



Journal
of Intercultural
Management

Vol. 13 | No. 2 | June 2021



WYDAWNICTWO
SPOŁECZNEJ AKADEMII NAUK

Editor-in-chief: Łukasz Sułkowski

Issue Editor: dr hab. Roman Dorczak, prof. UJ

Text design and typesetting: Marcin Szadkowski

Cover design: Marcin Szadkowski

Language editing: Lidia Pernak

Adjustment: Małgorzata Pająk

Editorial office: Społeczna Akademia Nauk, Kilińskiego 109, 90-011 Łódź

(42) 664 66 21 e-mail: wydawnictwo@spoleczna.pl

All the articles published in the journal are subject to reviews.

The electronic version is the primary version of the journal.

© copyright Społeczna Akademia Nauk and Authors
under the CreativeCommons CC-BY-SA license
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>
eISSN 2543-831X

Contents

- Grace Griffiths, Robin Precey, Leopold Sutton
*“Once Upon a Time...” – the Use of Storytelling in Consultancy
Leadership to Influence Behaviour Changes Post 2020* 1
- Michał Szostak
*Does Polish Post-Communist Cultural Burden
Influence the Perception of Creative Identities?* 29
- Mónica Vallejo Ruiz, José Miguel Nieto Cano,
Antonio Portela Pruaño, M^a Begoña Alfageme González,
Ana Torres Soto, M^a Luisa García Hernández
*Generational Diversity among Teachers in the Workplace:
Implications for Teacher Relationships, Identity and Development* 59
- Jagat Bahadur Kunwar
*The Influence of Culture on Collaborative Learning Practices
in Higher Education* 81
- Olivia Gillard
*The Role of Virtual Experiences in Increasing Knowledge,
Motivation, Independence and Cultural Capital from Disadvantaged
Pupils in England* 107



Journal of Intercultural
Management

Vol. 13 | No. 2 | June 2021

pp. 1–28

DOI 10.2478/joim-2021-0059

Grace Griffiths

Canterbury Christ Church University,
Canterbury, United Kingdom
gracegriffiths221@gmail.com

Leopold Sutton

Canterbury Christ Church University,
Canterbury, United Kingdom
leopold.sutton@gmail.com

Robin Precey

Canterbury Christ Church University,
Canterbury, United Kingdom
robin.precey@canterbury.ac.uk
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2125-187

“Once Upon a Time...” – the Use of Storytelling in Consultancy Leadership to Influence Behaviour Changes Post 2020

Received: 01-06-2021; Accepted: 29-06-2021

ABSTRACT

Objective: The authors of this chapter were inspired by the parallels they saw between education and management consultancy in terms of the behavioural

change, and the methods used to achieve this. They seek to explore these parallels in particular the use of storytelling.

Methodology: The chapter first unpicks the notion of storytelling and goes on to examine the idea of behavioural change and the connection between the two. It goes deeper by rooting this in adult transformational learning. This is then linked to some real-life examples (recruitment and consultancy) of storytelling and adult learning.

Findings: The chapter considers some implications for the use of narrative for leaders moving forward into a post-pandemic world.

Value Added: Combining narrative with adult learning theory and comparing the world of business with education.

Recommendations: It is our hope that examination of this intersection will provide lessons relevant to both the education and business professions.

Key words: narrative, storytelling, consultancy, leadership, transformational learning

JEL codes: I20, M12, M53

1. Introduction

While we might like to believe that behavioural change is something that we adopt rationally and consciously, all too often external factors play uncomfortably pivotal roles, not just the stories we are told, but also the ones we tell ourselves.

Storytellers surround us, whether it is politicians telling us that better times are coming, or advertisers letting us know that all we need to do to make our children happy is to buy their product (Chang, 2012; Wilson, 2005). It seems sensible, therefore, to question why and to what end this is the case: just how powerful can stories be?

This is a question that occasionally rises to national importance, such as in the United Kingdom in 2016 when a narrow majority of the country voted to leave the European Union. Regardless of the



arguments made, it has been suggested the ‘Leave’ side won because they were more effective at telling their story (Forss & Magro, 2016), with one author specifically attributing its success to its similarity to classics of the romance genre (Spencer & Oppermann, 2020).

During the COVID-19 virus pandemic of 2020–2021 urgency entered the discussion, and the importance of effective methods for influencing behavioural change came to the fore. As most European countries went into ‘lockdown’ over the COVID pandemic, each had an individual national narrative, some chosen deliberately and some not, influencing the behaviour of the population. The contrast between a virus which “is very much under control” (BBC News, 2020) and the nightly applause for health-care workers in Italy and Spain mirrored the subsequent experience of these countries and demonstrated the influence of these narratives. In the case of these stories, there was a clear and wide-reaching effect not only in the way they made us feel about ourselves, but also in the way we behaved. Indeed, speeches given by Angela Merkel at the height of the coronavirus pandemic had a measurable effect on the levels of both self-reported depression and anxiety nationally in Germany (Teufel et al., 2020).

This chapter was written during the early part of 2021, as COVID-19 rates reached new highs worldwide. We had been forced to rapidly adapt and discover new ways of influencing others, both externally and within organisations. It remained to be seen whether the adoption of new communication channels would turn out to be more or less effective, but it was apparent that they would constitute a fundamentally different way of changing behaviour (Chan et al., 2020).

In this chapter, we discuss the essential components of storytelling, and how these relate to transformational leadership, before going on to look at how behavioural change can be accomplished through the medium of storytelling by examining a professional context. We then introduce a framework for transformational learning in adults and examine whether this

behavioural change can be considered transformational learning in this way.

While we are mindful of the long-term impact that the pandemic will have, we hope to synthesise lessons to enhance behavioural change through the medium of storytelling and ensure this can be used to drive transformational learning and leadership within organisations long into the future.

