

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ADULT EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF FACING MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Prof. dr. Vaiva Zuzeviciute

(Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania),

Prof. dr. Margarita Tereseviciene

(Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania)

Aida Norviliene

(Klaipeda University, Klaipeda, Lithuania),



Aim:

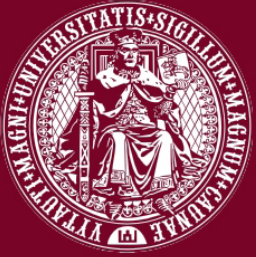
- This presentation aims at presenting data from an empiric study (qualitative, focus group and written reports of the discussions in focus group) that was aimed at identifying what meaning of citizenship did respondents attribute to citizenship.



Object:

The **object** of the study is implications for citizenship and intercultural education.

Methods of analytical and empirical study were employed in the process of developing the paper.



The limitations of a study

- The major limitation of the study is the low number of respondents, which is a characteristic of almost all qualitative studies. However, the limitation is counterbalanced by comparison of contribution of three groups of respondents.



Challenges in the Globalised World

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas

In recent decades, the rapid processes of globalization (the migration of peoples, cultural synthesis) determines to new mixed societies creation, with different cultural and linguistic elements.

An increasing number of industrialized societies is the broader cultural or multicultural (Giddens, 2005).



Challenges in the Globalised World

In a multicultural environments intercultural interaction broadens the public's cultural awareness. The interaction forces people to reflect, think over and take stock of their own culture, understand the importance of democracy and respect for human rights.

Therefore, the intercultural education is the first step towards in understanding and respecting other cultures.



Reciprocal nature of intercultural learning

In a multicultural society we need to have awareness of the rules and expectations in different situations.

Communication styles and teaching-learning strategies can be different, but much depends on personal tutorial help, on individual guidance in problematic situations and on the possibility to communicate with students and other people (Kondrotaite, 2008).

Therefore, one of the main issues to be emphasized in this paper is a reciprocal nature of intercultural learning.

On the one hand, people have to be prepared for learning in multicultural contexts, e.g., mobility (have to know foreign languages at a certain level, and also have certain attitudes to new situations and people), and on the other hand, it is a multicultural context that accelerates learning both of languages, communication skills, awareness building and even maturing.



Citizenship and Intercultural Competence

In intercultural education is very important that everyone understand their responsibilities as citizens.

In the changing society the classical concept of citizenship as well change over to holistic wherein in addition to legal and political elements occur in social, cultural, intercultural, equal opportunity, ecological, European and global citizenship elements (Montane, Beernaert, 2003).



Citizenship and Intercultural Competence

Citizenship – the personal competences whole (social skills, attitudes, knowledge of identification with their countries, cultural environment and political-social activities), that according to historical period, gaining a different meaning and form (global, cultural, national citizenship) (Balciuniene, 2007).

A holistic approach to understanding citizenship helps to more precisely reflect the characteristics of modern man: the openness and willingness to communicate, the ability to publish their own ideals and to coordinate with other people's ideals.



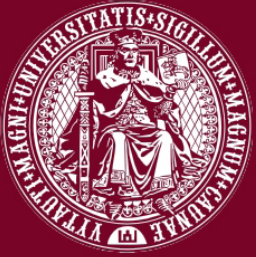
Methodology of empiric research

- Procedure of focus group discussion. The empiric study (carried out in spring, 2004, in Lithuania) was carried out on the basis of the critical references analysis. In order to answer research question: *How concepts of citizenship and citizenship education are perceived by school community members and adult learners*, the empiric study (focus group discussion and reflection) was organized.

