim & Tambovceva, 2018, p. 81 for an implementation of the matrix). It has also become clear that it is hard to institutionalize sustainability in the higher education sector (Junyent & Geli de Ciurana, 2008, p. 764), as externally triggered change policies often result in resistance from within (Jickling & Wals, 2007, p. 6; Lidgren, Rodhe, & Huisingh, 2006, p. 798).

The discussion about education for sustainable development often emphasizes the need for new methods that foster critical thinking (see Jetoo, 2018, p. 50; Nagoya Declaration, 2014), social learning or other forms of collaboration (Jetoo, 2018; Lidgren, Rodhe, & Huisingh, 2006, p. 805), active learning techniques (Jetoo, 2018, p. 44; Kostyuchenko & Smolennikov, 2018, p. 12), problem-solving capacities (Khalaim & Tambovceva, 2018, p. 88), multi- or interdisciplinarity (Ehrström, Wolff, & Sjöblom, 2016; Lidgren, Rodhe, & Huisingh, 2006, p. 805; Rusinko, 2010), learning for social transformation (Urenje & Rumjaun, 2017, p. 497), challenge-based learning (Gontar, 2018), new thinking (Urenje & Rumjaun, 2017, p. 491) and innovation (Kaaronen, 2016, p. 1333).

All novelties are associated with potential drawbacks. Sometimes the form of a given activity overshadows the topic making students more likely to remember how it made them feel, but not what it was about (see Taylor & Marienau, 2016, p. 19). Some activities seem to be an end in themselves. Social learning is frequently praised, which might create the expectation that activating learning methods by default should result in more critically thinking individuals and more sustainable thinking. If social learning in a short time would give incredible results, this should give a significantly increased quality of the student population in Finland, as the basic education in Finland have stressed collaborative learning for quite a while (*New national core curriculum…*, 2016). One might, therefore, question whether using new methods is the best or the only way forward.

It might also be overly optimistic to believe that in the future people will be more knowledgeable – but people may know more about certain topics if they are included in the curriculum. In the future people should consider sustainability as normal learning content, in the same way that human rights, gender issues and online safety have become standard topics one is expected to learn about. To reach this state of normalization regarding sustainable development, repeated occurrence in many courses might be more important than single thematic courses, regardless of how effective their particular methods are. This integrative principle, referred to as normalization, has been the object of debate in the context of education for sustainable development. It has been considered important that sustainability in higher education should not be introduced by merely adding a 'green aspect' to the existing curriculum or programme but should be built in (important enough to be integrated in all aspects of higher education), which means re-designing the foundations of the whole system (Junyent & Geli de Ciurana, 2008, p. 764; Tilbury, Podger, & Reid, 2004; Urenje & Rumjaun, 2017, p. 508).

It is also necessary to acknowledge that the borderline between new knowledge and ideology is very subtle: is the presence of sustainability issues in every part of the curriculum a case of illuminating its importance or is it a kind of indoctrination? (Is indoctrination for a good cause acceptable?) Apparently the question is not new: education for sustainable development is often '*fact-based, normative and pluralistic*' and researchers have claimed that the normative approach might be problematic (at least from a democratic point of view), '*as a response to Bob Jickling's and others' warnings of the capacity for or risks of indoctrination through education being 'for' something or other*' (Læssøe & Öhman, 2010, p. 4). Jickling & co dislike the concept of education for sustainability because of its connections with a neo-liberal globalization, and prefer *environmental* education (Jickling & Wals, 2007).

3. The case and the context: teaching public administration at Åbo Akademi University

The Public Administration programme at Åbo Akademi University is one of eight majors at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Economics. Of their 300 credits towards a master's degree students receive at least 145 credits for their major (65 at bachelor and 80 at master level).

The Public Administration programme covers traditional administrative topics, such as democracy and bureaucracy, management, organizations theory, public budgeting, public human resource management, use of public resources, but also topics related to government/governance at different levels in the public sector, especially at the local level and as regards the relationship between politics and administration.

The public administration programme at Åbo Akademi University has been offered since 1978, but topics to do with environmental governance have been introduced at least since the middle of the 1990s, especially with regard to the Baltic Sea governance and environmental governance at the local level. As a result, Public Administration, and the related programme in Political Science, together offer an optional Module called Environmental Governance. The module consists of courses on multi-level governance as well as global and local environmental governance. Earlier, the course Multi-Level Governance has been transformed as a result of a change project (Jetoo, 2018), as has the course Environmental Politics (in Political Science) (Hermanson, 2017).

The change project described in this article began with an assessment of the current practice with a view to determining how the teaching can be transformed to address sustainability challenges, i.e. how the programme manages to meet these demands and what can be changed. Rather than choose between the option of planning brand new courses and changing or restructuring content and materials in an existing course, this change project takes a holistic approach, which means that content and materials regarding sustainable development are integrated in existing courses, not as an 'add-on' but rather as a 'built-in' component (see Junyent & Geli de Ciurana, 2008; Tilbury, Podger, & Reid, 2004; Urenje & Rumjaun, 2017). The Public Administration programme at Åbo Akademi University offers 26 courses in the major, of which most are worth 5 ECTS credits. As the Public Administration and Political Science programmes have already had several courses on environmental sustainability (as mentioned above), the holistic approach was seen as a bigger step forward than creating a new course or changing an existing one. A lot of the concepts in Public Administration are relevant for sustainable development, which creates a good opportunity for working in the zone of proximal development (by Vygotsky, in Merriam & Bierama, 2014, p. 119). By adding content on sustainability into existing courses it is easier to show students that sustainable development is not merely a question of environmental sustainability. By making sustainable development an integral part of all teaching, this change project illustrates how *different* aspects of sustainability issues are relevant in different contexts, with a view to making sustainable development a normal and obvious point of view. In the same manner, younger employees (compared to elder) working in the area of spatial planning are claimed to have sustainability considerations as a default setting (Gustafsson, Hermelin, & Smas, 2018, p. 14).

Teaching in Finnish universities should be based upon research (Universities Act 558/2009, § 2) but as regards its content, it is not regulated by state authorities (Universities Act 558/2009, § 6 about freedom of research, art, and teaching). In contrast, the national core curriculum for basic education is quite precisely defined (see *New national core curriculum…*, 2016), although there is room for local adjustments. Learning objectives in courses at Åbo Akademi University are approved by the Faculty Board every two years. The learning objectives are not strictly set and leave teachers much liberty as to how the course should be organized. Consequently, individual teachers can introduce elements about sustainability in their courses, without having to change formal learning objectives.

The vision in this change project is to make sure that sustainable development is explicitly featured in the syllabus for every course: at first in the literature and in the examination, and gradually also in the learning objectives (once they are updated). In other words, the aim is to improve students' ability to see sustainability issues in different aspects of public administration and relations between politics and administration, because questions concerning sustainable development are to be found everywhere. By developing a model for examining a major with sustainability glasses, students can learn how to enable implementation of sustainable development (goals), lead change towards sustainable development (goals), work with strategies for sustainable development (goals), and enhance their critical thinking by taking a closer look.

One of the biggest challenges in education for sustainable development in higher education is that so much else than teaching is considered so much more important at universities, i.e. there is a multiplicity of competing institutional logics (see Gullberg & Svensson, 2020). There are other, teaching-related barriers to incorporating sustainability in the curricula, too, such as the lack of time, rewards, knowledge etc. (Lidgren, Rodhe, & Huisingh, 2006, p. 803).

Courses in Public Administration at Åbo Akademi University are subject to continuous quality improvement in a cyclical manner (see Hutchings & Cerbin, 2011; also, Urenje & Rumjaun, 2017, p. 499). It is considered to be a realistic ambition that 2-3 of them are revised every academic year, during the following 5-6 years.

Students' performance in courses in Public Administration is usually tested by essays, small-scale case-studies, book reviews or other written assignments. Students of Public Administration benefit from 'learning by writing' (see Tsang, 2009), as a lot of work in the public sector, regardless of task or sector, requires writing skills. All the courses use web-based platforms for distributing materials and handing in assignments.

4. Actions taken in the change project

The first aim of this change project is to revise reference literature, materials, and examinations for courses in Public Administration, so that every course in some way addresses sustainable development. To reach the expected outcomes several actions were undertaken.

In the first phase of the project, which took place during the academic year 2019-2020, three courses were adjusted in a more sustainable direction in relation to concepts central to the course. To reach successful work in the public sector civil servants need to know how to implement multi-level and ambiguous policies, how to budget for them, and maybe, why sustainable development in some cases works differently than in others. These three courses are described in more detail below.

The first one is a very first basic course on democracy and administration and the relation between them. Most participants are first year students. As this is their very first contact with administrative sciences, many core concepts are introduced for the first time, including institutions (which relates to target #16.6), decision-making (#16.7), transparency (#16.10) and corruption (#16.5). The syllabus consists of 10-12 traditional lectures (including discussions) and assigned readings, and the examination is based on 4 written assignments. Sustainability content was incorporated in two lectures, including readings on sustainable development goals and one of the assignments was written based on these readings. The sustainable development goals were connected to challenges associated with multi-level governance, implementation, and change leadership.

The second course to be transformed is a basic course on public budgeting. The course syllabus consists of seven parts, with topics and readings on decision-making in budgetary processes at governmental and local level as well as budgeting in the university sector. The course can be accomplished either with lectures or as self-directed studies, in both cases the course completion is based on written assignments. During the course different theoretical models of budgeting are presented and discussed, among them both participatory (#11.3), gender-based (#5.C) and CO2-based (#13.2) budgeting; all these models are promoted as recommended solutions from a sustainability perspective. Municipal budgeting processes are a central theme in the course, because municipalities in Finland have a strong self-government, an extensive mandate and a great responsibility for providing public services (Anttiroiko & Valkama, 2017; Haveri, 2015). The 311 municipalities in Finland vary in size and have very different means to maintain a sustainable local economy. Despite its small population, Finland also faces many challenges as a result of urbanization, some in growing cities and probably even more in declining areas (#11). By examining how these matters affect their home municipality, students are made aware of connections between drivers, context and outcomes that affects possibilities for local sustainable development.

The third course to be updated in this first phase of the change project is a master-level course about public resources. One of the matters in the course is the sustainable use of public resources in relation to the welfare state (#10.1, #10.4). Another one is the role of indicators for measuring productivity, effectivity, and strategy fulfillment or for setting targets and analysing consequences.

A third matter of interest is that the public sector both promotes a sustainable future but also uses mechanisms that hinder sustainable decisions concerning resources. Some rules to be reconsidered include the use of outsourcing (#12.7) to reach sustainable public procurements (*Skills for a High Performing Civil Service*, 2017). Most students are adults who work full time. By highlighting how public recourses can be used, students can gain valuable insights concerning their own working environments. This course is organized in a similar way as the other two, but with a bigger emphasis on how sustainability can be reached in different settings.

5. The pedagogy behind the successive change approach to curriculum

The second aim of this change project is to lay out the pedagogical framework that underlies the successive, integrative approach, which is based on principles found in pedagogical, psychological, and organizational theories. The framework is not designed to be fully coherent, but it tries to account for how people learn and be relevant for the course content and for practical considerations of teaching.

1. **Make it visible**. In a teacher's resource guide about education for sustainable development McKeown claims that *'every discipline and every teacher can contribute to sustainability education and that [such] topics* [...] *are often already inherent in the existing educational curricula but may not be identified and highlighted in that context'* (Lidgren, Rodhe, & Huisingh, 2006, p. 804). Being able to identify and recognize these topics is one of the keys to moving forward; another one is starting by ensuring that teachers are familiar with the concept of sustainability (Lidgren, Rodhe, & Huisingh, 2006, pp. 804-805).

In this change project aspects of sustainability are made visible in ordinary teaching (not only in a thematic course given by and prepared for those already interested), as questions concerning sustainability are found everywhere in the public sector, if one just agrees to see them.

2. **Work step by step**. Education for sustainable development often calls for transformation (see Nagoya Declaration, 2014; Urenje & Rumjaun, 2017). According to Albrechts (2010, p. 1118), transformative change rarely occurs in instant revolutions, but evolves in many small ways, to produce an emerging pattern. In pedagogical terms, it means *assimilation until accommodation*, because, in essence, transformative learning is making meaning of one's experience (Merriam & Bierama, 2014, p. 84). The biggest learning is claimed to occur in the zone of proximal development (by Vygotsky, in Merriam & Bierama, 2014, p. 119), when the topic is neither too distant, nor too close.

This change project tries to combine the familiar (administrative core concepts) with the new sustainability content in various courses as a way of incrementally building up relevant knowledge. An incremental approach to teaching sustainable development, also as regards the organization of teaching (starting with small groups, which can be expanded if they prove to be successful) has also been recommended earlier (Rusinko, 2010, p. 252).

3. **Build on positive emotions**. The pressing need for sustainable development is expressed by everyone, for example: *'The increasing sustainability challenge cannot be overemphasized'* (Urenje & Rumjaun, 2017, p. 489) or *'Society as a whole has to accept that it lives in a world in which much of what it does and how it does it simply cannot continue'* (Albrechts, 2010, p. 116, see also *The Future is now…*, 2019). Some are claiming that *time is running out* and that *gradual change is not any longer enough* (Leach et al., 2012). *'A radically new approach to innovation'* (Leach et al., 2012, p. 1) is required. This kind of doomsday rhetoric may be legitimate, but if it only creates anxiety and inability to act, nothing is won. Teaching cannot build on fear, because anxiety hinders change: if we want people to care and act, the rhetoric should not build on fear, but on positive emotions and caring (Taylor & Marienau, 2016, p. 297).

Sustainable development is important, but students who are not particularly interested in the topic can feel overwhelmed by the seriousness of interlinked global issues. The problem is not necessarily that these students do not care but merely that they do not know where to start. In this change project assignments, which combine theoretical knowledge with case studies at the local level (usually students' home municipalities), have been designed to create a bridge between the new and the familiar in order to build on students' positive emotions rather than fear. If people care about their local physical environment, they usually want the development in that area to be sustainable. People who are attached to the local community also tend to have better health, better relations and vote more often (Kitchen, Williams, & Simone, 2012), all those things found in the concept of social capital (Rothstein & Stolle, 2003).

4. **Avoid complexity.** Areas in need of sustainable development are complex: *'Complex sustainability concerns require commitment, determination and ambition'* (Kaaronen, 2016, p. 4) and we *'are in dire need of interdisciplinary, intersectoral and intersocietal tools to solve widespread societal and sustainability concerns'* (Kaaronen, 2016, p. 4).

When change in people's behavior is desired, concretization often is the key. That is why efforts to recycle plastic waste (#12.5) and actions aimed at reducing food waste (#12.3) are fairly popular; they are practical and easy to implement and the result is visible, at least at household level. By taking practical measures one can be part of a global movement. (This is no news. UN has even published *The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World* (n.d.).)

Teachers must help students realize that they do not have to understand all environmental mechanisms – how pollution in one place leads to erosion, insufficient availability of soil nutrients or the loss of biodiversity in another – but only to handle issues associated with administration. After all, there are administrators and economists in hospitals doing a credible work, even though they do not know very much about medicine. In practice, they follow the advice of Greta Thunberg; *'listen to the scientists'* (Milman & Smith, 2019). **In this change project students are shown practical examples of sustainable solutions in a municipal setting so that they can learn how to handle these issues administratively: to form policies informed by ideology, to form proposals and plans** in accordance with experts' recommendations.