2. Storytelling Definition, Structure and Elements

2.1. Definition

The defining feature of stories that distinguish them from other forms of communication is that they hold the attention of strangers, sometimes transcending temporal and cultural boundaries. The boundaries for other forms of communication that hold our attention are often more limited. For example, an individual may want to hear about events if they are recounted by a close friend, but this may not hold the attention of a stranger if it includes details they cannot follow: incoherence quickly becomes tedious. Furthermore, sometimes attention is maintained because of the consequence of not listening, such as with students and teachers, or in work meetings. This lack of incentive to make something compelling has resulted in the adoption of a less engaging didactic communication; a concept that is recognised as being undesirable in education and work settings alike (Green, 2004).

2.2. Structure

Across the centuries, scholars have identified and attempted to quantify the key elements that all stories contain, normally in the



range of five to ten (Krulik, 2015; Yorke, 2013; Butcher, 1902). The inability to land on a definitive number demonstrates the subjective nature of the art of storytelling. Therefore, we have chosen to focus on the 3 that appear most consistently because they are comprehensive enough to provide a useful springboard for discussion without being overwhelmingly convoluted. These three are **character, plot, and exposition**. Normally, the main **character** or characters are the ones whose perspective the recipient is provided with, although not necessarily through that character’s voice. A relatable protagonist that demonstrates character development throughout the story is usually considered more engaging (Norrick, 2000). The **plot** considers the coherence of sequential events and draws on one of the most fundamental physical laws of *cause and effect*. There could be many more events that occur in the story, often dubbed *subplots*, but if they do not somehow shift the narrative, then they usually do not feature in the *main plot*. The **exposition** includes setting and backstory, which is often used to set the tone and provide context for what is happening.

In addition to this, there is a striking regularity to the story structure writers adopt, a set of components which have appeared recurrently throughout history: the **status quo**, the **inciting incident**, the **main action**, the **all is lost moment**, and the **resolution** (Yorke, 2013). The status quo is often when the writer provides the exposition, including setting and backstory, so there is some crossover with the aforementioned 3 story elements. The inciting incident is an event the protagonist encounters that interrupts their normality and acts as a catalyst for them to make a change and leave their comfort zone. The main action involves the pursuit of a goal, and it often contains a series of challenges and a point of no return. The all is lost moment is when the protagonist thinks they have failed in their mission and have lost everything, and the resolution is when things restore themselves, either in the same way as before or, more often, with a fundamental shift in perspective and circumstance. It is important that the tone is consistent: if the story has been realistic and serious in tone throughout, and resolves

with a *deus ex machina*, it is jarring and can be ruinous to the entire narrative. The story must have an internal logic to be believable.

An integral aspect to all stories is **conflict**: it drives all of the action from the inciting incident to the end of the story. I am discussing it separately because, in a similar way to emotion, conflict is an inherent part of being human and its existence in stories is due to the prominent role it plays in everyday life. For example, the competing tension between the instinct to protect oneself and one's immediate family and the instinct to collaborate with large groups to aid progression underscores many of the complex social dilemmas our species grapples with. Furthermore, humans constantly have to balance internal struggles, such as the incompatibility between thoughts and feelings. The word *emotion* stems from the Latin verb meaning 'to move': this demonstrates the intrinsic understanding that emotions motivate one to act, which contemporary endocrinology research reaffirms (Goleman, 1996, p. 6). Conflict and emotion, thus, trigger action.

Conversational storytelling is distinct from normal dyadic communication, for which I will adopt Norrick's term, '...turn-by-turn talk' (2000, p. 3). Among other uses, turn-by-turn talk is employed to command, question and plan, whereas the function of stories in conversations are to entertain, enhance rapport, align group members, convey interpersonal information or illustrate a point (Norrick, 2000, p. 200). This type of storytelling can occur spontaneously in reaction to contextual cues: two individuals are chatting in a restaurant when a waitress drops a plate of food, reminding one of them of a time they did something similarly embarrassing, so they proceed to share the story. The recipient will then often respond with a story of their own. A personal anecdote could further illustrate a point, for example, that the local supermarket is always busy on a Saturday. Additionally, 'conversation starters' such as, "Have you ever met a celebrity?," often demand a story, evidencing how stories fuel conversation. Oral narrative tends to be less structured than traditional written stories, with false starts



and repetition a naturally occurring feature, particularly if a rudimentary recount. Despite this, they contain the same elements: an oft cited piece of research into conversational narrative identified 3 distinct narrative clauses, labelled, ‘...action, orientation, and evaluation...’ (Labov & Waletzky, 1967, as cited by Swanson, Rahimtoroghi, Corcoran & Walker, 2014, p. 171). Action clauses incorporate the sequential causal events in the story, akin to the plot; orientation clauses provide the background information, akin to exposition; evaluation clauses offer emotional reactions to key moments in the story, akin to a character’s voice.

2.3. Stories Lead to Awakenings

The success of the human species is often attributed to the ability to collaborate in large groups and the capacity to understand how other people are feeling (Harari, 2011). Our ability to work effectively with strangers stems from the human capacity to empathise with anyone in the population, whether immediate family or not. Being able to imagine what another person is feeling is why we can connect with characters in a story, fictional or otherwise. Some theories postulate that we can experience the same emotions as a character; a concept called *blurring* (Wilson, 2012, p. 246). By providing a new entity to empathise with, it broadens our ideas of who warrants our emotional investment, thus, we believe stories encourage empathy with larger groups of people.

Imagination is a tool that humans can employ to deal with conflict and to make decisions, imagining outcomes to various scenarios in their mind before taking action. **Witnessing a character in a story deal with their conflicts, be they internal or external, provides the recipient with possible outcomes to scenarios, without any real-world consequences for them. It helps one learn how to prepare for future scenarios and make decisions by providing a new perspective.** Harmon argues that the structure of popular narrative frameworks, such as *The Hero’s Journey*, reflect

phases of human growth: experiencing something new, facing a series of challenges, feeling like one has failed, and then resolving the episode by learning and growing (Myers, 2018). We agree with Harmon and we think stories reflect Mezirow's definition of transformational learning (discussed in section 4.2. below), particularly in reference to the '...disorienting dilemma' (Mezirow, 1995, p. 50). The fact that stories make useful teaching tools is a concept that we do not believe is well enough explored in education research, particularly for older students.