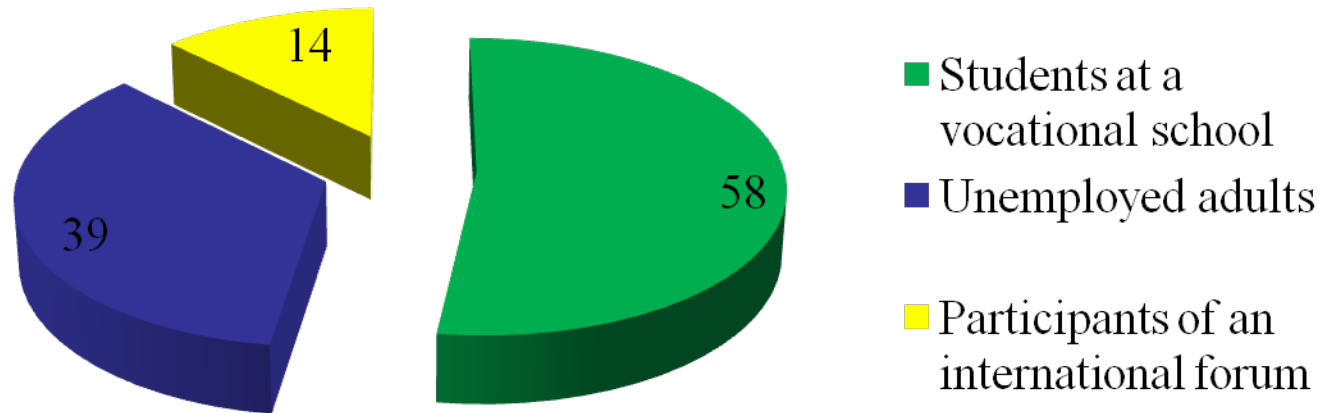


Methodology of empiric research

- Three groups of respondents were asked to reflect and provide a written report on the theme: “*To be a citizen for me means.....*”. Each session took place for 1,5- 2 hours. First half an hour was dedicated to initial discussions. Then respondents were asked to discuss and reflect, and provide individual reflections. Reflections were anonymous, the length of reflections varied from 2/3 of a page to 2 pages. Written reflections in Lithuanian and other languages were analyzed (Content analysis), categories and subcategories identified.



Profile of respondents



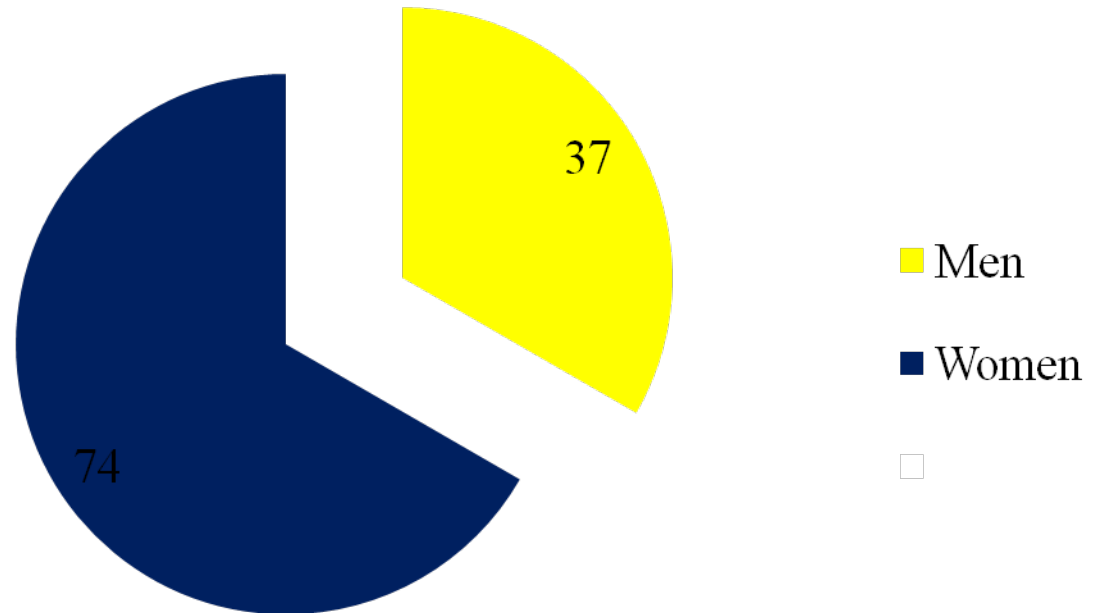
The first group of respondents (58) was comprised of students at a vocational school, aged 17 – 19. The second group of respondents (37) was comprised of unemployed adults, aged 37 – 58, who participated in specially designed courses, provided by college. The third group – participants of an international forum (Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Italy, Sweden) on citizenship in adult education (14), aged 25 – 66, with an average age 42,9 years.



Profile of respondents

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas

Profile of respondents (gender)





Results

Written reflections revealed at least four groups of concepts, which would fall under headings, identified in an above analysis:

- 1. Me – my needs and my rights.**
- 2. Me and others (or Civic duties/responsibilities).**
- 3. Next group includes contributions that take context into consideration.**



Results

To have a passport.
(Contributions were not considered in the analysis, they were allocated into the fourth group; however, there were just 2 of such responses among students, and 1 among unemployed).



Reflections of Respondents

Groups of concepts

| Me – my needs and my rights | Me and others | Contributions that take context into consideration |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>“To be a citizen for me means to be protected, and it also means that I can do whatever I want”</i> 17 years old boy.</p> | <p><i>“To be a citizen for me is to comply to rules, because then I may demand others to comply to rules as well”</i> 18 years old girl.</p> | <p>A 43 years old Italian (woman): <i>“To have equal opportunities for all to participate in social life for the bettering of world”</i>.</p> |
| | <p>A 29 years old woman from Poland stated: <i>“to be active (to be a part) of social, economical, and cultural life”</i>, and a 43 years old woman from Iceland – <i>“To be active and share my opinions with others and thereby influence society”</i>, a 25 years old man from Poland: <i>“Participation in political and social life”</i>.</p> | <p>As one of the 18 years old girls stated: <i>“...is both to work hard to have opportunities, especially with the European Union at hand, I think I will try to work in another country, but I have to know language and proper ways of conduct, also know basic rules in order to be acceptable“</i></p> |