5. **Critical thinking** is highly appreciated in the sustainable development movement. In this case, critical thinking refers to the process, which enables students to become aware of two set of assumptions: scientific ones and their own (Merriam & Bierama, 2014, p. 213).

In the public sector, as in all organizations, critical thinking is very useful, for example the Japanese *5 whys technique*, *double loop learning* (Morgan, 1986) or other similar notions. By applying organizational theories to sustainability **this change project can show students how organizational aspects affect output,** and equip them with tools which will enable them to trouble shoot when organizational matters hinder sustainable development.

6. Results and conclusions

The literature on education for sustainable development in higher education contains a lot of reports of change projects (Alshuwaikhat & Abubakar, 2008, p. 1777; Rusinko, 2010), but does not provide nearly as much information about their effects (see Lidgren, Rodhe, & Huisingh, 2006). This change project started only in autumn 2019 and is scheduled to continue for several years, so the earliest assessment of the effectiveness of sustainability teaching cannot be expected until 2024 or 2025.

The **expected outcomes** of the change project are twofold. The first objective, i.e. to *make sure that sustainable development is explicitly featured in course syllabuses, to make sustainable development an integral part of course content*, has been reached, which represents the first phase of the project. During the academic year 2019-2020 the syllabus, reference literature, materials and examinations in three courses in Public Administration were transformed, mostly by increasing the share of sustainability-related materials and by pointing out connections to sustainability issues, where relevant. This part of the project continues. The second expected outcome, i.e. the presentation of the *pedagogical framework underlying the change project*, has also been achieved, as reported above.

As a long-term **outcome,** it is expected that *students will have learned to facilitate the implementation of sustainable development goals, to lead change towards sustainable development goals and to work with strategies for sustainable development goals*.

How can such a long-term result be measured? The plan is to make a comparative evaluation of students' master's theses, to examine whether students' argumentation concerning sustainability-related matters before the launch of the change project (in 2019) and afterwards (maybe 2024), by which time most of the courses should have been updated. In the worst-case scenario, such an evaluation will show no signs of change in students' thinking. In the best-case scenario, sustainable development will be taken into account in students' theses in all relevant cases. The actual result is likely be somewhere in between. In any case, as a result of the changes, we expect the share of public officials with a sound knowledge of issues regarding sustainable development to increase. That would be an acceptable result.

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Etapy zmian programu nauczania zrównoważonej administracji publicznej

Streszczenie. Rozwój zrównoważony uważany jest za jedną z najważniejszych kwestii dotyczących przyszłości, o czym świadczy rosnące zainteresowanie zrównoważonym rozwojem w szkolnictwie wyższym. Projekt zmiany opisany w tym artykule jest przykładem wysiłków podejmowanych w celu włączenia rozwoju zrównoważonego w program szkolnictwa wyższego. Cel projektu zmiany jest dwojaki: modyfikacja programów nauczania, literatury źródłowej, materiałów i egzaminów dla studiów na kierunku „administracja publiczna", w taki sposób, aby każdy kurs w jakiś sposób odnosił się do kwestii zrównoważonego rozwoju. Czyniąc rozwój zrównoważony integralną częścią całego nauczania, przedstawiony projekt podkreśla znaczenie różnych aspektów kwestii zrównoważonego rozwoju w różnych kontekstach. Istnieją trzy powody, dla których rozwój zrównoważony powinien być obecny w nauczaniu: edukacja na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju jest ważna dla samej uczelni; rozwój zrównoważony jest szczególnie istotny dla studentów administracji publicznej; aby zaangażować wszystkich studentów, edukacja na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju wymaga odpowiednich ram pedagogicznych. Drugim celem projektu jest nakreślenie podstawowych ram pedagogicznych, opartych na zasadach zawartych w teorii pedagogicznej, psychologicznej i organizacyjnej. Zdaniem autorki, w przedstawionym w artykule podejściu integracyjnym powtarzanie się tematów dotyczących zrównoważonego rozwoju na wielu kursach jest lepszym rozwiązaniem niż opracowanie pojedynczego kursu tematycznego. W pierwszej fazie projektu, w roku akademickim 2019-2020, dokonano przeglądu trzech kursów w celu uwzględnienia aspektów zrównoważonego rozwoju w odniesieniu do pojęć kluczowych.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja, program nauczania, edukacja na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju, zrównoważony rozwój w szkolnictwie wyższym, administracja publiczna

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Gert-Olof Boström*

A generic model for integrating ESD in a university course – complementing a textbook with contemporary material[1]

Abstract. A large number of stakeholders are demanding more education for sustainable development (ESD) at Swedish universities, among them students who are expecting to find ESD in their courses. The aim of the article is to present a model for how to develop a course to include ESD when no updated textbooks are yet available and Bloom's taxonomy is used for demonstrating the high level of learning that can be achieved without any syllabus changes. The setting for the case study and model development was a course in service marketing with a diverse group of students in terms of their background and education, at Umeå School of Business, Economics, and Statistics at Umeå University in Sweden. The course took place in the middle of the education program. Techniques such as lectures, guest lectures, assignments based on the theoretical textbook content, and a term paper were used to incorporate ESD into the course in order to accomplish possibilities for generic use. A challenge in designing ESD was the lack of knowledge about the students' initial understanding of sustainability. The model was designed to take this into account. The design of assignments showed clear possibilities of achieving high levels of learning in terms of Bloom's taxonomy, including analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The model is also an endeavor to encourage university teachers to introduce elements of ESD in their usual courses.

Keywords: sustainable development, higher education, education for sustainable development, Bloom's taxonomy

JEL Codes: M1

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[1] The work behind this article was done within the framework of the Baltic University Programme Teachers' Course on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Higher Education in fall 2019 and spring 2020.

1. Introduction

Several stakeholders call for efforts to make sustainability present in university courses, one of which is the United Nations (UN). On 25 September, 2015, all UN members adopted a resolution containing 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) (United Nations, 2015). But already a decade before this agreement, UN had dedicated the time between the years 2005-2014 to focus on education for sustainable development (SD), as stated in the report "Shaping the Future We Want – UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (UNESCO, 2014). A decade was too short a time for achieving the goals; there was some progress in educating for sustainability but much more needs to be done and the pace still has to be increased (UNESCO, 2014). In order to make education more fruitful in terms of the SDGs, UNESCO (2017) prepared a report detailing what needs to be learned in order to achieve the SDGs. The aims of education for sustainable development are explained in another UNESCO publication (Leicht, Heiss, & Byun, 2018, p. 25), in the first chapter devoted to target 4.7: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through Education for Sustainable Development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (United Nations, 2015, p. 17).

The idea of integrating SD into university education is far from a novelty in the context of Swedish universities. Already in 1992, the following principle was established for Swedish universities: "In their activities, higher education institutions shall promote sustainable development, which means that current and future generations are ensured a healthy and good environment, economic and social welfare and justice" (5 § Högskolelag, 1992: 1434, translated by the author).

The task of educating for sustainable development (ESD[2]) imposed on Swedish universities has left some footprints in the university system; for example, the

[2] ESD can be derived from UNESCO (2004) and UNESCO Education Sector (2005) in latter articles a definition of ESD has developed, e.g., Yarime et al. (2012) "utilizing all aspects of public awareness, education, and training to create and enhance an understanding of the linkages among the diverse issues of sustainable development, of which the objective is to develop the knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values that will empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future" (p. 104). A definition that has been challenged by Tikly et al. (2020) who want to define ESD as "access to a good quality education for all that can facilitate existing and future generations of learners across the lifespan, in formal and informal settings, to realise the rights, freedoms and capabilities they require to live the lives they have reason to value and to protect and co-evolve in a more harmonious relationship with the natural environment of which human beings are an integral part so that natural and social systems may flourish."

vision of Umeå University states the following: "Conduct research and doctoral education that contribute to increased knowledge of sustainable development. Reach out to society for collaboration, participate in public debate and disseminate knowledge and good examples of sustainable development" (Umeå University, 2020). The aim of the vision for Umeå University has also become known at the level below the university administration, for example Umeå School of Business, Economics, and Statistics (USBE) clearly states in its vision the importance of sustainability: "Through interplay with surrounding society, we provide education and research that contributes to the understanding, ability, and responsibility of individuals in relation to societal challenges and the importance of sustainable development" (USBE Vision, 2020).

Despite these guidelines to integrate SD into higher education institutions (HEI) in Sweden, the pace is too slow. Finnveden et al. (2020) scrutinized all 47 HEIs in Sweden in terms of their efforts in this regard and found that less than half had well-developed processes for the integration of SD in education. Brorström and Påhlsson (2019) arrived at the same conclusion regarding the contribution of universities and colleges regarding SD. The heading of their report is "Much is done, much more needs to be done", which is a very good way to summarize their conclusions.

One important group of stakeholder includes students, who are the ones to learn, to be educated for sustainability (ESD). Their motivation determines their ability to learn (Eppler & Harju, 1997). A survey of students attending the course that was used as a case study for this article was conducted in February 2020, (unpublished material) clearly showed their wish for the inclusion of sustainability in the studied courses. 4 out of 5 students expressed agreement or strong agreement with the following statement: "It is very important for me that the modules[3] in my education address sustainability", which is evidence of a strong expectation on the part of students to receive ESD in every university course they take.

As stated above, there is pressure on individual teachers to incorporate sustainability in their course(s). In order for course material to be as relevant as possible, it needs to be directly related to what happens in society. This article describes a proposal of a model for how to include contemporary material in a university course. The proposed model should make it possible to include materials for ESD without the need to change the syllabus. Since the model can be used without the support from the syllabus, individual teachers have more freedom to start ESD and to incorporate activities related to contemporary SD. Another intention of the model is to offer suggestions on how to integrate the SD component into a given course so that it is not perceived by students as an unrelated addition.

[3] In this case, the term 'module' is equivalent to 'course'.

There are additional reasons in favor of having such a model. Given the swift pace of development observed in society regarding sustainability, it is difficult to keep textbooks up-to-date by including material reflecting the present status of SD in society. On the other hand, students need to be exposed to current situations taking place in society regarding SD (experiential learning) in order to develop their learning ability (Boström, Winka, & Boström, in print).

2. Design of the study

The article reports the results of a case study and is based on firsthand experience of incorporating sustainability into a university course. The course in question is an advanced course in services called Service Management, which is offered by the department of business administration at USBE, which is part of social science. When students start to the course, they are in the middle of their education, beginning their fifth semester. The Study Programme in Business Administration and Economics lasts 8 semesters and a master degree program lasts 10 semesters. The Service Management course is attended by students with various educational backgrounds, but about 40% are students of Service Marketing, which is dedicated for those studying services. The second largest group of participants (30%) in this course consists of international students. Other students come from independent courses (non-program courses). Since the course is also open to international students it is given in English, which is the language of instruction. Usually, there are 2-4 participants who are native English speakers; for the majority of students this is their first course in English. The course is usually attended by 70-80 students.

To demonstrate the ability of the proposed model to offer significant levels of student learning, Bloom's (1956) taxonomy was used, see Fig. 1.

The basic level in the triangle is **knowledge** that the student has in a given area, which involves the recall or recognition of processes, terms etc. **Comprehension** means that the student has passed the level of just knowing facts and can now interpret (translate, extrapolate) facts in a given situation. At the level of **application** the student can apply general principles or methods to a specific context. At the level of **analysis** the student is expected go beyond applications and try to see patterns in order to solve problems or to deconstruct a complex situation into its constituent parts and understand the relationship between them. At the **synthesis** level the student should be able to create new theories or make predictions based on certain facts. This level involves the ability of putting together parts to make a whole. The top level of the pyramid is **evaluation**, where the student should be able to assess information and understand its value and

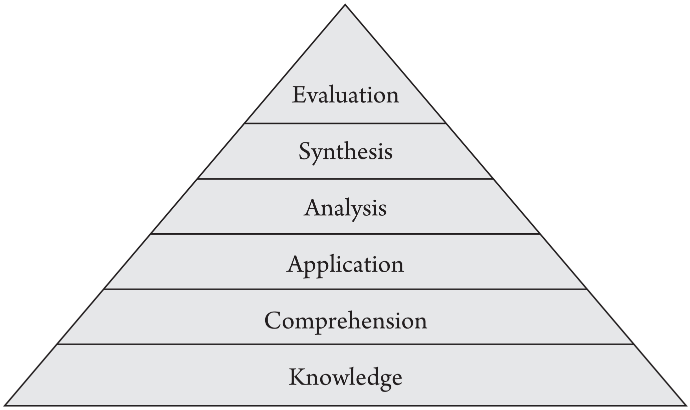

Fig. 1. An illustration of Bloom's classification of learning objectives into levels of complexity and specificity

Source: author's work based on Bloom (1956).

potential biases behind it, making judgements about the value of materials and methods.

The purpose of using Bloom's taxonomy is to demonstrate that the proposed model can provide significantly high levels of student learning, which involves advancing on the scale of Bloom's taxonomy to reach to the levels of applying, analyzing and evaluating (Bloom, 1956). In other words, the goal is to give students an understanding that goes beyond the functions of the analytical tools – models from the book – and instead focus on applied understanding so that they can articulate appropriate and applicable questions (cf. Hopkins, Raymond, & Carlson, 2011).

3. The Environment – University and Business School

Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics (USBE), founded in 1989, is a business school at Umeå University. USBE students come from a variety of places, with only one third originating from the northern parts of Sweden. Thus, its catchment area includes the whole of Sweden as well as foreign countries. There are about 3,000 students enrolled in one of 12 study programs or 165 courses offered at USBE and in 2018 there were 172 exchange students. This mix of students is naturally reflected in individual courses given at USBE.

USBE has a strong sustainability profile, which is strengthened by its membership in the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the fact of being an advanced signatory of PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education), as well as being certified according to the environmental management standard ISO 14001 and the specific policy for sustainable development. Moreover, the school has an organization that signals the importance accorded to sustainability: a dean that actively promotes sustainability, a sustainability council (including a student representative)[4], an administrative manager, who also serves as sustainability coordinator at USBE, a head of teaching and learning clearly devoted to sustainability and a career center coordinator in charge of alumni work with an outspoken interest in sustainability. Thus, the setting at USBE strongly supports activities related to sustainability (see also Boström, Winka, & Boström, in print).

In order to appreciate the situation of students participating in the course it is necessary to know the range and nature of educational programs offered at USBE. The Study Programmes in Business Administration and Economics are the most popular ones, not only with USBE students but also generally in Sweden; they prepare students directly for work in business or in the public sector. After completing one of these programs, students can apply for positions in the business sector, in the public sector or start their own business (cf. Filho & Pace, 2016).

4. Course activities addressing sustainability

Below, different parts of the course with a significant portion of sustainability are presented. The following activities were used: an introductory lecture, regular lectures, a guest lecture, an application-oriented assignment and a term paper. The goal was to use general activities that can be found in most courses. The activities were designed to be assignments in one or another way related to the SDGs.

4.1. Introductory lecture

The purpose of the introductory lecture was to set the tone for the course and communicate its clear focus on SD. Two specific topics regarding SD were addressed: the SDGs and definitions of sustainability, with an explanation of their role and background. The importance of defining sustainability has been pointed out by several authors, e.g., Bolis, Morioka, & Sznelwar (2014), Filho (2015). Brundtland's definition and the triple bottom line approach to sustainability were presented. The use of two definitions was to make students aware of the complex-

[4] This representative is a member of the student association HHUS, which is a volunteer association for all students at USBE.

ity involved in defining sustainability. Another intention was to present sustainability as an example of a wicked problem, e.g., Tikly et al. (2020). However, the definitions given in the introductory lecture were critically addressed later in the course. Time constraints and uncertainty about students' knowledge in the area of sustainability were the main reason for this approach.