Humans are naturally curious: when presented with an initial hook, our brains enjoy piecing together the clues more than being given all the information at once, and we actually anticipate a positive outcome; a phenomenon termed *seeking* (Badt, 2015). It is for this reason that being the recipient of a story is enjoyable, and we are rewarded with endorphins when we solve a puzzle, which could explain why thrillers are such a popular genre. Thrillers in the UK were particularly popular during the lockdowns that occurred in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Flood, 2020).

Stories help us learn by teaching us empathy; broadening our social schemas; increasing our capacity to imagine solutions to hypothetical scenarios; helping us navigate conflict; and demonstrating the process of growth by overcoming obstacles. This transformational learning subsequently leads to awakenings that influence our behaviour and is a useful tool to employ with adults in a work setting. Storytelling may seem dissonant with a professional setting, but we think it can easily be introduced in a presentation, pitch, training, or even just in everyday conversation. As demonstrated above, storytelling and conversation are closely interrelated concepts, demonstrating their cultural and social importance.



3. Transformational Learning leads to Behaviour Change and better Leadership

3.1. What is transformational behaviour change?

The term ‘behavioural change’ is open to varying interpretations depending on the context. Having established our understanding of storytelling, we need a broad definition to apply to contexts in which the authors have experience. Michie, Van Stralen and West (2011) suggested that behaviour is best thought of as the ‘prevalence or incidence of particular behaviours in specific populations’. We can then adjust this for our purposes to say that a behavioural change is a material change in this prevalence or incidence. When we examine storytelling then, we will be looking for cases in our professional experience that meet this criterion.

While this is broad, this would, for example, capture a client who changed their way of working or an employee who participated in a training course, while not capturing cases which are primarily about changing views rather than a shift in behaviour, such as political or commercial advertising. We must acknowledge though that these shifts in attitude can often be the precursor to behavioural change, as we see from Mezirow’s writing on transformational learning discussed in section 4.2. below.

3.2. The notion of power

When thinking about examples of behavioural change, the first to come to mind may be of a negative change imposed by powerful groups on less powerful ones. However, this pertains to

a transactional leadership style, which we are less interested in than a more equitable persuasion to change behaviour that benefits all; this is the contrasting concept of transformational leadership we establish in section 4.1. below. It is vital to ensure the broader applicability of any lessons we are able to synthesise, that we understand that traditional notions of power do not necessarily indicate success in driving behavioural change, as demonstrated by the historical success of climate change protests in driving structural change (Adedoyin et al., 2020).

3.3. Context for change in different environments

In our examination of this subject, we will use two contrasting contexts to examine behavioural change. Because of the experience of the authors, we have chosen contrasting examples in the context of management consulting.

The neoliberal concept of the ‘outside expert’ has been in vogue now for more than 100 years, giving rise eventually to the management consultant. For the purposes of this chapter, we will take a broad view on the definition of management consultancy to encompass the advisory services provided by large management consulting firms and accounting firms and innumerable outside experts who provide their advisory services for a fee. The management consulting industry provides a suitable focus for our examination because they have a demonstrable association with storytelling. For example, Accenture’s recent blog post extolling the skill of storytelling as foundational to all of their work (Aguilar, 2021), and PricewaterhouseCoopers’ explicit efforts to use narrative as a way to draw meaning from recent political and economic events within the United Kingdom (PwC, 2021).

As well as the clear promotion of storytelling, the industry is predicated on organisational change, of which behavioural change is an integral part. It is possible to transform organisations without



changing behaviour but it prevents the benefits from that transformation from being fully realised (Lawson & Price, 2003). This means that effectively changing behaviour is a vital necessity for these organisations.

Finally, as the industry matures and services offered risk becoming commoditised, competition increases (Nissen, 2018). In these cases, there is pressure to use effective narrative in order to differentiate services where this might not be possible using more traditional methods (Padgett & Allen, 1997). For example, we see this in the case of Deloitte’s 175th Anniversary where an advertising campaign is explicitly a historical creation myth of the organisation rather than its current capability or position in the market (Deloitte, 2021).

3.4. Theoretical underpinnings

In order to analyse behavioural change within a recognised framework, we need a simple framework which is applicable across the contexts we will discuss. For this purpose, we choose the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) because of its simple three inputs of **Attitude**, an individual’s desire to undertake a specific behaviour, **Subjective Norm**, an individual’s beliefs about the response of others to their undertaking of that behaviour, and **Perceived Behavioural Control**, an individual’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. This is an expanded version of the Theory of Reasoned Actions (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992) which we require because of the situations arising, where people believe they will be unable to take the action that they believe is right.

There is a weakness, however. As we are considering relatively small groups of individuals rather than whole populations, we cannot expect behavioural change to arise spontaneously when there are sufficient conditions, but instead must look for animating triggers. There are a number of models which aim to incorporate specific triggers, such as Fogg’s behaviour model (2009), however,

these focus on individual actions, rather than shifts in behaviour, or the process of behavioural change, and so are less useful for our purposes. We will therefore use Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour in order to analyse the narratives that are likely to lead to a behaviour change, with the addition that we must acknowledge specific triggers for the given behaviour, rather than assume it has arisen spontaneously.

First, considering **attitude**, the changes in attitude that storytelling can drive are a common thread in our discussion above, including as part of *The Hero's Journey*, where necessarily the protagonist of the story emerges a different character at the end of the journey compared to when they started. Second, regarding **subjective norms**, the 'blurring' that we have previously discussed regarding empathy for the viewpoint of a character may well change our perception of the views of those around us. This provides the necessary personal connection for a shift in subjective norms that is not possible with other methods of influence, such as advertising. We see this through the need we have established for a protagonist that is relatable to us, having more personal impact on norms. Third, regarding **perceived behavioural control**, which is affected by a number of the story elements we have established, including the pursuit of a goal ending in success or failure, particularly the 'all is lost moment'. The 'blurring' concept is likely to render us particularly affected by the subsequent success or failure of the character and oftentimes, when protagonists model overcoming difficulty in their pursuit, it can encourage us to try something previously deemed impossible.

Finally, as we have established, in our context there is a need for a **trigger**. We can see this with the 'inciting incident' component of stories, combined with the ever-present call to action that a story relies on. Triggers can also be found beyond the story as it stands and may instead be caused by our reaction to the story, particularly when internal conflict is motivating a change in behaviour.