Results

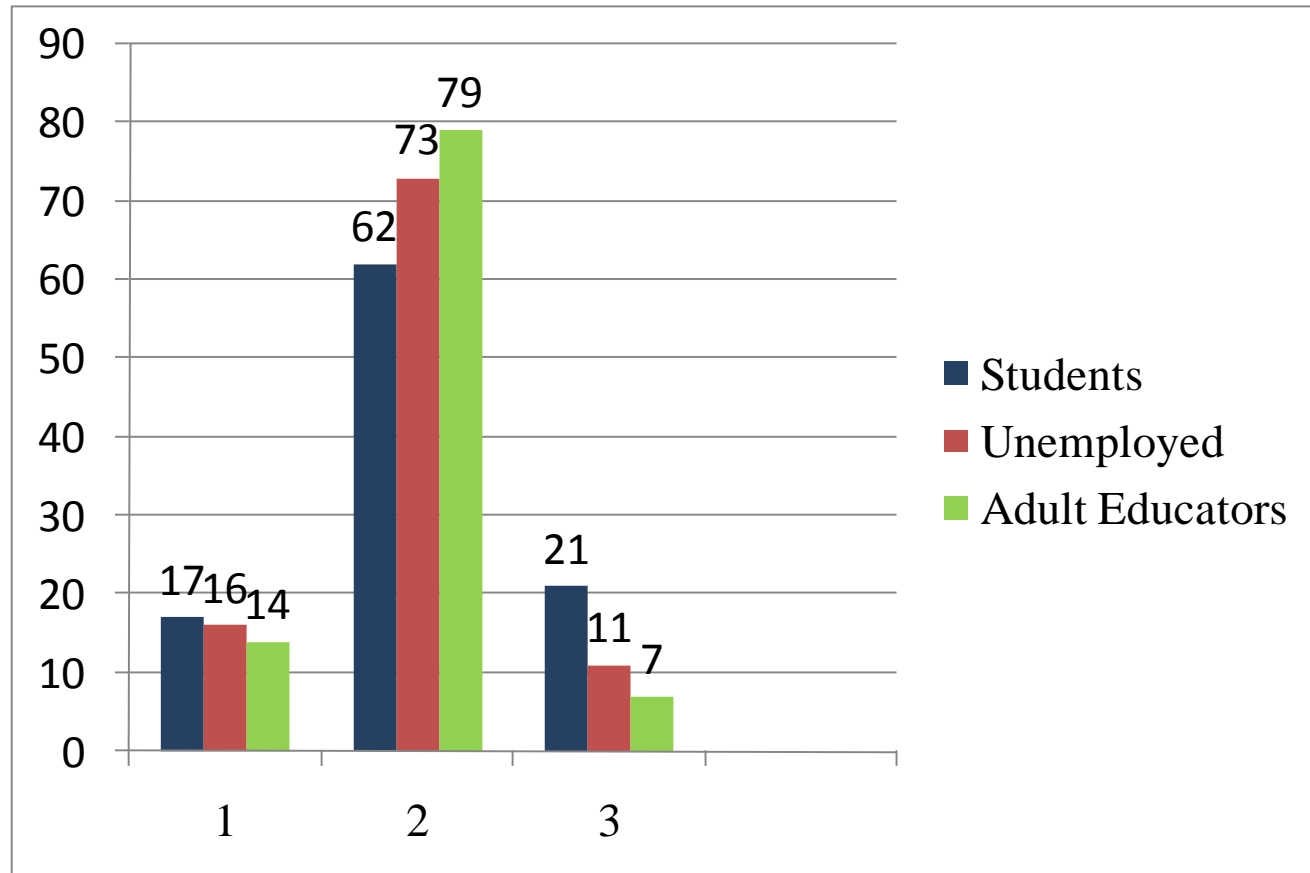


Fig. 1. Distribution of responses among three groups of respondents and three groups of concepts



Conclusions:

- It seems that age is not the main factor for the depth of concept: respondents in both groups noted legacy, international aspect, balance of rights and duties.
- However, younger respondents mentioned, the need and wish to work and socialize in a wider context (Europe) relatively more frequently (21% as compared with 11% among unemployed).



Conclusions:

- Older respondents take into considerations others, they feel responsible for there immediate and activity based communities (79% among adult educators and 73% among unemployed as compared with 62% among students), then younger respondents.
- We may also conclude that older respondents communicate their ideas with other people (primarily – family members), therefore consistency of ideas, continuation of commitments seem to lie firmly within families, and education system has the foundation to build on.



Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas

Thank you for attention

**WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO
ANSWER QUESTIONS**