In addition to defining sustainability, the SDGs were briefly introduced, including their background. Some time was spent presenting the targets for each of the 17 SDGs.

4.2. Regular lectures

The lectures can be regarded as a basic tool that facilitates the application and integration of sustainability approaches. Another benefit of the lectures was the possibility to enter into a dialogue with the whole group of students. These dialogues also provided an indication of how much the students understood; they were a built-in feedback about the teaching and the assignments in the course – a kind of formative evaluation.

The lectures were the opportunity for introducing different assignments. This was done intentionally so as to make sure that the students understood the assignment and to avoid speculations about how to interpret the assignment instructions. Moreover, it was a way of giving the students a possibility for asking questions directly about the assignment as well as it was a learning occasion for the teacher to understand where the ambiguities were in the description. Surprisingly there were very few questions about the assignments when they were presented; the questions tended to come later on.

4.3. Assignment – guest lecture

The course featured a guest lecture given by a person from the property and facilities office at Umeå University. The lecture was devoted to sustainability regarding property and facilities at Umeå University and was followed by two tasks for students: an individual assignment and a two-step group assignment.

The individual assignment. After the guest lecture each student was asked to respond to some questions about the lecture and hand in their written answers. Among these questions was also one about good study spaces at the university. Each student was to exemplify one of these spaces by naming it and explain what characteristics made it to a good place to study at. The main purpose for these questions was, however, to ensure that the students had grasped the key points of the lecture and to give them a chance to reflect on the issues addressed by the lecturer from the perspective of a good work environment – SDG 8. The lecture was recorded so non-attenders could benefit as well.

Group assignment step one. After the lecture the students were asked to identify three good and three bad spaces at the university in terms of sustainability using the SDGs as evaluation criteria and the part of the textbook which provides guidelines for how to design physical spaces in order to communicate what the organization stands for. For each example of space, the students had to come up with three arguments derived from the SDGs. As additional support for their arguments the students were expected to look for three different peer-reviewed articles that could support at least some of their arguments. In order to make the work easily accessible, each group of students filmed their selected spaces, including their arguments. Each group had to present their film at a seminar and to respond to questions from the audience.

Group assignment step two. After the seminar where students' films were presented, each group of students had to comment on another group's examples of bad spaces. For each "bad" example, they had to develop three suggestions of improvements. These improvements should be founded in the SDGs.

4.4. Assignment – applying a model from the textbook

The students had to refer to the sections of the textbook about managing an innovation process. This assignment was connected to SDG 9 and more specifically CO2 emission and consisted in proposing a service that could help to diminish CO2 emissions. Three dimensions were presented for assessing the impact of the proposed innovation: Efficiency – how efficient the service would be in reducing CO2 emissions; cost effectiveness – its cost per ton of reduced CO2 emission; and credibility – how realistic is the innovation? The first part of the assignment was to make a pitch for the proposed innovation in the form of a 60-second video. Each group had to show their film at a seminar and respond to questions from the audience. After the seminar all videos could be accessed by all student groups. In the second part, the students were asked to adopt the role of investors using the criteria presented above. Their assignment was to identify and rank the top five innovations.

4.5. Assignment – term paper

The goal of the term paper was to identify an organization or company that has the outspoken ambition of addressing one or more of the SDGs or any of their targets The first task was to describe actions taken by the organization to implement this ambition. The second task was to analyze/describe how the organization communicates this ambition. This part of the assignment there was clearly outlined in the textbook. In the third part, the students were supposed to analyze how this ambition fits in with the organization's history. The final question was whether the communication was consistent, which required students to analyze different communication channels (various types of social media, multilingual website content, etc.).

The term papers were presented at a seminar. After each presentation, another group was assigned the role of a reviewer. To facilitate the review process, the students had been given evaluation criteria for the term paper, which they could use at their discretion.

5. Discussion

The inclusion of sustainability topics in the course can be described as applied – e.g. applying the SDGs and the textbook in different ways to achieve ESD. The textbook served as a tool providing concepts and models which were applied in different ways in the context of sustainability. This approach was selected because it was a fruitful way of reflecting on how organizations and companies today work with sustainability from the perspective of the concepts and models presented in the textbook. It also encouraged critical and reflexive learning.

Below, each one of the assignments is discussed in relations to Bloom's taxonomy (1956) to give the reader an idea about how a university course can include the ESD component without any syllabus support. Lectures are not discussed as they are seen as preparations for assignments.

5.1. Assignments related to the guest lecture

In the **individual task**, students should **analyze** spaces at the university. **The first group assignment**, where students were asked to identify good and bad spaces at the university from the perspective of the SDGs, can be regarded as relating to the level of **application and analysis**. In the **second group assignment**, where the task was to comment on another group's choice of "bad spaces" and suggest improvements, the students had to understand how another group had interpreted the SDG(s) in their classification of bad spaces and to **analyze** how the spaces could be improved in accordance with the SDGs.

5.2. Assignment – applying a model from the textbook

The first part of the assignment was about **applying** the framework provided in the textbook to create a service innovation. The second part required skills of

synthesis in order to create something new by putting together elements indicated in the textbook. Since the last part of this assignment required the use of three criteria, there was also an element of **evaluation**.

5.3. Assignment – term paper

The term paper assignment was designed to practice **evaluation** skills, which correspond to the top level of Bloom's taxonomy. The peer review of another group's work was also an example of an evaluation task.

When the assignments are analyzed in terms of Bloom's taxonomy (1956), it is evident that most of them demanded the use of higher level learning skills. They show that it is possible to design complex and challenging tasks related to SD and the SDGs and include them in a course without altering the syllabus and without waiting for textbooks to be updated with relevant examples.

5.4. Uncertainty about students' knowledge about sustainability

As a first-time experiment, the proposed ESD component was faced with the challenge of trying to assess the level of students' knowledge in the area of SD, given that the topic had not been previously included in the course. Although sustainability is present in many courses, it is hard to be sure how this presence translates into actual knowledge. In other word, to borrow Entwistle's term "threshold concept" (Entwistle, 2009), it is difficult to set the appropriate starting level.

It was assumed that students at the start of their 5th semester were already familiar with the SDGs. However, there was also a substantial group of international students with varying levels of knowledge regarding the main topic and SD. The group assignments were designed to minimize these differences, by providing opportunities for collaborative work and discussions between group work (Elmgren & Henriksson, 2016).

6. Conclusions

The aim of this article was to demonstrate how to incorporate ESD into a university course. The proposed suggestions can be implemented without any changes in the syllabus. The actual course described in the article had a syllabus that supported the task related to sustainability. However, modifications and improvements introduced into the course may well have been done without any support from the syllabus for that specific course.

The possibility of making a successful change in a course is naturally facilitated by institutional support. In this case, Umeå University promotes sustainability in its vision as does the Business School, which includes it in its mission statement. Of course, this support for work on sustainability helps but the demonstrated changes can be scaled, which means that the amount of ESD presence can vary depending on the system's maturity and students' knowledge. Thus, the learning outcome in the syllabus is no guarantee of a high level of learning, according to Bloom's taxonomy.

A model for starting or developing ESD in a course without syllabus changes.

The following is a list of actions that can be taken to transform a course by including elements of ESD or to enhance the ESD component within a course. These actions can be treated as a model for such a transformation and can be modified to suit the needs of an actual course. The objective of the lectures is to provide foundations for the subsequent work.

1. Start talking about sustainability during the introductory lecture, e.g. by presenting the SDGs and definitions of sustainability.

2. Ask other lecturers teaching the course to address sustainability. A guest lecture is also a good way of providing contemporary knowledge about sustainability.

3. Ask the students to reflect on what sustainability would mean in relation to a central concept/model from the textbook.

4. Try to apply a model from the textbook in the context of sustainability. Depending on students' experience with ESD, adapt the assignment level accordingly. A good way of exploiting the potential of such assignments is to let students evaluate each other's work. It is especially interesting if they get to judge the work of several other groups and rank them according to SDGs.

5. The term paper is probably an assignment with the greatest degree of freedom regarding design. Also, students are expected to work at the highest level of Bloom's taxonomy – evaluation.

The above model is intended to serve as a tool for setting and stimulating the mind when ESD is to be introduced in a course or elaborated. The steps of the model should be treated as suggestions about how to think when working with ESD. Remember to consider students' knowledge about sustainability. They need to have a threshold level of knowledge in order to be able to understand and relate to what is being presented. Also, they are likely to be more interested in the topic if they find the presented material accessible.

It would be interesting to assess and analyze the effectiveness of these activities from the perspective of student learning and how they can be improved. In the coming year the author intends to hand out information about all assignments at the beginning of the course instead of handing them out in succession.

An important area that needs to be addressed in the future is the level of students' knowledge about sustainability. It would be very helpful to have a tool for assessing the level of their knowledge about SD; it would help in designing a course that is better tailored to students' needs concerning sustainability.

Another change for the future is to work more with definitions of sustainability and to challenge students' understanding by problematizing the definitions and expose them to normative criticism, (cf. Tikly et al., 2020). Another interesting area worth exploring is how students' performance in assignments changes over time.

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Ogólny model integracji edukacji na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju w ramach kursu uniwersyteckiego – uzupełnienie podręcznika o aktualne treści

Streszczenie. Liczne podmioty, w tym także studenci, domagają się większego udziału edukacji na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju (EZR) na szwedzkich uniwersytetach. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie modelowego sposobu opracowania kursu uwzględniającego EZR w sytuacji braku zaktualizowanych podręczników, bez żadnych zmian w programie, jednak przy zapewnieniu wysokiego poziomu uczenia się, zgodnie z taksonomią Blooma. Zaprezentowane w artykule studium przypadku i proponowane zmiany dotyczą kursu marketingu usług dla grupy studentów zróżnicowanej pod względem pochodzenia i wykształcenia w Szkole Biznesu, Ekonomii i Statystyki na Uniwersytecie Umeå w Szwecji. Kurs odbył się w połowie programu edukacyjnego. Elementy EZR zostały wprowadzone za pomocą wykładów, wykładów gościnnych, zadań opartych na treściach podręcznika teoretycznego i pracy semestralnej. Wyzwaniem w projektowaniu komponentu EZR był brak informacji na temat początkowego stanu wiedzy studentów w kwestii zrównoważonego rozwoju. Modelowe podejście zostało opracowane w taki sposób, aby uwzględnić tę niedogodność. Zastosowane formy zadań pokazały możliwości osiągnięcia wysokiego poziomu uczenia się według taksonomii Blooma, w tym analizy, syntezy i oceny. Modelowe podejście jest również próbą zachęcenia nauczycieli akademickich do wprowadzenia elementów EZR do swoich zajęć.

Słowa kluczowe: zrównoważony rozwój, szkolnictwo wyższe, edukacja na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju, taksonomia Blooma

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Interactive exercises and games for sustainable development goals: How to develop sustainability competencies in higher education?

Abstract. The article is dedicated to the idea of including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in any discipline in higher education for the development of sustainability competences. The article analyses possible interactive exercises and games for all 17 SDGs. It also includes the analysis of sustainability competences provided by each game or exercise, as well as disciplines in which it can be used. This author recommends using interactive exercises and games for SDGs in higher education as effective and powerful instruments for promoting sustainability issues and developing students' competencies.

Keywords: education for sustainable development (ESD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), interactive exercises and games, sustainable competencies

JEL Codes: I20, Q01

1. Introduction

The numerous challenges we have been faced with in recent years have given the impulse for a change of perspective and prompted a search for alternative ways of development. One such way is known as sustainable development, which is perhaps the only way forward. Sustainable development aims to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland et al., 1987).

There are a lot of descriptions of what a sustainable society could look like (Brown, 1982; Cortese, 2003; Ellyard, 2011; Umeda et al., 2009). In 2015 UN

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Member States adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets (UN, 2015), which demonstrate the ambition to reach sustainable development in global level, but many questions are still open. Many people realize that human well-being depends on nature and ecosystems and some are convinced that the human race is the main cause of environmental degradation, but many others still have not really realized that each of us are responsible for that. The ecological footprint of each person is mainly invisible, but the ecological footprint of the entire human civilization is devastating. Unfortunately, most people do not want to change their habits to save nature and reduce their ecological footprint. However, sustainable development cannot be achieved until every member of society feels responsible and lives by the principles of sustainability in day by day. So, the question raised in this article is how to make people feel responsible for sustainable development and how to make it clear to everyone that each one of needs to contribute to sustainable development?

There has been a lot discussion concerning all the above-mentioned problems (Annan-Diab & Molinari, 2017; Cortese, 2003; Crespo et al., 2017; Mensah & Ricart Casadevall, 2019; Vladimirova & Le Blanc, 2016; UN, 2015), but the conclusion is the same: sustainable development cannot be achieved without education. Therefore, education for sustainable development is a key tool in this respect. Some questions, however, remain open.

There are a lot of instruments, methods, approaches and recommendations concerning education for sustainable development, so one naturally wonders which of them is the most effective, how it can be used and in which disciplines, which competences it develops? There is no definitive answer to such questions. The aim of this article is to fill this gap by analyzing possible interactive exercises and games relating to all 17 SDGs. The article provides an analysis of sustainable competences developed by each game or exercise and a list of disciplines in which they can be used.

2. Key issues in education for sustainable development

In the last decades it has become increasingly obvious that traditional approaches to education are not effective any more. It is not enough to acquire and generate knowledge but one also has to reflect on behaviors and decisions that are required to solve the challenges facing humanity (Barth et al., 2007). “We need a fundamental, transformative shift in thinking, values, and action by all of society’s leaders and professionals, as well as the general population” (Cortese, 2003, p. 16). “Interdisciplinarity can increase the ability to understand the complex challenges the world currently faces” (Eagan, Cook, & Joeres, 2002, p. 51). We need a shift in education from competitive approach to cooperative and collaborative (Cortese, 2003). Eventually, we need to develop competencies that enable and "empower individuals to reflect on their own actions by taking into account their current and future social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts from both a local and a global perspective" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7).

Many authors emphasize the importance of developing sustainability competences, which can help to bridge the gap between knowledge and action (Brundiers et al., 2020; de Haan, 2010; Glasser & Hirsh, 2016; Rieckmann, 2012; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011; Wiek et al., 2015). Although different approaches to the selection of key competencies of sustainability have been developed, different researchers agree on the same ideas.

In this article the following key competences will be used as most relevant in future-oriented higher education (Brundiers et al., 2020; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011; Wiek et al., 2015):

1. Systems thinking: the ability to analyze complex systems across different domains (society, environment, economy, etc.) and across different scales (local to global), considering the interconnectedness of all system elements and understanding importance of relationship (UNESCO, 2017; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011; Wiek et al., 2015).
2. Futures thinking (or anticipatory): the ability to understand and evaluate multiple futures – possible, probable and desirable – and to create one's own visions for the future (UNESCO, 2017; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011; Wiek et al., 2015).
3. Values thinking (or normative): "the ability to understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one's actions and to negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals and targets" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 44).
4. Strategic thinking (or action-oriented): "the ability to collectively develop and implement innovative actions" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 44).
5. Collaboration: the ability to learn from others; understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others (empathy); deal with conflicts in a group; and facilitate collaborative and participatory problem-solving (UNESCO, 2017; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011; Wiek et al., 2015).
6. Integrated problem-solving: the overarching ability to apply different problem-solving frameworks to complex problems and develop viable, inclusive and equitable solution (UNESCO, 2017; Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011; Wiek et al., 2015).