This demonstrates that the elements of storytelling can establish foundations necessary for behavioural change. In order to de-



termine whether these are sufficient, we will examine examples of these principles in action within the professional context.

4. Transformational Leadership based on transformational learning and significant Behaviour Change

In this section we draw links between transformational leadership and transformational learning for significant behaviour changes in leaders and their followers, and highlight the clear and valuable place for storytelling for the teller and the listener.

4.1. Transformational leadership

We discuss definitions further below, but we understand **transformational leadership** to mean the alignment of structures and roles and the development of sustainable cultures that enable organisations to make their values and vision a reality. The shift in the education and other leadership agendas requires leaders who are comfortable working in this highly complex and dynamically changing environment that will continue post-COVID-19. If change is to be transformational, it is axiomatic that leadership itself needs to be less managerial or transactional and more transformational. There is some consensus in the literature that such leadership involves:

- building a compelling vision of a better future underpinned by high moral confidence;
- establishing shared organisational goals;
- displaying high levels of interpersonal engagement with a deep understanding of personal, team, and organisational learning;
- offering individualised support;

- modelling best practices and important organisational values;
- demonstrating expectations of high performance;
- providing intellectual stimulation for others and seeking best practices;
- creating a productive culture with a commitment to community;
- developing structures to foster participation in decision-making and distributing leadership throughout the organisation; and
- personal resilience.

If these are some of the ingredients for transformational leadership, then critical perspectives are essential if we are to provide high-quality learning in an increasingly frenetic world. The wisdom to make the best possible decisions in the busyness and potential confusion of differing leadership contexts rests on leaders' abilities to employ intelligent, informed discrimination between choices. We believe such leadership requires a passion for social justice and equity, reflective practice, and critical thinking. Transformational leaders should want to question; they should have the courage and the capacity to challenge conventional wisdom and to critique accepted but untested assumptions, beliefs or values systems. Above all leaders need to understand and cultivate their own ability to learn and that of others whom they serve.

4.2. What is transformational learning?

Mezirow defines **transformational learning** as: '...the process of effecting change in a frame of reference... [which] are primarily the result of cultural assimilation and the idiosyncratic influences of primary caregivers' (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 5–6). All learning is transformational in that it transforms neural connections in one's brain, but not all learning results in an ideological shift that transforms actions and behaviour. We think Mezirow's definition is referring to the latter. From his definition, it follows that every adult has



a unique frame of reference, given that every adult will have been brought up in a particular culture with a unique set of interactions with their primary caregiver. Moreover, these frames of reference are changeable. Often, this theory is applied solely to adults and, although we believe transformational learning can occur in children, we think it mostly occurs in fully formed brains. Modern cognitive research indicates that brains stop developing at the average age of 25, resulting in adults thinking differently to teenagers (Johnson, Blum, & Giedd, 2009).

Learning is unavoidable because human beings are predisposed to do it: it occurs automatically when we think and feel, and when our senses perceive, therefore, it continues throughout our lives (Spitzer, 2006, p. 50). Transformational learning is distinct from other types of learning because, rather than being focused on new, immediate knowledge, it broadens long-held beliefs and schemas, normally regarding social dynamics. The rate of learning decreases with age: younger learners have faster processing speeds and larger working memories than older learners, which means they can be better at learning new technologies and skills that change frequently. It is this phenomenon that explains why the workplace has been known to favour younger employees and why age discrimination protections are required. However, older people have more life experience, therefore more knowledge stored in their long-term memories that new concepts can connect to. This allows for a deeper understanding of concepts that remain more constant, such as emotions and human behaviour, meaning they are better positioned to be leaders and produce more profound observations on the social sciences (Spitzer, 2006). That is why top leadership positions, such as president of a country or headteacher of a school, tend to be taken by older people.

Mezirow argued that the greatest opportunity for transformational learning occurs after a ‘...disorienting dilemma...’ (Mezirow, 1995, p. 50). This is the result of a crisis or transitional event, such as a bereavement, which implies the trigger must be dramatic. Moreover, his use of the verb ‘effecting’ in the definition we

provided, suggests that the process is consciously and deliberately induced. We believe it happens more frequently and at a less conscious level: everyone encounters challenges, and each challenge that is overcome provides a slightly new perspective that we think the subconscious mind helps to formulate. That is why we believe conversational storytelling can be powerful: each conversation contributes to the tapestry of stories collecting in your mind. Gradually, one's ideology shifts, albeit at a slower rate than were one to regularly practise effortful reflection to challenge one's perception. We think self-reflection is a useful habit to build into one's weekly routine, and many educators recognise its merits in formal learning scenarios as well, with blogs becoming a more widely used educative tool. Storytelling has a clear place here.

Thus, we argue that in order for organisations, whether they be public, private or Third Sector, to thrive in the current and future world, they require transformational leaders. How can these people be prepared and developed appropriately and what would such transformational learning look like? Where does storytelling fit in?

Unlike transmissional and transactional learning, for which there is still a place, transformational learning is more profound and involves the learner finding and knowing their own meanings in relation to their role (such as a leader). Transformational learning is thus a deeply challenging, truly educational, intensely liberating process. It is a journey – a well-used metaphor but still of value – with no prospect of reaching a final destination. It is essential that our leaders are travelling in this way to shape their views of the world, the organisations that they run and the people whom they lead.