Therefore, the development of competences of sustainability in education is one of the key requirements in achieving sustainable development. There are still some practical questions to solve. How should these competences be developed? What instrument and approaches can be effectively used to develop sustainability competences?

3. Active learning in education for sustainable development

Among different educational approaches, active learning is considered to be the most powerful and effective instrument, which is best suited in the context of education for sustainable development. There are many definitions of active learning, but, generally, it can be defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process (Prince, 2004). As such, it seems to be the best way of developing sustainability competencies.

Among many different techniques of active learning that are used in different disciplines, interactive games and exercises seem to be particularly useful for promoting sustainability themes in higher education because they can create an interactive learning experience by transforming inactive learning material into learning episodes, where learners become active players and participants (Ritzko & Robinson, 2006; Sugar & Takacs, 1999). Simple, interactive games and exercises can help students to understand complex challenges and find possible solutions.

4. Interactive exercises and games for SDGs

SDGs are "transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path" (UN, 2015). SDGs are complex and interrelated (ICSU, 2017; Nilsson et al., 2018) and cover all areas of human life, including social, economic and environmental aspects. It means that sustainability issues should be included in any discipline in higher education. Therefore, the SDGs can only be achieved by adopting a systematic, holistic and interdisciplinary approach. The development of sustainability competences of students and other members of society can help to achieve the SDGs. Active learning and interactive games and exercises in particular are best suited for this purpose.

Table 1 lists various interactive games and exercises related to SDGs, with a description of specific sustainability competences developed by each game or exercise and disciplines in which they can be used. Most of the games and exercises can be used in several disciplines or can be adapted to any needs. The number of manuals on interactive games and exercises is constantly growing, which shows their relevance in education. Interactive games are aimed at promoting systems, futures and values and strategic thinking. In addition to various other advantages (Den Haan & Van der Voort, 2018; Stanitsas, Kirytopoulos, & Vareilles, 2019), they help students to develop many other interpersonal skills, which are so important in our changing world and necessary to achieve sustainability.

Table 1. Interactive games and exercises for the SDGs

Name	Short descriptions	SDGs	Sustainability competences	Themes	Disciplines	Reference
Privilege walk	The game develops empathy and emotional intelligence; raises awareness of unequal opportunities in society; contributes to the understanding of the possible personal consequences of belonging to certain social minorities or cultural groups; allows us to understand that each person is the creator of his own destiny.	1. No poverty, 2. Zero hunger, 3. Good health and well-being, 4. Quality education, 5. Gender Equality, 8. Decent work and economic growth, 10. Reduced inequalities, 16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions	• systems thinking, • futures thinking, • values thinking, • strategic thinking, • collaboration, • integrated problem-solving	• different types of inequalities, • inclusiveness, • human rights	• social sciences, • business, • humanities, • natural sciences, • applied sciences	Young (2006)
Lifecycle of things	The game shows the importance of conscious and responsible consumption, focuses on how irresponsible consumption affects our well-being and prosperity, how consumption is related to the conservation of natural resources and ecosystems.	6. Clean water and sanitation, 9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, 11. Sustainable cities and communities 12. Responsible consumption and production 13. Climate action 14. Life below water 15. Life on land	• systems thinking, • futures thinking, • values thinking, • strategic thinking, • collaboration, • integrated problem-solving	• circular and green economy, • environmental management, • natural conservation • responsible behavior and habits	• social sciences, • business, • humanities, • natural sciences, • applied sciences	Posibnyk "Ministerstvo klimatych-noyi mahiyi" (2017)
Crossed arms	This is an exercise about our habits and the need to change them depending on the conditions. The exercise warns us about some of the consequences of our habits and their changes.	All 17th SDGs	• systems thinking, • futures thinking, • values thinking, • strategic thinking, • integrated problem-solving	• environmental management, • natural conservation • responsible behavior and habits • sustainable development • personal development and growth	• social sciences, • business, • humanities, • natural sciences, • applied sciences	Sweeney, Meadows, & Mehers (2011)

Table 1 – cont.

Name	Short descriptions	SDGs	Sustainability competences	Themes	Disciplines	Reference
Biodiversity	This game was created by Dennis Meadows on a panel at the 2009 World Science Forum in Budapest. It is an analogy to biodiversity loss: biodiversity includes not only species diversity but also structural diversity, so by losing one species we can lose others, because in nature everything is closely interconnected, and sometimes ecosystem relationships are much more important than some elements (species).	14. Life below water 15. Life on land	• systems thinking, • futures thinking, • values thinking, • strategic thinking, • collaboration, • integrated problem-solving	• biodiversity, • ecosystem services, • environmental management, • natural conservation, • emergence in system	• natural sciences, • applied sciences	Sweeney, Meadows, & Mehers (2011)
Harvest	This game is about the importance of rational use of natural resources, as well as equal access to resources and taking into account the interests of all stakeholders. Natural resources are not limitless, and therefore need rational and fair use, otherwise everyone will lose	1. No poverty, 2. Zero hunger, 12. Responsible consumption and production, 13. Climate action, 14. Life below water, 15. Life on land	• systems thinking, • futures thinking, • values thinking, • strategic thinking, • collaboration, • Integrated problem-solving	• biodiversity, • ecosystem services, • environmental management, • natural conservation, • tragedy of commons, • limited resources, • natural resources policy	• social sciences, • business, • humanities, • natural sciences, • applied sciences	Sweeney, Meadows, & Mehers (2011)
Carbon cycle	The game simulates the movement of a carbon molecule in the carbon cycle. In an interesting and active way students get acquainted with the carbon cycle and evaluate carbon stocks and their sources. During the game, its participants will travel through the main flows of carbon and its reservoirs in various forms (part of plants, animals, ocean, soil, atmosphere, fossil fuels). This process helps them to understand the relationship between disruption in carbon cycle, increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and climate change.	7. Affordable and clean energy, 13. Climate action, 14. Life below water, 15. Life on land	• systems thinking, • futures thinking, • values thinking, • strategic thinking, • integrated problem-solving	• carbon cycle, • climate change, • renewable and clean energy, • carbon footprint	• business, • natural sciences, • applied sciences	*Carbon Connection…* (n.d.)

Web of life	The game shows that in nature everything is connected to everything else. This activity addresses the issues of the global food web. The game shows how eating habits and diet affect global environmental challenges, as well as the loss and degradation of natural ecosystems.	1. No poverty, 2. Zero hunger, 3. Good health and well-being, 10. Reduced inequalities, 12. Responsible consumption and production, 13. Climate action, 14. Life below water, 15. Life on land	• systems thinking, • future thinking, • value thinking, • strategic thinking, • collaboration, • integrated problem-solving	• natural wealth and resources, • right to life, liberty and personal security • ecosystem services, • footprints • food resources	• social sciences, • business, • natural sciences, • applied sciences	Brander et. al. (2015)
The World's Future	It is a simulation game about the main global challenges facing humanity. The game shows how the main environmental, social and economic problems are interconnected, and what is the role of different stakeholders in solving them.	All 17th SDGs	• systems thinking, • future thinking, • value thinking, • strategic thinking, • collaboration, • integrated problem-solving	• environmental management, • natural conservation, • responsible behavior and habits, • sustainable development, • personal development and growth, • circular and green economy	• social sciences, • business, • humanities, • natural sciences, • applied sciences	Games4Sustainability (n.d.)

Source: own research.

5. Conclusions

Education plays a key role in achieving sustainable development, but it needs to be changed by the inclusion of effective tools and instruments. As one of the existing educational approaches, active learning is considered to be among the most powerful and effective instruments. Interactive games and exercises are a particularly powerful tool for active learning, which can be used to develop sustainability competencies in higher education. After analyzing eight games and exercises from six sources, it was found that such games and exercises can be useful for promoting most sustainability competencies. In addition, interactive games and exercises can be used in any discipline to promote the principles of sustainable development, as well as take into account the interdisciplinary approach. One of the idea of this article is to promote interactive exercises and games for SDGs in higher education as effective and powerful instruments with focus on the development of sustainability competences as well as to stimulate the transition to active learning in higher education more often. But the future aspects should focus on integrating interactive games and exercises in distance learning.

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Ćwiczenia i gry interaktywne dotyczące celów zrównoważonego rozwoju: jak rozwijać kompetencje w zakresie zrównoważonego rozwoju w szkolnictwie wyższym?

Streszczenie. Artykuł jest poświęcony idei włączania celów zrównoważonego rozwoju (CZR) w ramach dowolnego przedmiotu w szkolnictwie wyższym, co może przyczynić się do rozwoju kompetencji w zakresie zrównoważonego rozwoju. W publikacji przeanalizowano ćwiczenia i gry interaktywne dotyczące wszystkich 17 celów zrównoważonego rozwoju. Artykuł obejmuje również analizę kompetencji w zakresie zrównoważonego rozwoju rozwijanych przez każdą grę lub ćwiczenie, a także przedmiotu, w których można je wykorzystać. Autorka zaleca wykorzystanie ćwiczeń i gier interaktywnych dotyczących celów zrównoważonego rozwoju w szkolnictwie wyższym jako skutecznych narzędzi do promowania kwestii zrównoważonego rozwoju i rozwijania kompetencji studentów.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju (EZR), cele zrównoważonego rozwoju (CZR), ćwiczenia i gry interaktywne, zrównoważone kompetencje

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On the road: customer motivation and non-petrol purchases of petrol station customers in Poland

Abstract. The fact that a lot of people in Poland travel by car creates a lot of different business opportunities for the retail sector. Petrol stations are among various entities that attempt to take advantage of this situation. The main purpose of this article is to identify and assess the behaviour of petrol station customers in Poland regarding their motivations for choosing particular facilities and their non-fuel purchases. The study is based on results of a CAWI survey of 603 customers. To make sure that sample was representative, its composition was controlled in terms of the following respondent variables: sex, age, size of the town of residence and province. Consumer behaviour can be affected by a number of factors but only some of them could be addressed in the study, which can be regarded as one of its biggest limitations. Nevertheless, the results provide an interesting insight on this topic. The main contributions of the study include the creation of a typology of petrol stations, identification and assessment of consumer motives for selecting a given facility and information about non-fuel purchases made by customers. The most frequent motives for selecting a given petrol station include convenient location, brand, and the price of petrol and other products. In addition to fuel, customers usually stop to buy coffee and fast food, alcoholic beverages and basic groceries. The authors discuss statistically significant differences between different types of petrol stations in the above mentioned respects. The results of the survey can be of interest to owners of petrol stations as guidance on how to adjust their marketing strategies, especially in terms of the composition of their offering.

Keywords: petrol stations, consumer behaviour, motive, purchase structure, decision making process

JEL Codes: D90, D91

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1. Introduction

Petrol stations are examples of retail outlets that have clearly changed their function over the years – from places selling mainly petrol to outlets offering various goods and services, ranging from catering services, through a selection of food products, to the sale of vehicle insurance or the pickup of courier parcels. Nowadays, petrol stations or (service stations along motorways) are an indispensable element of any longer car journey. Contemporary petrol stations, apart from selling petrol, are places of consumption, meetings and relaxation (Wyciszkiewicz & Zawadzki, 2018, p. 134), thus playing a special role in meeting the diverse needs of the economy and society. The aforementioned changes in the offering of petrol stations reflect the general trend in customer behaviour towards more convenience, which, according to a report by Euromonitor International (2020) is likely to have the greatest impact on business in the nearest future. The behaviour of customers of petrol stations is a very specific niche, which has not been the subject of any research.

According to a report published by Triverna.pl (n.d.), most Poles travel around the country up to five times a year. Only every seventh respondent travels alone and as many as six out of ten go on longer car journeys. This fact creates an incentive for petrol stations to match their offering to suit the needs of potential consumers and to study their behaviour. Moreover, petrol consumption in Poland is seasonal and reaches the highest level during the holiday months. Holidays are traditionally a period of increased demand for liquid fuels in Poland and the CEE region, as a result of a much bigger number of leisure trips made in this period by various means of transport (Furman, 2019).

Consumer behaviour and motivation are among the most common subjects described in scientific literature in recent years. From a holistic perspective, this topic has been addressed, among others, by Solomon, Russell-Bennett & Previte (2012); Sethna & Blythe (2016) or most recently by Hoyer et al. (2020). Motives of consumer behaviour are discussed in the context of various industries and areas (Diaz-Moriana et al., 2020; Niehoff & Oosterwijk, 2020; Schütz, Schultheiss, 2020). A review of the existing literature reveals that there are few studies on the petrol station sector in Poland. The situation is similar when it comes to studies investigating motivations of customers using petrol stations (Zawadzki, 2016); most of which are industry reports (POPiHN, 2020). The majority of publications devoted to the petrol station sector in Poland concern ecological aspects (Mozga & Stoeck, 2018), focus on petrol as a chemical product (Samociuk et al., 2017) or on logistics (Kaleta, 2016). Only a handful of scientific articles, mainly written by one of the co-authors of this article, concern the issue of broadly understood marketing. It is difficult to find scientific articles analysing petrol stations in relation to tourism. Similarly, no typology of petrol stations has been developed on the basis of customers' purchasing preferences and the method of facility management. So far, there have been no comprehensive studies of broadly understood marketing in the petrol station sector. The identified research gap was one of the reasons why the authors decided to investigate the topic.

As a result of the study, a new typology of petrol stations has been created. The survey revealed the following reasons for visiting a petrol station: to buy fuel (91% of responses), to use the toilet (35% of responses) and to buy some other articles (32% of responses). The most common reasons for choosing a given petrol station were: 1) convenient location 2) petrol station brand and 3) the price of petrol and other goods in the store. Answers given by customers of petrol stations located along motorways and expressways turned out to be the most different (in terms of statistical significance) from those referring of other those station types. These differences included both the reasons for stopping at a fuel station and the structure of non-fuel purchases.

The main purpose of this article is to identify and assess the behaviour of customers of petrol stations in Poland regarding their motivations for choosing particular facilities and their non-fuel purchases. Specific types of service stations are identified, which are used to indicate statistically significant differences in relation to customer behaviour. The discussion is based on a review of the literature, particularly on the analysis of industry reports about the petrol station sector in Poland and on the results of a survey conducted by the authors.

2. The petrol station sector in Poland and its typology

According to the Polish Organization of Oil Industry and Trade (POPiHN), on December 31, 2018, there were 7,765 petrol stations in Poland, including, among others, 1,787 stations belonging to the PKN ORLEN network and 3,779 stations owned by independent operators (POPiHN, 2020, p. 1). After analysing reports on the petrol station sector in Poland (prepared by POPiHN, petrol companies and commercial research agencies), it can be concluded that there is no single, consistent and universal classification of petrol stations in Poland. This is clearly due to the fact that oil companies tend to use different classification criteria, such as:

– market segment (i.e. premium stations vs. economy stations),
– facility size (i.e. "MOP" – rest areas vs. other facilities),
– management form (i.e. stations owned by petrol retailers, franchise stations, or already disappearing patron stations).

In view of the above situation, one of the authors of this article conducted a questionnaire among experts participating in the "PetroTrend 2017" forum (people with real impact on the shape of the petrol station sector in Poland), which contained a question about factors that currently differentiate the petrol station sector and those that, in their opinion, should differentiate this sector (the purpose was to compare the current state with the desired state of the sector). 30 correctly completed questionnaires were returned out of 300 that had been distributed among the forum participants. Because the conference was only attended by invited guests and members of top management, the number of responses can be regarded as satisfactory. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of particular factors on a 7-point Likert scale. The set of factors to be assessed was created after analysing industry reports on the petrol station sector (published by POPiHN, Statistics Poland (GUS) and marketing agencies). The first question was about the extent to which a given factor differentiates the petrol station sector in Poland, while the second was about the extent it should differentiate this sector. A summary of responses is presented in Table 1.

The respondents' answers reveal a possible discrepancy between the current and the desired state. From the results in Table 1, it can be concluded that the existing classifications of petrol stations in Poland should be less dependent on their form of ownership (i.e. private station, franchise station, station owned by a petrol retailer). On the other hand, more attention should be paid than is cur-

Table 1. Factors differentiating the petrol station sector – current and desired state

Factor	Rating of the current state*	Rating of the desired state*	Difference
Station brand	5.8	5.7	–0.1
Location	5.4	5.3	–0.1
Station's offering:			
• the range of goods offered in the store	4.8	5.3	+0.5
• additional services, e.g. car wash, shower for drivers	5.0	5.7	+0.7
• additional catering service (e.g. restaurant or bistro)	5.4	6.0	+0.6
Price of petrol	5.1	4.9	–0.2
The presence of an attendant in the driveway	4.4	4.9	+0.5
Ownership type	4.8	3.8	–1.0
Petrol station area	4.2	3.8	–0.5
Opening hours	4.0	4.8	+0.8
Possibility of payment directly at the pump	3.7	4.4	+0.7
Number of fuel types sold	3.9	4.4	+0.5

* The scale of responses from 1 to 7, where 1 – should not differentiate at all, 7 – should definitely differentiate the petrol station sector.

Source: own study.

Table 2. Petrol station typology

Petrol station type	Description
1. Petrol stations located in cities	stations located within city limits or in the suburbs (with the exception of facilities listed in points 4 and 5)
2. Petrol stations along motorways and expressways	petrol stations located along motorways and expressways (denoted as „S" roads)
3. Transit petrol stations	service stations not located in cities or along motorways and expressways
4. Supermarket petrol stations	a relatively small group (190) of stations owned by supermarkets but with a considerable share of petrol sales in the whole petrol station sector
5. Others (including automatic petrol stations)	all petrol stations that do not fall into the other categories

Source: own study.

rently the case to factors related to the range of the offering i.e. the number and type of products and services on offer as well as implemented innovations (e.g. possibility of paying directly at the pump).

In an effort to address these discrepancies, a new classification of petrol stations is proposed (Table 2), which takes into account the results of the questionnaire conducted among industry experts, the analysis of the offering of individual petrol stations and many years of professional experience in the petrol station sector gained by one of the authors of this article, who is a long-time panellist at the PetroTrend forum, a columnist for the Stacja Benzynowa & Convenience Store magazine and author of scientific publications on the petrol sector As a result, the proposed typology of service stations is unrelated to ownership form and instead focuses on factors directly related to the petrol station's offering and its location.

3. Methods

The article is mainly based on the results of a survey of petrol station customers; in addition, reference is also made to the questionnaires conducted during the "PetroTrend 2017" forum (with a view to developing a typology of petrol stations) and "PetroTrend 2018" (with the purpose of identifying reasons for making purchases at petrol stations).

The aim of the survey of petrol station customers, which was carried out in June 2018, was to determine purchasing preferences of people who stop at petrol stations, in general terms and broken down by type of petrol station. Data in the survey were collected during computer-assisted web interviews (CAWI), which, in addition to providing results quickly, make it possible to determine the representative composition of the sample, ensure good quality of answers and minimizes the risk of affecting the neutrality of respondents). The sample consisted of 603 adult Poles. Care was taken to ensure the sample was representative in terms of sex, age, size of the town of residence and province. (Representativeness is understood as a continuum approaching the best possible representation, i.e. a representative mapping of the distribution of selected key features of the population in the sample). Table 3 presents the structure of the sample population (by age, sex and place of residence), while the latter part of this section provides information on the use of petrol station offering in the last month, the use of a given type of petrol station and reasons for visiting petrol stations (broken down by station type). The sample is almost evenly distributed in terms of sex (52% women to 48% men) and age, except for the age groups: 18-24 and 45-54, where the percentage share was slightly lower than the average value of 19%. In terms of the place of residence, the provinces with the largest share of respondents include Śląskie (13%), Mazowieckie (13%) and Małopolskie (10%); the most numerously represented types of localities are villages (38%), towns up to 19,000 inhabitants (13%) and cities with 500,000 or more inhabitants (12%).

Table 3. Sample structure in the survey of petrol station customers (%)

Sex		**Province of residence**	
Female	52	Dolnośląskie	7
Male	48	Kujawsko-pomorskie	5
Age		Lubelskie	6
18-24 years old	10	Lubuskie	4
25-34 years old	19	Łódzkie	7
35-44 years old	19	Małopolskie	10
45-54 years old	15	Mazowieckie	13
55-64 years old	18	Opolskie	3
65 years old and above	19	Podkarpackie	6
Size of the place of residence		Podlaskie	3
Village	38	Pomorskie	4
Town with up to 19,000 inhabitants	13	Śląskie	13
Town with 20-49,000 inhabitants	10	Świętokrzyskie	3
Town with 50-99,000 inhabitants	9	Warmińsko-mazurskie	3
City with 100-199,000 inhabitants	8	Wielkopolskie	9
City with 200-499,000 inhabitants	9	Zachodniopomorskie	4
City with 500,000 and more inhabitants	12		

Source: own study.

4. Results

Bearing in mind the trend towards increasing convenience (*#convenience walutą naszych czasów*, 2016), i.e. the fact that modern consumers expect more (e.g. faster and better service) with less effort (e.g. shopping in a convenient location), service stations perfectly fit this trend for a large group of communities. More and more often, they are used for buying basic grocery products, over-the-counter medicines, high-quality coffee or for dining. In the context of the above, in the first part of the survey, respondents were asked about their history of purchases at petrol stations. The survey questionnaire consisted of 11 main questions and 8 demographic questions. Respondents were instructed to provide answers regarding their previous visit to a service station. At this point it should be emphasized that the question was intentionally directed to the general population rather than only to drivers (which is the case with most studies conducted in the sector). This approach made it possible to obtain a more reliable representation of customers' interests in the offering of petrol stations.

89% of the respondents reported having used the offering of a petrol station in the previous month, which could mean the fact of refuelling and/or the purchase of other products.

It is interesting to consider which types of petrol stations identified in the above typology are visited by the respondents. The most frequently chosen category are petrol stations located in urban areas (73% of responses), followed by petrol stations located along motorways and expressways (11%), transit petrol stations (8%) and petrol stations located at shopping malls (6%). These results are not surprising in the light of data on the number of petrol stations by category, which indicate that facilities in urban areas are by far the most numerous, while fully automated stations are the least common. According to by POPiHN, on December 31, 2018, there were 192 supermarket stations and 83 stations located along motorways (POPiHN, 2020, p. 3). From the perspective of a person traveling across Poland, the number of petrol stations located along motorways and expressways is insufficient. According to a report of the Supreme Audit Office (carried out in the summer of 2018), there are over 150 kilometres of sections without the possibility of refuelling (Information Market, 2018).

From the perspective of our research, the type of petrol station chosen by customers is more interesting than the petrol station brand. In this survey, however, we also decided to ask respondents about their most frequently chosen brand. The resulting ranking is as follows: PKN ORLEN (40%), followed by BP (14%) and Lotos (10%). Circle K, Shell and supermarket petrol stations (for example, those owned by Intermarche, Auchan) were mentioned by 7% of respondents.

The distribution of answers naturally reflects the structure of the petrol station market in Poland. According to POPiHN (2020, p. 1), the three major petrol retailers with the largest number of stations (as at December 31, 2018) are PKN ORLEN (1,787 stations), BP (552) and Lotos (495), which corresponds to the top three choices indicated by the respondents. It is worth noting the significance of supermarket petrol stations (for example Tesco, Auchan, Intermarche): despite the relatively small number of facilities in Poland (192 as at December 31, 2018), they account for a relatively large percentage of fuel sales and are chosen as often as stations operated by the well-known brand Circle K (former Statoil), which had 349 petrol stations (POPiHN, 2020, p. 1-4).

As regards the most common reasons for visiting petrol stations, despite the observable trend of petrol stations becoming a kind of convenience-type facilities, the main reason for visiting petrol stations was the purchase of petrol (91% of responses), followed by the need to use the lavatory (35% of responses), use the catering services and buy other goods in the store (32% and 28% respectively). In other words, every third respondent reported using the lavatory and shopping in the station store during the last visit.

Interesting conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the respondents' answers in relation to the identified types of petrol stations. In this case, the analysis is based on results of significance tests between specific groups in relation to the total sample (Table 4). Statistically significant differences are marked in blue (the result for a given station type is higher than the average result for all types) or yellow (the result for a given station type is lower than the average result for all types). The table shows results of a two-tailed Z-test for a proportion, which was used to test the statistical significance of differences between the percentages of responses associated with particular types of petrol stations. Welch's t-test was used to compare the means for each type. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Regardless of station type, the purchase of petrol was invariably the most important reason for stopping at a petrol station. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the case of petrol stations located in cities this reason was statistically more common than the average for all station types (95% of respondents), and in the case of petrol stations located along motorways – much less common (75% of respondents). Of all stations types, respondents' answers concerning stations located along motorways deviated the most from the average. This difference was particularly evident with regard to the purchase of catering services and the use of the lavatory. As many as 70% of respondents reported that the reason for stopping at a motorway petrol station was to take advantage of its gastronomic offering (e.g. to buy a hot dog), compared to the average of 32% (a statistically significant difference can also be observed for supermarket stations (20%) and

Table 4. Reasons for visiting a petrol station by station type (%)

Reason for visiting	Average for all stations	Petrol station type				
		Petrol stations in cities	Petrol stations along motorways	Transit petrol station	Supermarket petrol stations	Other (incl. automatic)
To buy petrol	91	95	75	83	85	92
To buy other products (e.g. beer)	28	29	34	13	24	23
To use catering services (e.g. buy a hot-dog)	32	29	70	43	20	0
To check the technical condition of the vehicle (compressor, etc.)	6	6	2	13	7	8
To wash the car	18	19	18	7	17	15
To socialize	2	1	5	3	3	0
To use the lavatory	35	33	57	33	34	15
Others (please specify)	1	1	0	0	2	0

Notes: blue – the result for a given station type is higher than the average for the all stations (statistically significant difference); yellow – the result for a given station type is lower than the average for the all stations (statistically significant difference).

Source: own study.

petrol stations located in cities – 29%). Similarly, the need to use the lavatory was much more commonly mentioned with respect to motorway service stations on motorways (57%) than the average for all stations (35%). Motorway petrol stations are often referred to as motorway rest areas. The results of the survey show that this is an apt description: the gastronomic offering was almost as important a reason for stopping at a petrol station as the purchase of petrol (70% and 75% of responses respectively). The need to eat a warm meal or drink coffee is undoubtedly a more important reason for visiting a petrol station in the case of customers who are on the road and stop at motorway and transit petrol stations. The significantly lower share of respondents mentioning this reason with regard to supermarket petrol stations is often justified by their relatively poor infrastructure (if there is a store at all, it is relatively small).

The survey shows that only 2% of respondents use the other (including automatic) types of petrol stations. The sample size for this type is therefore definitely too small to justify conclusions about significant differences. In addition, automatic petrol stations (the predominant sub-group in this category) only sell petrol and are self-service facilities.

5. Motives for choosing a specific petrol station

When analysing reports (Raport On Board PR ECCO Network, 2008; Qualifact, 2013) concerning customers of petrol stations, one of the most common questions asked concerns their motivation for choosing a specific petrol station. During the survey, the respondents were also asked the following question: "*What made you choose this particular petrol station?*" The respondents were given 11 reasons to choose from. The set of options was created on the basis of previous analyses of reports concerning purchasing preferences of petrol station customers and interviews conducted during the "PetroTrend 2018" forum. Respondents in the main survey considered a convenient location to be the most important reason for choosing a particular petrol station (76% of respondents). In practice, this means that a petrol station is visible from the road and has an appropriate entry and exit system. In Poland, quite a number of petrol stations are located near a roundabout, where one might expect petrol sales to be very high; however, in reality, customers prefer to use other petrol stations precisely because of the inconvenience of entering or exiting the station, which requires them to go around the roundabout or get stuck in a traffic jam. The second most important reason for stopping at a specific station is the station's brand (38% of responses), while the price of petrol and other products in the store ranks third (33% of responses). This order of the most frequent answers (i.e. location, petrol retailer brand, which is identified with the quality of petrol and other products and services offered, reasonable price) can be observed in many surveys conducted over the last few years (Raport On Board PR ECCO Network, 2008; Qualifact, 2013), also in the survey "Polak w drodze" (Poles on the road) carried out in 2016 by the Institute of Market and Social Research (IBRIS) commissioned by Santander Consumer Bank (Santander, 2017, p. 6). Percentages of responses for the remaining motives are as follows: loyalty program (22%), convenient facility infrastructure (12%), gastronomy offering (7%), no other petrol station nearby (7%), fleet cards (5%), special offers in the store (3%) and request from a traveling companion (3%). Interestingly, only 4% of respondents claim that they don't care where they buy petrol.

Despite the similarities mentioned above, one can observe significant differences when the responses are related to individual types of service stations (Table 5). As can be seen, there are several statistically significant differences between the responses. For customers stopping at a petrol station in the city, location was more commonly mentioned (79%) as a reason for stopping than the average for all stations (76%). When choosing a petrol station located in the city respondents are more frequently motivated by the brand (42%) or the possibility of benefiting from a loyalty program (25%). In most cases, loyalty programs function according

Table 5. Reasons for choosing a specific petrol station by station type (%)

Reason for stopping at a given petrol station	Average for all stations	Petrol station type				
		Petrol stations in cities	Petrol stations along motorways	Transit petrol station	Supermarket petrol stations	Other (incl. automatic)
Convenient location	76	79	55	70	76	69
Convenient infrastructure and station signage	12	10	27	17	12	15
Station brand	38	42	36	47	15	31
The price of petrol and other products in the store	33	29	30	40	53	69
Gastronomic offering	7	6	23	10	7	0
Loyalty program	22	25	14	20	12	23
Store promotions	3	4	5	0	3	0
Fleet card	5	6	2	7	2	0
Request from a travelling companion	3	2	9	7	3	0
No other alternative	7	6	7	13	5	8
I don't care where I buy petrol or other products	4	3	9	7	3	0
Other (please specify)	1	1	2	7	0	0

Notes: blue – the result for a given station type is higher than the average for the all stations (statistically significant difference); yellow – the result for a given station type is lower than the average for the all stations (statistically significant difference).