Such transformational leadership can be learned. Burbules and Berk (1999) stress four components to such learning:

- the ability to think outside the conventional and accepted ways of doing things;
- the maintenance of the essential tension of controversy (being prepared to accept that leadership can be messy);



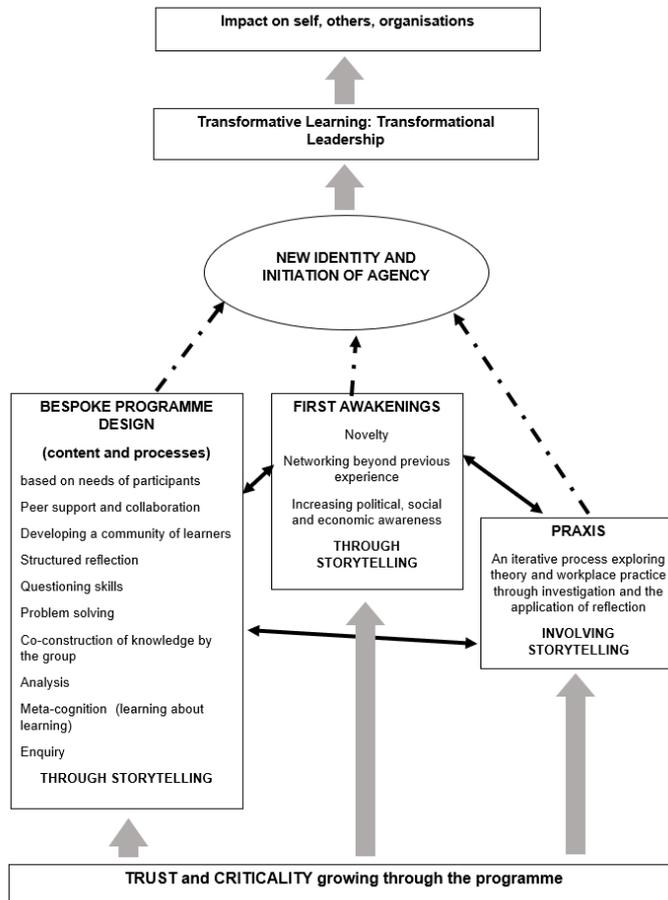
- an interactive, collaborative construction of meaning (developing the involvement of others); and
- fallibilism (accepting that leaders cannot know everything).

Underpinning opportunities for leaders to develop in these ways is the need to develop a critical, enquiring stance. All of these features are those of effective storytelling.

4.3. The place of storytelling in a framework of transformational learning

One of the most useful analyses of opportunities for transformational learning is that by Greenan and Dieckmann (2004). They developed this in evaluating a teacher education course in the USA, but their thinking has wider applications to leadership. Their analysis of transformational learning helps us to see what learning for transformational leadership looks like and how it might be developed. This has been deconstructed and reconstructed by Precey and Jackson (2008). Transformational leadership development seems to rest on three core interrelated elements. These elements are the foundation stones that can make it possible for leaders to learn to behave in transformational ways within their organisations and to help others likewise. As well as the imperative of developing criticality, Bryk and Schneider (2002), Bottery (2004) and Covey (2006) rightly maintain that trust is the magic glue that enables organisations to transform, and this precious commodity needs to be grown by leaders. Therefore, trust along with criticality must underpin and infuse the learning process and this applies to storytelling as well.

Figure 1. Conditions and Processes for Transformational Learning



Source: based on Precey & Jackson (2008).

The clear place of storytelling can be planned, delivered and evaluated through these 3 interrelated elements in the framework:

- A **unique learning programme** that is designed for each particular group of individuals for transformational learning to take place, programmes must be bespoke rather



than standardised “one size fits all”. Storytelling fits comfortably within such programmes as they need to be tailored to fit the whole audience as well as individuals whose behaviour the storyteller seeks to confirm or alter. They need to be designed to influence and so should pay attention to Burbules and Berk’s (1999) four components of transformational learning in order to be most effective;

- **Praxis**, here meaning “the intentional capacity to identify and implement alternatives” (Miron & Lauria, in Greenan & Dieckmann, 1998 p. 189) must be developed. This involves interrogating practice against relevant theory and research and vice versa. Storytelling as discussed has a clear rationale in relation to andragogy;
- **Awakenings** through which the transformation of learners through the concepts explored must be precipitated, and personal and institutional knowledge constructed leading to the reconstruction (or even confirmation) of identity. Just as in the *Hero’s Journey*, storytelling in a transformational learning context is all about such awakenings in individuals listening (Campbell, 2008).

Profound behaviour change rests on **awakenings** leading to those involved seeing themselves differently with a **new sense of identity**. This in turn can lead to a **greater sense of agency** and unlocking the potential of human beings – one of the major roles, we would argue, of leaders.

5. Theories in Action

In the following case studies, we discuss experiences at work in relation to the storytelling elements we explored previously. In each case study, we find that our examples of situations that changed behaviour map very easily onto story structures, demonstrating the aforementioned theoretical link.

5.1. Graduate recruitment

There is perhaps no greater behaviour change that is forced on us externally than when we begin a new job. In this case study, we consider the case of the graduate intake of a large Professional Services organisation.

The story begins before candidates have decided to apply, with the firm organising well-resourced recruitment events featuring dedicated professionals. Sessions start with the organisation, its accomplishments, history, and the part you can play in that, with reward and work only minor features. This continues through the application and offer process, where candidates wait in modern rooms attended by well-dressed professionals with glossy printouts of the firm's latest research at hand. The story of what can be expected is reinforced. The final stage is the induction process which begins not with training, but with a presentation from the CEO, and the story is complete. Graduates are now a part of this organisation, and this is the motivation for their behavioural change which will make them more effective over the coming weeks and years to the organisation.

We can see that this largely follows the framework of a story we have established, with the graduate themselves playing the part of the protagonist. There is clearly a status-quo before application, followed by the inciting incident as we are shown something we want, but can't easily obtain. This is followed by the main action of the application process before the resolution of the story as that application is successful. We can even locate a series of 'all is lost' moments, as candidates at multiple stages of the application are left unsure whether they will be able to progress to the next stage, waiting for an external influence. Of course, this assumes that the application is successful. If the application is unsuccessful, it no longer follows our narrative structure, but this does not affect the organisation, as there is no longer a need for behavioural change.



We can see that this narrative then goes some way to meeting our theory of planned behaviour. While it may initially appear that there is not the personal relevance to impact the subjective norms, in fact it may be that as candidates internalise this narrative and the positivity with which it is delivered, they come to shift their views of the opinions of their peers and family. As well, while it may appear that this narrative would reduce the perceived behavioural control of candidates, the deliberate inclusion of diverse examples of successful candidates throughout the process is a clear effort to mitigate this, as candidates are exposed to successful ‘people like them’. Third, trivially, this narrative also shifts attitude positively, making candidates significantly more likely to apply. This is evident from the significant resources which these organisations are willing to spend. Of course, it is important to note that this is not a story that works in isolation, but one that compliments the culturally pervasive narrative of hard work leading to good grades leading to good jobs, allowing it to have a greater impact than it would have by itself.