Source: own study.

to the same principle: drivers collect points, which they can redeem after reaching a certain limit for credit toward their next purchase, discounted services, or giveaways. Only a few petrol retail chains (e.g. Moya, which has been growing dynamically recent years) offer their loyal customers a 'here and now' discount on the price of petrol. Only a few customers declare using loyalty programs offered by petrol retailers. In the case of petrol stations located in cities, the price of petrol and other products was less commonly mentioned as the reason for the choice (29%), compared to other types of service stations, but it still should be regarded as a relatively important motive compared to other motives listed for this type. However, this reason was significantly more important for respondents choosing supermarket petrol stations (53% of respondents compared to the average of 33%). On the other hand, this group was significantly less concerned about station brand (15%) or the possibility of benefiting from loyalty programs (12%). With respect to motorway service stations, the infrastructure (properly designed parking lots, rest zones, the possibility of comfortable eating, etc.) was significantly more commonly mentioned as the reason for the choice (27%). This can be explained by the fact that stations along motorways and expressways have to meet certain conditions and the site location has to be approved by the General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways (GDDKiA). As already mentioned, for customers of motorway service stations, the gastronomic offering is significantly more important (23% of respondents chose this motive compared to the average of 7%). Another aspect that matters to customers of these stations is the signage, which is natural given the fact that often travellers stop there to rest (and have a coffee or lunch). This is used as an opportunity for innovative promotional campaigns that help to sell FMCG products.

6. Non-petrol purchases of petrol station customers in Poland

It has been repeatedly emphasized that petrol stations are increasingly used as convenience stores, which is reflected in the range of products bought by the survey respondents at petrol stations. Obviously, petrol, their main commodity on sale, was by far the most popular item listed by the respondents (90% of responses for all station types). As regards other products, the most frequently chosen items include: basic gastronomic/catering offering (31% of responses), alcoholic beverages (20% of responses), basic groceries (19% of responses) and services (13% responses). Based on the collected data, observations and the authors' own experience, these results are typical for this sector.

Additional insights can be obtained by analysing responses for different types of petrol stations (Table 6). Frequencies of specific categories of purchases made at petrol stations located in the city, transit stations and supermarket stations were not significantly different from the average for all stations. However, statistically significant differences were found with respect to station motorway service stations, where a much larger share of basic (36% compared with the average of 19%) and non-standard food products (11% vs. 5%) was reported. There are also significant differences regarding the frequency of buying car chemicals, oils and lubricants (23% vs. 12%). In contrast to higher than average frequencies of non-petrol purchases at motorway service stations, the percentage of respondents who reported buying petrol was the lowest share of all types (73% compared to the average of 90%). To sum up, the three most frequently bought non-petrol products (in terms of the percentage of respondents who listed them) at motorway petrol stations are foodstuffs, basic groceries and car accessories. In the case of petrol stations located in cities, these include foodstuffs, basic groceries and services.

Table 6. Purchases by station type (%)

Products	Average for all stations	Petrol station type				
		Petrol stations in cities	Petrol stations along motorways	Transit petrol station	Supermarket petrol stations	Other (incl. automatic)
Petrol	90	93	73	83	86	100
Basic groceries	19	18	36	23	17	8
Other food products (e.g. healthy food, fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and cold cuts)	5	4	11	7	3	0
Car chemicals, oils and greases	12	12	23	7	8	8
Personal cosmetics and hygiene products	5	4	7	7	5	0
Alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, strong alcohols)	20	20	23	23	17	0
Services (e.g. vacuum cleaner, compressor, car wash)	13	15	11	10	10	8
Basic gastronomic offering (hot dogs, grilled cheese baguettes, coffee)	31	31	48	37	20	8
Additional gastronomic offering (e.g. lunch dishes, pizza, other hot drinks)	4	4	14	3	0	0
Mobile phone top-ups	5	5	5	0	3	8
Additional services offered by external providers (e.g. sending and collecting parcels, car rental)	2	2	9	0	0	0
Accessories and tools (bulbs, batteries, towing cables, etc.)	6	7	7	3	2	8
Other (please specify)	3	4	2	7	0	0

Notes: blue – the result for a given station type is higher than the average for the all stations (statistically significant difference); yellow – the result for a given station type is lower than the average for the all stations (statistically significant difference).

Source: own study.

7. Conclusions

Traveling by car involves the necessity of stopping at petrol stations. The survey described in the article has shown that 89% of the respondents regularly use the offering of petrol stations. The presented analysis is based on the following typology of service stations: 1) petrol stations located in cities, 2) petrol stations along motorways and expressways, 3) transit petrol stations, 4) supermarket petrol stations, 5) Other stations (including automatic ones). The new typology was developed in an effort to avoid the problem of having to use different classifications that appear in industry reports, which could not be easily applied for the purpose of the study.

When one considers all station types, invariably the main reason for stopping at a petrol station is the need to refuel (91% of responses), followed by the need to use the lavatory (35% of responses) and buy some other products (32% of responses). The most common reasons for choosing a particular petrol station include its convenient location, station brand, price of petrol and other products, the possibility to benefit from a loyalty program, convenient infrastructure and signage.

As regards non-petrol purchases, the most commonly mentioned are basic gastronomic offering (e.g. hot dogs, casseroles, coffee) – 31%; alcoholic beverage (mainly beer) –20%; and basic food products – 19%. Such results are consistent with those found in reports published by professional marketing agencies, for example *Monitor satysfakcji klientów sieci stacji paliw* (ARC Rynek i Opinia, 2017, p. 66).

From a statistical point of view, patterns of customer behaviour at motorway petrol stations was found to be significant different from the rest. These differences can be observed as regards the reasons for stopping at a petrol station facility as well as the structure of non-petrol purchases. Undoubtedly, this information should be taken into account by those responsible for the planning the range of products on sale at petrol stations, especially when it comes to the catering offering.

The study has revealed the need for further research on the petrol station sector, for example concerning the importance of specific product categories in the offering of a given type of petrol station. There is little literature on this topic, so more research is needed, given the popularity of this sector. The authors are aware that the presented study has not exhausted the topic and further studies should be conducted in the future. Possible directions for future research in this area include an attempt to determine to what extent petrol stations have become another type of convenience stores and identify changes in the range of product categories available at petrol stations, e.g. to investigate whether regional and healthy food can become an attractive addition to the existing product range.

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W trakcie podróży: motywy wyboru obiektu oraz transakcje pozapaliwowe klientów stacji paliw w Polsce

Streszczenie. Zgodnie z danymi raportów Polacy bardzo często podróżują po kraju, co niewątpliwie stwarza liczne możliwości biznesowe. Stacje benzynowe postrzegane jako przedstawiciele sektora handlu detalicznego są jednymi z wielu podmiotów, które próbują wykorzystać tę sytuację. Głównym celem artykułu jest identyfikacja i ocena zachowań klientów stacji paliw w Polsce pod kątem: 1) oceny motywów wyboru danego obiektu, 2) określenia, jakie transakcje pozapaliwowe są przez nich dokonywane. W artykule zastosowano metodę badawczą CAWI. Całkowita wielkość próby wynosiła 603 osoby. W celu zapewnienia reprezentatywności próby w trakcie badania udziały kontrolowano pod kątem następujących cech respondentów: płci, wieku, wielkości miejsca zamieszkania oraz województwa. Na zachowania konsumentów może wpływać bardzo wiele czynników, uwzględnienie każdego z nich jest w praktyce niemożliwe i dlatego stanowiło to podstawowe ograniczenie badawcze. Niemniej jednak przedstawione w artykule wyniki powinny zdecydowanie wzbogacić dotychczasową wiedzę w badanym obszarze. Podstawową wartość artykułu stanowi: stworzenie autorskiej typologii stacji paliw, identyfikacja i ocena motywów konsumenckich przy wyborze danego obiektu oraz dostarczenie informacji o transakcjach pozapaliwowych dokonywanych przez konsumentów. W przypadku motywów wyboru danego obiektu do najważniejszych zaliczono: 1) dogodną lokalizację obiektu, 2) markę stacji benzynowej oraz 3) cenę benzyny i towarów sklepowych. W przypadku transakcji pozapaliwowych dokonywanych przez konsumentów najczęściej wybierane były: podstawowa oferta cateringowa/gastronomiczna, napoje alkoholowe oraz podstawowe artykuły spożywcze. Dodatkowo omówiono istotne statystycznie różnice między zidentyfikowanymi typami stacji paliw w ramach wymienionych obszarów. Wyniki przeprowadzonych badań mogą być wykorzystane przez właścicieli stacji paliw w celu dostosowania strategii marketingowych, zwłaszcza w zakresie tworzenia oferty dla konsumentów.

Słowa kluczowe: stacje paliw, zachowania konsumenckie, zachowania nabywców, motywy, struktura zakupowa, proces decyzyjny

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Harouna Zongo*

A change project to promote conflict resolution in order to ensure sustainable development in Africa

Abstract. The article describes the idea of a change project (a new course) in higher education. The aim of the change project is to promote traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and strategies in order to ensure sustainable development in Africa. The new program will combine the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and various conflict resolution scenarios by applying the technique of design thinking. The program will involve discussions about types of conflicts in Africa, the real causes of these conflicts, mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution (with special emphasis on the rakiré and the palaver tree) and design thinking. The author intends to implement the program at the Faculty of International Relations of the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv (Ukraine).

Keywords: conflict resolution, Africa, education, sustainable development, sustainable development goals, design thinking, change project

JEL Codes: F51

1. Introduction

The African continent has long been the epicenter of many conflicts. Among the most common conflicts are:

– intra-family conflicts (*fadenkélé*), characterized by irreducible antagonisms between children of the same father;

– conflicts between individuals and villages (land disputes and those relating to clashes between shepherds and sedentary people over the grazing of animals on the latter's cultivated fields;

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– inheritance and matrimonial disputes, which are the most widespread in rural areas;

– political, social-economic conflicts experienced by all African urban centers.

These conflicts of political, economic, cultural, territorial and religious origin constitute a major obstacle to the successful development of the African continent. In addition to the endogenous causes, underlying those conflicts, it is possible to identify exogenous ones, one of which is the famous Berlin conference (late 1884-early 1885), which led to the balkanization of the continent. Africa is estimated to lose $ 18 billion a year to armed violence, roughly the annual amount of development assistance for the entire continent. An African nation's economy typically declines by about 15% as a result of an armed conflict (as highlighted in Oxfam's 2007 report, "Africa's Missing Billions: International Arms Flows and cost of conflicts"). Violence and instability, and the resulting crime levels, discourage outward investment (*Why we need a global Arms Trade Treaty* n.d.).

The purpose of the university course escribed in this article is to promote African traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution and design thinking.

Some universities are increasingly confronted with the problem of inefficient or often outdated education. The author of this article believes that if Ukrainian students are given opportunities for their creative skills to flourish through design thinking, they will be more willing to assimilate traditional methods of conflict resolution in Africa. By the end of the module, students may be able to suggest new strategies for conflict resolution.

The proposed course will help students to apply new strategies drawn from African traditions and realities. As the father of the Burkinabè revolution[1] Captain Thomas Isidore SANKARA, once said in 1984, "to African problems, African remedies" (Sankara, 1987). It would therefore be inappropriate to keep believing that conflicts on the continent can be reduced with non-African-based solutions. The course will be held at Ivan Franko National University in Lviv for the benefit of Ukrainian and European students, but most of the materials to be used during the course come from African sources and traditions.[2]

[1] Captain Thomas Sankara, considered the father of the Burkina Faso revolution in August 1983, was president of Burkina Faso. At the head of a group of Burkinabè army officers, he seized power on August 4, 1983 in a coup. He changed the country's name from the Republic of Upper Volta to Burkina Faso (land of honest men). During three years of the revolution, he reorganized the Burkinabè administration under the banner of "fight against mismanagement, corruption and favoritism". He is regarded as the African Che Guevara because of his commitment to defend the cause of the weakest in Africa and everywhere in the whole world where needed. 33 years after his assassination, Thomas Sankara remains an icon who inspires Burkinabè and African youth. This is why he is the father of the Burkinabè revolution.

[2] For a long time, the former colonizing powers, such as France and Great Britain, believed that conflicts in Africa could be resolved only in offices in Paris, London or Brussels. On several occasions,

Emphasis should be placed on design thinking by associating it with traditional methods of conflict resolution (for example: the rakiré and the palaver tree). For example, when faced with a case of conflict between two villages, students will have to play a scenario game based on traditional methods in order to find new solutions.

As future diplomats and experts in international politics, students of International Relations will be able to develop skills based on systems thinking, futures thinking, values thinking, competence collaboration, critical thinking, personal competence, and integrated problem-definition competence.

Drawing on African realities including traditional kingdom[3] our students will be able to develop various skills in order to propose new strategies and face different global challenges.

2. The status of African studies at the Ivan Franko National University

There are currently several programs at the Faculty of International Relations of the Ivan Franko National University. With respect to purely African studies, programs devoted to African issues are often treated superficially. In addition to being approached superficially, African studies are not treated with an adequate understanding of African realities. One likely reason for this situation is the history and geography of Ukraine, which is located in Eastern Europe and Africa, has played a marginal role in its foreign policy: currently Ukraine has only 10 embassies in Africa.[4] In addition, since Ukraine's independence, no Ukrainian president has visited the continent and cultural exchanges are not very intense. Consequently, Ukrainian students show little interest in African issues. Also, it is difficult to find professors of conflictology or African studies who combine instruction in con-

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Europe wanted to resolve certain African conflicts outside the African continent, as was the case with the Linas-Marcoussis agreement in relation to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire in January 24, 2003. That agreement was a failure and failed to resolve the Ivorian crisis. However, it was the Ouagadougou political agreement in 2007 that led the various protagonists to compromise and accept a national unity government. That second agreement led to the elections and allowed the country to regain stability. This is why the course will be based on certain African realities.

[3] A traditional kingdom is a political and administrative entity representing territorial communities living in a given region, subject to the domination of a chief whose authority no longer rests solely on kinship, but also on prestige and some limited coercion. In sub-Saharan Africa, traditional kingdoms were micro-states before colonization.

[4] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. https://mfa.gov.ua/diplomatichni-ustanovi/inozemni-diplomatichni-ustanovi-v-ukrayini

flict resolution and sustainable development. This is why the proposed approach has received a preliminary favorable opinion from the authorities of the department of international relations.

2.1. The idea of a change project

The goal of my change project is to develop a student training program aiming at promoting traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in order to ensure harmonious sustainable development in Africa, allowing students to understand the reasons for the recurrence of conflicts on the continent, to associate the sustainable development goals with different conflict resolution scenarios. The new student training program will be called "Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Development in Africa".

The objective of the change project is to promote peace, stability for sustainable development on the African continent.

The training program is intended for students of the Faculty of International Relations of the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv and other Ukrainian and European educational institutions.

The expected outcomes of the change project include:

– students will be able to suggest effective and lasting scenarios in order to reduce or even end conflicts in Africa,

– increased presence of the SDGs and sustainability in conflicts resolution,

– new appreciation of conflict situations in Africa.

Given that according to the United Nations Development Program the most pressing social and political issues in Africa require actions aimed at strengthening gender equality, empowering women and girls, etc., the project will mainly focus on the following SDGs:

1 – no poverty
2 – zero hunger
3 – good health and well-being
4 – quality education
5 – gender equality
6 – clean water and sanitation
9 – decent work and economic growth
10 – reduced inequalities
13 – climate action
15 – life on land
16 – peace, justice and strong institutions
17 – partnerships for the goals

2.2. Actions towards the change project

Several steps need to be taken in order to launch the new program.

Step 1. Present the project to the dean of the faculty of international relations. To date, we have been able to present the outline of the project to the dean who encouraged us to go through with our plans for the benefit of the faculty.