We can examine then the extent to which this provides the foundational elements for transformational learning as described by Precey (2008). First, the structure of the delivery is necessarily not unique because the same materials are present en masse to a wide audience with whom the firm will only have a fleeting connection. However, this narrative is not over once the input has been delivered, but instead relies on each individual’s response being highly personal. This is further reinforced by the personalisation of information available from secondary sources, such as relevant websites and personal interactions with graduate recruiters. In terms of praxis, we find that this experience goes at least some way to fulfil the necessary criteria. The recruitment process is designed not to develop the capacity to make rational comparisons between organisations, but instead focuses on making decisions between the options available as part of the organisation. Finally, more clearly, we see that this narrative contains an awakening event, as the primary purpose of the narrative is to elicit

a behavioural change (a completed and successful application) within a specific timeframe.

Surprisingly, this narrative has remained mostly similar during the Coronavirus pandemic. While the medium has changed entirely to delivery over webinars and video calls, the structure has remained similar, with the identified elements intact. The longer-term impacts of this change remain to be seen, but this indicates that, however wide ranging the impact of the virus on logistics, the narrative remains the crucial component in the process.

5.2. Storytelling in Consulting Projects

Narratives are used constantly between a management consultant and a client, regardless of whether the story is being sold to the client, or the client is proposing a change story to the consultant and requesting their help to implement it. An example of one such story is a project where the client was a police force, so the consultant set them up as the protagonist. The process of holding remand hearings was that a police officer would travel to a local court with a defendant, whereby a judge determined their punishment for minor crimes. This formed a less than ideal status quo. The inciting incident was realising how inefficient and costly this process was to the police, when technology offers a quicker and cheaper alternative. The main action involved many technological obstacles, as all involved had to learn an entirely new and uncomfortable way of virtual working, including police, lawyers, translators and the media. However, after the height of frustration and discomfort, perhaps occurring in the first experience of a virtual remand hearing, the narrative resolved with a much more convenient process, whereby all actors other than the judges in the remand hearing could join the event virtually from their laptops, wherever was convenient. Moreover, the inherent understanding of story structure meant the client understood that, although the journey was difficult, it was worthwhile and would result in an



awakening. It also, crucially, changed the client’s behaviour. Drawing from Azjen’s theory: the client’s attitude was favourable to the change, they believed in the positive response of the public, and a dedicated team of change professionals helped them to perceive the behaviour as easy enough for them to control.

Moreover, the foundational elements of Precey and Jackson’s (2008) framework for transformational leadership learning can also be seen in this example. The structure for all transformation project plans must be bespoke for them to be successful: this was not a one size fits all approach. The context of the police force with its idiosyncrasies was taken into account and there were variations across regions accordingly. Praxis was applied in the technological solution proposed, whereby all alternatives were considered. Finally, awakenings were apparent throughout, particularly in the narrative the client told themselves. Some actors who had resigned themselves to being ‘bad at technology’, had to challenge that notion and overcome it, leading to a reconstruction of their identity.

6. Conclusions

This chapter has argued and illustrated that storytelling can beneficially be at the heart of significant individual and organisational behaviour change if harnessed by transformational leaders who understand and are skilful in deploying the important principles underpinning transformational learning. A framework has been offered in which to locate this narrative approach. Storytelling provides tools and a methodology for changing behaviour, but also, when done with knowledge and understanding that this chapter seeks to develop in the reader, facilitates transformational learning in both the storyteller and those listening. The process of a narrative, starting with practice and drawing out general learning points is in itself transformative. As seen in the case studies, Storytelling by external consultants can clearly provide the found-

ations for behavioural change. Such behavioural change best rests on the pillars of adult transformational learning:

- a unique story and structure provided by the individual telling and responding to the narrative, leading to;
- awakenings in individuals (both teller and listener) which are necessarily provided by these narratives, underpinned by;
- praxis that brings together adult learning theory and day to day practice so that there is a solid foundation for the use of stories to change behaviours.

We can learn lessons from the application of theory to these case studies. We should not underestimate the extent to which recipients will internalise the narrative, and leaders should facilitate this wherever possible. Coronavirus has not fundamentally changed the nature of storytelling for behavioural change and may indeed have made it more foundational. This enforced lockdown forced storytelling to become virtual and less impromptu: working from home limited the chances of bumping into a colleague whilst getting coffee and socialising generally was significantly reduced. We think a fascinating area of future study would be to evaluate if this had an effect on internal behavioural change initiatives in organisations.

Storytelling has been a feature of human interaction for as long as we have existed, although the means of communication have changed a little throughout history. Effectively used, it is still a strong feature of deep learning and significant, even profound, change, and effective transformational leadership. Transformational leaders unlock the potential and harness the talents of themselves and those whom they serve. They understand the power of transformational learning and facilitate it in order to change behaviours in themselves and others. Storytelling is something we all grow up with and we all love a good tale. Let us learn from them to become more developed human beings.

“Once upon a time...”