Step 2. Present the project to the vice-dean of the faculty. Due to his busy schedule, we have not been able to meet him yet.

Step 3. Work with my thesis supervisor, who has given his full support, being the mainstay of the faculty as regards African studies. He will spare no effort in implementing this new program.

Step 4. Submit the program draft to the head of the department of international relations and professor of Diplomacy. The professor finds the project fascinating and will bring his influence to support us.

Step 5. Benefit from the support and experience of the director of the northern Europe center at Ivan Franko National University in Lviv, who specializes in environmental protection and sustainable development. She has been receptive to all of our requests and encouraged us to implement the project. With all this support, we plan to implement the project in two years.

2.3. Methods of instruction to be used: design thinking

Design thinking will be used as a strategy of conflict prevention. To achieve the 12 development goals (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, climate action, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, partnerships for the goals) that I believe are priorities for the African continent, for example by means of stimulating role plays based on 'Rakiré' (the joking kinship) and the palaver tree (for example, with the class divided into two or three groups, where each group represents one clan and acts out the role of a cousin against another group. The scenario simulates a conflict situation and the groups gather under the palaver tree to find a solution). We believe that Africans must rely on their traditional mechanisms that guarantee stability, social cohesion and progress. Two of these traditional mechanisms include the 'Rakiré' (the joking kinship) and the palaver tree.

"'Rakiré' or joking kinship is a social practice typically found in West and Central Africa, which allows, and sometimes even requires, members of the same family (such as distant cousins), with certain surnames (in Senegal, in Burkina), of certain ethnic groups or inhabitants of a given region, territory and province (which can then be described as a joking alliance) to make fun or to insult one another without consequences These verbal confrontations are interpreted by anthropologists as a means of relaxation, social cohesion or reconciliation, or even as a sacred practice. The rakiré is a mode of mitigating or resolving inter-ethnic conflicts in West Africa and was a major component of human relations in ancient societies. In Burkina Faso, the practice remains alive, despite the transformation of cultural frameworks and the impact of imported values. A joking alliance is a cement that binds and federates cultures, languages, regions and even countries. The practice is in fact based on a form of supra language or supra culture allowing ethnic groups to find themselves on a common ground of understanding that allows the symbiosis of cultures. From then on, the notions of language and ethnicity are sublimated through the verbal game and the practice of the phenomenon to retain only the expression of shared common values such as solidarity, mutual understanding, and brotherhood. In short, the interbreeding of values, languages and cultures as a form of language transcending the simple notion of ethnicity and language" (Zongo, 2020, p. 18).

"Regarding our second conflict resolution solution and the 9 sustainable development goals mentioned above, we propose a 'palaver tree.' In fact, the palaver tree is where we are in Africa at night in the countryside to start 'long and tumultuous discussions' and to talk, organize a city or talk about a lot of things" (Zongo, 2020, p. 17).

"It is also this majestic tree, impressive scale, which gives a cool shade especially during the dry season: in general, the Shea, the 'cailcédrat,' the mango tree, etc. that is to say, the tree whose leaves are not deciduous. It gives shade in any season. The life of the village is governed by the palaver tree: marriages, land conflicts, good or bad behavior of a particular young man, this or that young girl, good or bad harvest, news from relatives of neighboring villages, protection of the village against witchcraft, and to protect the village against various plagues (drought, epidemics, etc.). The village is thus scrutinized from all angles. It is truly a collective management of the village. The cohesion of the village community is thus ensured, just as peace and understanding are ensured between inhabitants of the same village and then between neighboring villages" (Zongo, 2020, p. 18). Here jokes or derision are used between allies, very often with the intention of insulting and ridiculing, making it possible to relax relationships. The method gives one ally the opportunity to say bluntly to the other ally whatever they want. In the event of a conflict, the "joking brother" can use the pact that binds him to his brother in order to calm and pacify him. As the entities (village, kingdom) are mostly made up of people with the same surname, the "joke fraternity" can help to prevent or stem a conflict in traditional societies. Even in modern times, in the latest so-called Tuareg conflicts in northern Mali, the political authorities did not hesitate to put it into practice to have the Tuareg tribes and their brothers in Sonrai joke around the negotiation table and elsewhere.

3. Types of conflicts in Africa

"According to a report by APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism), there are several types of conflicts on the continent. The conflicts generally encountered on the continent stem from electoral violence and land issues, while the predominant causes or factors of conflict are ethnic / religious differences, inequalities and poverty" (Gluhbegovic, 2016, p. 1).

3.1. The real causes of these conflicts

"In fact, electoral competitions in Africa are regularly peppered with violence and protest, which can lead to confrontations between members of the same political party, or between the different political parties. The organization of elections is still not transparent. In order to stay in power, some leaders do not hesitate to resort to unorthodox practices. Such behavior can only lead to unrest in the country. In 2011, for example, there was a post-election crisis in Ivory Coast causing the death of nearly 3,000 people because President Laurent Gbagbo did not want to recognize the victory of his opponent Alassane Dramane Ouattara.

Moreover, one of the conditions present in several African countries and serving as a catalyst for political conflicts is the transition from a one-party system to a multi-party system or from an authoritarian regime to democratization. Tensions and lack of stability characterize these periods of change, which can lead to a power vacuum or challenges for the new power in place, compared to the old. In most countries that have begun the transition to a form of democracy, elections have become the battleground for the power and location of political conflict. [APRM]" (Gluhbegovic, 2016, p. 8).

As already mentioned, I agree with many other experts that the current issues of the African continent originated in the Berlin conference, held from November 1884 to February 1885, without the participation of African indigenous leaders.

Indeed, the new map of Africa drawn up following the Berlin conference is the origin of the border and social conflicts observed everywhere in Africa. This bad mapping is, for example, the cause of the Christmas War, fought in December 1985 between Mali's Moussa Traoré and Burkina Faso's Captain Thomas Sankara over the Agacher Strip along the border of northern Burkina Faso. The resulting territorial division does not take into account the linguistic, ethnic, religious, geographical, political and historical realities that existed in Africa. Thus, entire families have been divided or separated between two or more countries. This is one of the reasons why family names, such as Ouattara, Coulibaly or Traoré can be found in several West African countries.

3.2. Mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of conflicts

"As many international experts believe that the current problems in Africa are largely the result of the Berlin Conference, we believe that the African people themselves must take the initiative to resolve conflicts on the continent. That's what motivated Captain Thomas Sankara when he said, "we must accept to live as Africans. This is the only way to live free and dignified." Without an adequate solution to the continent's problems, I believe that it would be very difficult to achieve sustainable harmonious development" (Zongo, 2020, p. 18).

According to a World Bank data, 13 of the SDGs are a priority in two thirds of African countries. These objectives are: 8 – Decent work and economic growth; 2 – zero hunger; 3 – good health and well-being; 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions; 9 – industry, innovation and infrastructure; 6 – clean water and sanitation; 1 – no poverty; 4 – quality education; 7 – affordable and clean energy; 10 – reduction of inequalities 13 – climate action; 5 – gender equality; 11 – sustainable cities and communities (Gyimah-Boadi, 2019, Fig. 1).

4. The added value that the project will bring to universities

The department of international relations and diplomatic service of Ivan Franko University is among the best departments that train experts in international politics in Ukraine (*Top Universities in Ukraine. 2020 Ukrainian University Ranking*). But it is difficult to understand why questions concerning Africa are not approached with greater interest in this institution. Therefore, by implementing this project, I believe that the department of international relations will be strengthened and equipped with the tools and skills to tackle African issues with ease and mastery. Several studies show that Africa is a continent of the future, given to the young age of its population, the growth of its economy, the availability of natural resources. This project will therefore enable Ivan Franko University to develop students' knowledge of conflicts in Africa and highlight the need of resolving them in order to achieve sustainable development. This project will also make Ivan Franko University one of the first in Ukraine to have a subject that combines conflict resolution and sustainable development in Africa.

5. Conclusion

The main idea of the project is to promote sustainable development on the continent by first addressing the root causes of the ongoing conflicts. Conflicts on the African continent have various sources, including the famous Berlin conference. This conference triggered multiple border disputes between the new states. The resolution of certain conflicts requires taking into account several factors, including the cultural aspect. Although experts say “rakiré” and “palaver tree” strategies cannot always be invoked to resolve armed conflict, the importance of these practices as an effective means of conflict prevention must be taken into account.

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Projekt pt. „Rozwiązywanie konfliktów w celu ustanowienia zrównoważonego rozwoju w Afryce”

Streszczenie. Artykuł opisuje projekt zmian w szkolnictwie wyższym, którego celem jest promowanie tradycyjnych mechanizmów rozwiązywania konfliktów i strategii zapewniających zrównoważony rozwój w Afryce. Proponowany program łączy w sobie cele zrównoważonego rozwoju (SDG) oraz różne scenariusze rozwiązywania konfliktów z wykorzystaniem techniki myślenia projektowego. Z tego względu w ramach nowego przedmiotu (konfliktologii) zastosowane będzie podejście zwane myśleniem projektowym, które pozwoli studentom tworzyć i proponować nowe rozwiązania ograniczające konflikty w Afryce. Zastosowana metoda obejmie dyskusje na temat rodzajów konfliktów w Afryce, ich rzeczywistych przyczyn oraz mechanizmów pokojowego rozwiązywania konfliktów, ze szczególnymi uwzględnieniem tradycyjnych metod afrykańskich: metody Rakiré i drzewa palaver. Program ma być realizowany na Lwowskim Uniwersytecie Narodowym im. Ivana Franko na Ukrainie.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwiązywanie konfliktów, Afryka, edukacja, zrównoważony rozwój, cele zrównoważonego rozwoju, myślenie projektowe, projekt zmiany

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Third places in the home. The idea of cohousing

Abstract. The aim of this article is to analyse cohousing in the context of Ray Oldenburg's theory of a third place. The author argues that cohousing, which promotes the idea of deep social relations in connection with respect for individualism and sustainable consumption and prosumption, can be viewed as a new form of socialization similar to Oldenburg's concept of the third place. The first part outlines ideas underlying the concept of a third place, while the second part focuses on the assumptions of cohousing and demand conditions for its development. This theoretical article continues the author's considerations about the concept of third places in the era of globalization.

Keywords: cohousing, third place, community

JEL Codes: O44, R31, Q01

1. Introduction

According to David Bakan (1966), agency and communion are the two main aspects of human existence – each person is the achiever of his goals (*agency*), a member of the community and a participant in social relations (*communion*). Efficiency is connected with the pursuit of individualism. Although it can be assumed that the process of individualization produces a proud, free and independent individual, aware of his or her choices and consequences of his or her own decisions, it should be remembered that individualization creates the risk of being unhappy (Elias, 2008), which can be manifested by a withdrawal into

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privacy, isolation and powerlessness, with a negative impact on social relations (Bokszański, 2007, pp. 77-79). These processes are deepened by the virtualization of consumption, which leads to increased anonymity of the individual and a lack of belonging. Everyone searches for a sense of togetherness in an attempt to satisfy the eternal human need to get together in groups. As a result, new forms of social integration are emerging. The new forms of socialization that are emerging now guarantee social recognition, while preserving the freedom and individuality of each participant. As Olcoń-Kubicka rightly points out, individuality acquires meaning only within a group of people who feel the same way: by identifying with them, the individual begins to understand what their individuality is (Olcoń-Kubicka, 2009, p. 38). One example of a new form of social integration is *cohousing*, which promote the idea of deep social relations in connection with respect for individualism. It can be viewed as an alternative perspective on Oldenburg's concept of the third place, providing a bridge between the traditional approach to the third place and its application to the virtual world (virtual spaces)[1].

2. The concept of a third place

The concept of a *third place* was proposed by Oldenburg in his 1999 book entitled *The Great Good Place: cafes, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community*. The concept was an attempt to capture the changes that had taken placed in the second half of the 20th century, namely the declining importance of a multi-generational family and the impact of corporate trends, which created a need for places where people could rest from the hardships of everyday life at home and responsibilities at work. Oldenburg referred to such places as third places (with home being the first place, and work – the second place) and defined them as physical places where people spend their free time, public spaces where those seeking happiness outside the home and work get together to enjoy various informal and often spontaneous meetings. The third place was supposed to be primarily a space for establishing interpersonal relations, an anchor of social life stimulating creativity. The space of third places is important for social sustainability. Communities in a given society have different dimensions, therefore places that help to maintain interpersonal contacts also vary. A third place is just as important as a community itself; if there are no places to meet and act together, the community may not survive (Ellis, 2019). The main activity that people in third places are involved in is talking and exchanging ideas to get to know each other and, since these spaces tend to be close to home, to unite the local community

[1] More about virtual third places: (Markiewicz, 2019).

and help it identify with the surrounding space. These places are inconspicuous, available for everyone and at any time, where no formal criteria of participation or exclusion apply, although they owe their unique character to the regulars. They are places for relaxing, but also for having fun, places outside the physical home environment, but close to it in terms of mental comfort and support. The local community identifies itself with the place, which gives rise to a sense of identity, which, apart from vitality and accessibility, is a basic determinant of the value of space as a place of possible social activities and behaviours (Wicher, 1999). In this way, by increasing social trust, security, individual satisfaction and happiness, these places allow the regulars to improve their quality of life.

In Oldenburg's view, third places are located in the public space, which can be treated as a common good. It can be an external space (open space) e.g. streets, squares, parks, or an internal space (closed space), located within buildings that can be accessed by everyone: pubs, cafes, hairdressers. This space provides an opportunity to meet other people. However, the mere existence of a generally accessible space where interpersonal contacts can be made does not necessarily mean that it will be a space of real interactions. Several types of interpersonal contacts can occur within this space: intimate contact (a distance of less than 0.5 m) reserved for family members and close relatives; individual contact, usually reserved for relatives (0.5-1.2 m), social contact (1.2-3.6 m) between people who do not know each other well or at all (no physical contact); and public contact (3.6-7.6 m) between strangers (only through eye contact) (Hall, 1966). Depending on the type of contact, we can speak of different depths of relations between the participants, ranging from fleeting ones (*so-called passive sociability*), which do not require direct contact, to very close ones (*so-called permanent sociability*) (Mehta, 2013). Hence, meetings in third places do not always involve close contact between the participants and do not evoke a sense of identification with the place and the community on their part.

The third place concept is mainly applied in works on the psychology of place, the management of public spaces in cities and sustainable development (e.g., "sustainable socialization" – Dudek, 2019; Dymnicka, 2011; Finlay et al., 2019; Jagodzińska, 2018; Jeffres et al., 2009; Kosiacka-Beck, 2017; Lewicka, 2012; Mehta, 2013; Mikunda, 2004; Mao & Kinoshita, 2018) and increasingly often in the context of the influence of the media (including the Internet) on consumer behaviour (Hadi & Ellisa, 2019; Markiewicz, 2019; Peachey, 2008; Wilkowski, 2016).