References

- Adedoyin, F., Ozturk, I., Abubakar, I., Kumeka, T., Folarin, O., & Bekun, F. V. (2020).** Structural breaks in CO2 emissions: Are they caused by climate change protests or other factors? *Journal of Environmental Management*, 266, 110628.
- Aguilar, L. (2021).** Best Consultants Are Also The Best Storytellers. *Accenture*. Retrieved from www.accenture.com/us-en/blogs/blogs-why-the-best-consultants-are-the-best-storytellers. Access: 01.03.2020.
- Ajzen, I. (1985).** From actions to intentions: A theory of planned behaviour. In J. Kuhl, J. Beckman (Eds), *Action control: From cognition to behaviour*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
- Badt, K. L. (2015).** A Dialogue with Neuroscientist Jaak Pankseep on the SEEKING System: Breaking the Divide between Emotion and Cognition in Film Studies. *Projections*, 9(1), 66–79.
- BBC News (2020).** Trump Deliberately Played Down Virus, Woodward Book Says. *BBC News*. Retrieved from www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-54094559. Access: 06.03.2020.
- Bottery, M. (2004).** *The Challenges of Educational Leadership*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002).** *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. London: Russell Sage.
- Burbules, N. C., & Berk, R. (1999).** Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy: Relations, Differences and Limits. In T. S. Popkewitz, L. Fendler (Eds.), *Critical Theories in Education: Changing Terrains of Knowledge and Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Butcher, S. (1902).** *Aristotle, The Poetics (Trans. S.H. Butcher, 1902)*. *Denisdutton.com*. Retrieved from http://www.denisdutton.com/aristotle_poetics.htm. Access: 11.11.2018.
- Campbell, J. (2008).** *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Novato: New World Library.
- Chan, A. K., Nickson, C. P., Rudolph, J. W., Lee, A., & Joynt, G. M. (2020).** Social media for rapid knowledge dissemination: early experience from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Anaesthesia*, 75(12), 1579–1582.

- Chang, C. (2012).** How People Tell an Ad Story: Western vs. Asian Styles. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 22(3), pp. 235–252.
- Covey, M. R. (2006).** *The Speed of Trust*. New York: Free Press.
- Deloitte (2021).** Deloitte 175. *Deloitte*. Retrieved from www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/deloitte175.html. Access: 19.12.2019.
- Flood, A. (2020).** Research finds reading books has surged in lockdown. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/books/2020/may/15/research-reading-books-surged-lockdown-thrillers-crime. Access: 15.05.2020.
- Fogg, B. J. (2009).** A behavior model for persuasive design. In *Proceedings of the 4th international Conference on Persuasive Technology* (pp. 1–7). Claremont, California, USA, 26– 29 April. DOI: 10.1145/1541948.1541999
- Forss, K., & Magro, L. (2016).** Facts or Feelings, Facts and Feelings? The Post-Democracy Narrative in the Brexit Debate. *European Policy Analysis*, 2(2), 12–17.
- Goleman, D. (1996).** *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Green, M. C. (2004).** Storytelling in Teaching. *Association for Psychological Science*. Retrieved from www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/storytelling-in-teaching. Access: 11.11.2019.
- Greenan, N. P., & Dieckmann, J. A. (2004).** Considering Criticality and Culture as Pivotal in Transformative Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55(3), 240–255.
- Harari, Y. N. (2011).** *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. London: Penguin Random House UK.
- Johnson, S. B., Blum, R. W., & Giedd, J. N. (2009).** Adolescent Maturity and the Brain: The Promise and Pitfalls of Neuroscience Research in Adolescent Health Policy. *The Journal of Adolescent Health: Official Publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine*, 43(3), 216–221.
- Krulik, N. (2015).** The Five Essential Elements of a Story. *katiekazoo.com*. Retrieved from www.katiekazoo.com/pdf/KK_FiveEssentialElements.pdf. Access: 19.10.2019.



Lawson, E., & Price, C. (2003). The psychology of change management. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 4, 30–41.

Madden, T. J., Ellen, P. S., & Ajzen, I. (1992). A Comparison of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18(1), 3–9.

Mezirow, J. (1995). Transformation Theory of Adult Learning. In M. Welton (Ed.), *In Defense of the Lifeworld: Critical Perspectives on Adult Learning* (pp. 37–90). New York: State University of New York Press.

Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative Learning: *Theory to Practice*. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 5–12.

Michie, S., Van Stralen, M. M., & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: a new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation science*, 6(1), 42.

Myers, S. (2018). Dan Harmon, The Hero’s Journey, and the Circle Theory of Story. *Scott Myers*. Retrieved from scottdistillery.medium.com/dan-harmon-the-heros-journey-and-the-circle-theory-of-story-b64bb77d6976. Access: 09.12.2019.

Nissen, V. (2018). Digital transformation of the consulting industry – introduction and overview. In V. Nissen (Ed.), *Digital Transformation of the Consulting Industry* (pp. 1–58). New York: Springer International Publishing.

Norrick, N. R. (2000). *Conversational Narrative: Storytelling in Everyday Talk*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Padgett, D., & Allen, D. (1997). Communicating experiences: A narrative approach to creating service brand image. *Journal of Advertising*, 26(4), 49–62.

Precey, R., & Jackson, C. (2008). Transformational School Leadership Development: What Works? *Journal of Research into Professional Development*, 1(1), 4–20.

Precey, R. (2008). Trainspotting: Leadership at a critical junction. *Forum*, 50(2), 235–242.

PwC (2021). A New UK Narrative Exploring The UK’S Place In The World. *PricewaterhouseCoopers*. Retrieved from www.pwc.co.uk/issues/new-uk-narrative.html. Access: 08.01.2020.

Spencer, A., & Oppermann, K. (2020). Narrative genres of Brexit: the Leave campaign and the success of romance. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(5), 666–684.

Spitzer, M. (2006). *Brain Research and Learning Over the Life Cycle*. Centre For Educational Research and Innovation, *Personalising education* (pp. 47–62). Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Swanson, R., Rahimtoroghi, E., Corcoran, T., Walker, M. A. (2014). Identifying Narrative Clause Types in Personal Stories. In *Proceedings of the SIGDIAL 2014 Conference, Philadelphia* (pp. 171–180). Association for Computational Linguistics. Retrieved from www.aclweb.org/anthology/W14-4323.pdf. Access: 06.01.2020.

Teufel, M., Schweda, A., Dörrie, N., Musche, V., Hetkamp, M., Weismüller, B., Lenzen, H., Stettner, M., Kohler, H., Bäuerle, A. & Skoda, E. M. (2020). Not all world leaders use Twitter in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: impact of the way of Angela Merkel on psychological distress, behaviour and risk perception. *Journal of Public Health*, 42(3), 644–646.

Wilson, E. O. (2012). *The Social Conquest of Earth*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Wilson, M. (2005). *Storytelling and theatre: Contemporary professional storytellers and their art*. UK: Red Globe Press – Macmillan International Higher Education.