3. The idea of cohousing

The concept of *cohousing*, which is a translation of the original Danish term *bofællesskab* (living community) was introduced by American architects Charles Durett and Kathryn McCamant in the early 1980s. The idea of a "living community" was born in Denmark in 1964 and referred to residential settlements tailored to individual needs and expectations of their community members, who were obligated to take part in house design. The first community was supposed to consist of 12 houses located around the so-called Common House. Unfortunately, the project faced opposition from potential future neighbours, who associated the community with the left-wing movement. Despite the project's failure, its architect Gudmand-Hoyer began to promote the idea of cohousing. As a result, in 1968, further attempts were made to create housing communities in accordance with the principles of bofællesskab, which resulted in the creation of two cohouses – Skarplanet in Jonstrup and Seattedammen in Hillerod (Jagiełło-Kowalczyk & Ptaszkiewicz, 2018). In order to facilitate the process of establishing cohouses, the Sambo association was established in 1978, which consisted of lawyers, engineers and social scientists. The association significantly influenced the development of these cohousing communities throughout Denmark, and enabled the spread of the idea in Europe and the United States (Jagiełło-Kowalczyk & Ptaszkiewicz, 2018). Currently, cohousing is most popular in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United States and Canada.

Dick Urban Vestbro defines cohousing as housing with shared spaces and shared facilities for residents (Vestbro & Horelli, 2012). It is a bottom-up, non-institutional housing model with an emphasis on a healthy balance between private, family and community life (Meltzer, 2005). The idea of cohousing is to create a sustainable residential environment that takes into account the expectations of future residents, their goals and social needs (Jagiełło-Kowalczyk & Ptaszkiewicz, 2018). Residents form an integrated group, who share values and goals. It is an authentic community of residents, which is based on cooperation and close, even social relations with the neighbours, and thus helps to continuously strengthen neighbourhood ties.

The main principle of cohousing is that a community should be formed by people of different gender, with different educational backgrounds, interests and lifestyles. This lack of homogeneity in the community provides opportunities to learn from others, share experiences, skills and views. Additionally, it prevents social exclusion, e.g. of the elderly or lonely people, and limits the level of unequal division of household duties between men and women.

However, there are also communities formed by social groups with certain common characteristics, such as female, gay, religious or senior cohousing. Cohousing habitats vary depending on how they function. They can consist of several single-family houses, terraced houses or a single residential building. Different organizational models of habitats can be distinguished depending on cultural differences of the regions in which they function and preferences of their inhabitants. They can manifest in architectural forms (such as those mentioned above), criteria for the selection of residents (e.g., in the USA there are cohousing communities for white and wealthy members only), the size and number of housing units, the size and type of common space (e.g., in the Netherlands there is no common kitchen, which in other communities is treated as a basic element), shared duties, forms of ownership (rented or owned) or the state's involvement in the organization and management of the community (private, local government, built by foundations or associations).

Kathryn McCamant, Charles Durrett and Ellen Hertzman distinguished six main features of cohousing: participatory process, intentional neighbourhood design, extensive common facilities, complete resident management, non-hierarchical structure and separate income source (McCamant, Durrett, & Hertzman 1994, p. 38). The **participatory process** refers to the participation of future residents in the process of planning, designing, organizing and managing the habitat. Both the individual residential units and the common space are adapted to the needs and requirements of the community. At the same time ensuring privacy and social interaction means that each community member has their own apartment (with basic rooms, i.e. bedroom, bathroom, kitchen) with access to the common area, a space where community members interact. In order to provide a sense of individuality on the one hand and a sense of community on the other, it is important to design two types of space: private and public. The appropriate delineation of these spaces is meant to ensure optimal conditions for community life (**intentional neighbourhood design**), which are enabled by **extensive common facilities**. Within the common space, one can distinguish between internal and external spaces. Internal public spaces include laundries, workshops, playrooms, common rooms, reading rooms, shared balconies, saunas, yoga rooms, rooms with discussion circles, film meetings, open lectures. External public spaces include playgrounds, barbecue areas or a vegetable garden cultivated cooperatively. Also important are places where community members meet regularly for common meals, such as dining rooms and the shared kitchen. **Management** by cohousing residents means democratic decision making at community meetings and the creation of working groups responsible for particular activities within the community. Residents organize themselves into smaller groups responsible for organizing the life of the community, activities that are supposed to bind the group together, or for resolving any conflicts that may arise. **Non-hierarchical structure** and co-decision making means sharing responsibility for the majority of decisions by all community members, although this does not exclude the possibility of delegating leaders responsible for particular matters, such as community finances. What is important is the egalitarian treatment of all residents, which makes each resident feel responsible for his or her goods. The last characteristic of cohousing is **separate income source**, which means that each resident is responsible for earning their own income, and the common budget, created from contributions of community members, is used to cover the costs of habitat renovations or, for example, child care during joint community meetings. Social interactions within a cohousing community are possible thanks to the existence of common goods (common infrastructure), which are usually located in the so-called common house. The co-ownership of some of the goods within the cohousing community requires certain design decisions and ways of clearly distinguishing between the private and public spheres. This separation can guarantee that residents have a sense of intimacy and exclusion, which, as Anna Sokołowska rightly points out, paradoxically supports the development of internal contacts in the public space: thanks to a momentary exclusion from the life of the group, the individual is all the more willing to return to it and continue the relationship of sociability (Sokołowska, 2009). Architectural solutions concerning space in a cohousing community should enable its residents to participate spontaneously in activities undertaken in the common house. If the space outside individual residential units is too large, residents may find it difficult to interact in the common area and participate in joint actions, if it is too small, it may make residents feel like they are violating the privacy of other community members. It is, therefore, important to make sure that the transition between the separated zones (private and public) is smooth and easy, because this is what determines the relationship of the individual to the group and the group to the local community (Sokołowska, 2009). This smooth transition in the semi-public zone, also called the *soft edge* (McCamant, Durrett, & Hertzman 1994, p. 180) is provided by alleys, squares, corridors. Properly planned space within a cohousing community is intended to establish interpersonal relations while guaranteeing the privacy of the residents. As for the sense of security, it is not created by installing bars and locks, but through an appropriate architecture and system of neighbourhood cooperation (so-called *security by design*) (Cieślik, 2014).

4. Third places in the home, demand conditions for *cohousing*

The existence of a common house in a cohousing community makes this model similar to Oldenburg's idea of a third place. And although in this case we cannot speak of a public space but rather a third place in the home, only accessible to community members, the main purpose of a third place is achieved: relaxation, fun, conversation and exchange of thoughts to establish interpersonal relationships. According to George Hillery (1955), a community can be identified through three elements: social interactions, social bonds, and common territory (common space). And while in the traditional community (created e.g. around a third place in Oldenburg's view) the common space is created through interactions and social bonds due to spatial proximity, in the case of a cohousing community the opposite is true. It is the space that does not exist yet, which is the reason for the creation of interactions and social bonds in the community, which are formed in order to create this space. The maintenance and strengthening of interactions and social bonds is facilitated by the existence of common spaces (Kutypa, Wójcik, & Piotrowski, 2018).

Cohousing can be regarded as a new version of Oldenburg' concept of third places, a new form of socialization that was born in response to the changing needs of society and changes in consumer behaviour. Among the most important demand-driven conditions of cohousing are consumers' search for a balance between agency and communion, sustainable consumption and prosumption.

The ubiquitous heterogenisation of consumption is associated with an increase in individualization and the growth of diverse consumer attitudes and behaviours. The number of consumers with sophisticated tastes who openly express their needs and demand products and services through which they can express their identity and individuality is growing. On the other hand, the search for a sense of community is a response to the declining role of a multi-generational family and virtualization of consumption. Technological development and its impact on social relations lead to a sense of loss and isolation and a question arises about the depth of qualitative changes that new technologies are introducing into social life (the problem of treating media as a kind of alternative to the social environment). Cohousing assumes a balanced model of agency – communion of social perception, in which agency means focusing on one's own self and oneself as an achiever of goals, while communion means focusing on other people and one's own relations with them. Unrestrained agency means maximum concentration on oneself and one's own goals, which leads to ignoring relationships with other people and ignoring their goals. On the other hand, an extreme form of communion (unrestrained communion) means such a strong concentration on other people and their relationships that it leads to the abandonment of one's own goals (Bakan, 1996). In the long run, such extreme forms of behaviour have negative effects for the individual and cohousing helps to keep them in balance. On the one hand, the fact of cohousing satisfies individual needs of community residents, private spaces provide them with an opportunity to rest from others on their own terms. As Anthony Giddens (2001) points out, people of late modernity look for a place with which they identify themselves and which identifies them more or less. Members of cohousing communities identify themselves with them, which increases the level of individual satisfaction and happiness and, consequently, the quality of life for each person involved in this form of socialization. On the other hand, as Karin Krokfors rightly points out, cohousing can be an answer to the problems of modern society, its alienation and isolation (Krokfors, 2012), since the main reason people decide to join cohousing communities is because they are seeking to increase the intensity of interpersonal contacts and thus build a sense of security and trust (Sokołowska, 2009). Thus, cohousing can be an ideal combination of agency and communion, providing a guarantee of social recognition while preserving the individuality of each community member. Members of one cohousing community in Tucson, Arizona "seek diversity of backgrounds, ages and opinions, and our common value is our commitment to solving our problems and finding compatible solutions that satisfy all members, each of us wants a greater sense of community, as well as strong interaction with and support for our neighbours" (*What is cohousing*, n.d.). In addition, cohousing can also be a kind of compromise between Oldenburg's idea of third places and virtual online communities. The sense of authenticity of relations, experiences and sensations within a cohousing community (the importance of authenticity as a factor stimulating the growing interest in cohousing) becomes more and more important in this case.

As Vestbro and Horelli (2012) note, cohabitants belong to new groups of "postmaterialists", who differ from members of the consumer society in that they focus primarily on values such as good social contacts, time spent with children, cultural and recreational activities. Sustainable consumption and the emergence of a socially responsible consumer who limits his material needs to what is really necessary, prefers an eco-friendly lifestyle and takes action to limit the destruction of the natural environment is another demand-driven condition of cohousing. The consumer takes on, in a way, the role of a citizen, who appreciates the intangible pleasures of life, practices active neighbourly contacts, which involve, for example, exchanging, lending or other forms of community building (Lorek & Fuchs, 2005). Cohousing is characterised by a rational management of goods, which is based on the principles of sustainable housing and therefore assimilates easily in social groups that value sustainable consumption (in terms of economic, ecological and social rationality). Cohousing can be a new solution in the face of dualism in the behaviour of some consumers who, on the one hand, try to limit their consumption and, on the other hand, fall into the trap resulting from an overabundance of products and services offered (the paradox of choice and the so-called Diderot effect). Cohousing can be treated as one of the forms of shared consumption, as its idea coincides with the assumptions of the economy of sharing space (Common House), objects and equipment (common lawn mower, washing machines, bicycles, cars) or skills (mutual assistance regarding plumbing, carpentry, accounting services or child care). This allows consumers to experience what various products and services can offer them, without many inconveniences resulting from owning them (including the negative environmental impact). Cohouses are usually created with great respect for the surrounding area. Some of them additionally meet the conditions of so-called ecological villages, where all activities undertaken by their inhabitants are performed without harming the environment and are integrated with the natural environment in order to support healthy, natural human development (Sokołowska, 2009). Cohousing additionally promotes a lifestyle with a greater emphasis on social cohesion and creates conditions to ensure that all its inhabitants can meet their basic consumption needs. The heterogeneous nature of cohousing communities is conducive to intergenerational dialogue, which prevents social exclusion. In addition, cohousing, which promotes the model of sustainable development, takes into account not only the short-term benefits of specific actions but also long-term effects of decisions on future generations and their environment (Sokołowska, 2009). According to some members of cohousing communities, the goal of cohousing is to study and model innovative approaches to ecological and social sustainability, to have a minimal impact on the land and create a place where all inhabitants will be equally valued as part of the community (EcoVillage Ithaca, 2020; Sonora Cohousing, 2020).

Prosumption, which consists in the consumer's active participation in the creation of the product in order to better satisfy his or her needs, is another important condition of cohousing. Modern consumers do not want to be passive recipients, they want to be active, they want to participate not only in consumption, but also in product development. Thus, a new model of consumption is being created, not only by offering the consumer the possibility of choosing products but also an opportunity to get involved in the development process, from the very first stages. Prosumption is primarily an expression of opposition to mass, standardized production based on uniform consumer needs and tastes. Prosumers want to emphasize their originality and uniqueness, to receive a product that is a reflection of their own ideas, and this is possible only if they can participate in the process of its creation. The creation of a cohousing community starts with the creation of a vision of community by defining common expectations and needs. This means choosing a specific place of residence, selecting a specific type of cohousing, its size, form of ownership, use of the common area, mutual relations and neighbourly cooperation, etc. At this stage it is important to take into account individual needs of particular members and to envisage how they can be satisfied within that cohousing community. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of space management within a cohousing community is to get all its members involved in the community's life. This is done by creating working groups (based on members' knowledge and skills in specific fields) responsible for particular activities within the community. In addition, management carried out by residents means democratic decision making at community meetings. The revolutionary principle of treating future members of the cohousing community as prosumers, who actively participate in the process of creating and functioning of the common space (from design to space management), ensures social recognition while providing each participant with a chance to express their individuality. It translates into a sense of responsibility for the common space and a sense of attachment to the community. It should be emphasized that the demand conditions of cohousing discussed above complements and strengthens the other conditionality while prosumption makes it possible to find a balance between agency and communion and strengthens activities in the field of sustainable consumption.

5. Conclusion

Third places are changing because the needs of society are changing, requiring the creation of new spaces suited to the needs of new consumers. Third places need to be developed and improved to meet new needs and to enable modern consumers engage in creative activities. Creating a space that could be used as a third place is difficult, especially in the context of defining parameters that have a psychological impact and generate specific social behaviour (Dudek, 2019). Third places have to provide comfort to their visitors on different levels. And since modern consumers have different needs, places that are supposed to satisfy these needs should also differ. The traditional concept of third places needs to be expanded and adapted to new trends in consumer behaviour, including the search for a balance between agency and communion, sustainable consumption, and prosumption. According to the author, the idea of cohousing can be viewed as an answer to modern consumer requirements and can be viewed as a new form of socialization similar to Oldenburg's concept of the third place.

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Trzecie miejsca w domostwie. Idea *cohousingu*

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest analiza cohousingu w kontekście teorii trzeciego miejsca Raya Oldenburga. Autorka stawia tezę, że cohousing promujący ideę głębokich relacji społecznych w powiązaniu z poszanowaniem indywidualizmu oraz zrównoważoną konsumpcję i prosumpcję może stanowić nową formę uspołecznienia zbliżoną do trzecich miejsc Oldenburga. W części pierwszej artykułu przedstawiono główne elementy pojęcia trzeciego miejsca Oldenburga, w części drugiej zaprezentowano założenia idei cohousingu oraz popytowe uwarunkowania jego rozwoju. Praca ma charakter teoretyczny i stanowi kolejną część rozważań autorki dotyczących koncepcji trzecich miejsc w dobie globalizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: cohousing, trzecie miejsca, wspólnotowość

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Oppermann, M. J. (2000). Tourism Destination Loyalty. *Journal of Travel Research*, *39*(1), 78-84. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F004728750003900110

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Scott, N. R., & Le, D. A. (2017). Tourism Experience: A Review. In N. R. Scott & J. Gao (Eds.), Visitor Experience Design (2nd ed., pp. 30-52). CABI. Warszawa 102-123. https://doi.org/10.1080/10645578.2016.1144023

- **E-Book**
  Mitchell, J.A., Thomson, M., & Coyne, R.P. (2017). *A guide to citation*. https://www.mendeley.com/reference-management/reference-manager
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- **Cały portal internetowy**

Zawiera: nazwisko, inicjał autora. (rok, miesiąc, dzień). Tytuł. Tytuł portalu internetowego. URL:

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