Yorke, J. (2013). *Into the Woods: A Five-Act Journey into Story*. London: Penguin Random House UK.

Michał Szostak

University of Social Sciences,
Warsaw, Poland
mszostak@san.edu.pl
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7774-2964

Does Polish Post-Communist Cultural Burden Influence the Perception of Creative Identities?

Received: 06-05-2021; Accepted: 06-06-2021

ABSTRACT

Objective: Post-communist countries, affected by decades of one of the most repressive political systems, are perceived as a particular area of gaps in social capital. These gaps influence the whole spectrum of behaviors of individuals, groups, and society. Countries that changed their political system start a journey of external (economic, social) and internal (personal, interpersonal, group) changes. The post-communist burden determines human behavior, so leaders and managers should pay attention to these consequences. The research deals with the differences in perception of creative identities (a creator, artist,

manager, entrepreneur, and leader) by Polish society compared to other countries without communist history.

Methodology: Quantitative research (n = 160) in the form of a survey among people from Poland and other countries. Verification of hypotheses by chi-square test of independence used (SPSS, MS Excel). Next, a qualitative analysis of discrepancies was undertaken (NVivo).

Findings: There are no statistical differences in the perception of creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader between citizens of Poland and citizens of other countries. The additional qualitative analysis exposed that differences in perception of the creative identities between investigated societies might have necessary consequences while managing or leading groups (and organizations) dominated by creative individuals. These differences are shown in detail, and links between our research results and the literature are built.

Value Added: It looks like a post-communist burden in current Poland has a minimal impact on the perception of creative individuals. Thus, it can be said that communism disappears from the social capital during one generation (ca. 30 years).

Recommendations: Further research exploring the perception of creative identities by different analogical groups of compared societies would be valuable.

Key words: Social capital, creator's identity, artist's identity, manager's identity, entrepreneur's identity, leader's identity, creativity

JEL codes: D91, J19, L26, M54, Z11

Introduction

Social identity theory (social psychology) interest deals with the relations between personal and social identities. It specifies the conditions when an individual thinks of himself as an autonomous individual or group member. From this perspective, the consequences of personal and social identities for individual perceptions and group behavior should be respected (Wolf, 2019). Using

this perspective, each country, being a specific group of people creating and using the same culture, influences the identities of its citizens. Parallely, personal identity, being one of the basic foundations establishing an individual, is not an accessible area for researchers, mainly if they focus on the managerial side of the problem and its organizational consequences. Due to the strictly psychological characteristics of the research area (identity), management scientists, being weaker armed in tools than psychologists, attempt to determine canons that can help include different identities in management practice. This philosophy was the initial point for this research.

Although external factors, like the social and intellectual background, primary material wealth, or just luck, affect each person's fortune, it is the identity being the steering power behind an individual's personal and professional life cycle. Previous research in the area of creator's, artist's, manager's, entrepreneur's, and leader's identities discovered that even the persons who own gifts, personal characteristics, and well recognized professional positions in the above fields have problems to define of who a creative person is, who an artist is, who a manager is, who an entrepreneur is, or who a leader is. These indistinct "definitions" of the particular identities directed the researchers to isolate the complex identities like artists-managers (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a; 2021b; 2020b) or artists-entrepreneurs (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2021a). Even the individuals with highly developed abilities allowing to describe their characteristics have many problems with the distinction between the creative and noncreative artist/manager/entrepreneur/leader.

The above considerations guided to compare the perception of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader by Polish and non-Polish citizens. Following this purpose, the research hypotheses were established: H1) Polish citizens perceive the creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader differently than citizens of the rest of the world. H2) The differences in the perception of creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader by Polish and non-Polish

citizens are not the same and vary in the case of each of the above identities.

Materials & Methods

Initially, secondary research in the form of reviewing literature was undertaken (NVivo Pro). The literature review approach was based on a qualitative selection of materials from EBSCO, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Mendeley, Scopus, and Web of Science. The methodological approach was based on an interdisciplinary and multi-paradigm tactic referring to arts and aesthetics, creativity, management, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Secondly, quantitative research in the form of a questionnaire was conducted. The survey was established on the approach of Stefan Nowak (2007), containing the dimensions of the studied phenomenon and selecting indicators allowing describing the studied phenomenon. The initial methodological idea assumed constructing separate sets of indicators for each of the analyzed dimensions. Sets of indicators for individual dimensions began to be developed based on the literature on the subject in the field of: artistry (Bayrakci et al., 2009; McHugh, 2015; Szostak, 2020; Walter, 2015; Wilson & Brown, 2012; Woodward & Funk, 2010), creativity (Dufour, Maoret, & Montani, 2020; Gangi, 2018; Lehmann & Gaskins, 2019; Leso et al., 2017; Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a; Taleghani, 2012; Zhou, Shin, & Cannella, 2008), managerial issues (Baker et al., 2012; Bulei, Mihalcioiu, & Tucmeanu, 2014; Elstad & Jansson, 2020; Hallier, 2004; Hatch, Kostera, & Koźmiński, 2006; Hracs, 2015; Lähdesmäki, 2012; López-Fernández, Romero-Fernández, & Aust, 2018; Lutas, Nistor, Radu, & Beileu, 2020), leadership (Adler, 2006; Alvesson & Blom, 2015; Carroll & Levy, 2008; Jankurová, Ljudvigová, & Gubová, 2017; Lord & Brown, 2001; Nikolski, 2015; Postuła & Majczyk, 2018; Raso, Fitzpatrick, & Masick, 2020; Stuke, 2013; Woodward & Funk, 2010), and entrepreneurship (Bureau & Zander, 2014;

Clarke & Holt, 2019; Damásio & Bicacro, 2017; Lewis, Ho, Harris, & Morrison, 2016; Postuła & Majczyk, 2018; Toscher, 2019; 2020). However, the analysis of individual groups of indicators showed that, in principle, each of the indicators selected for individual dimensions might be used to describe each of the examined dimensions. Following this assumption, a single list of 50 of the same indicators was compiled and applied to all five examined dimensions. Thanks to the above, the obtained results may be compared to the same indicators for other dimensions.

The survey was ultimately divided into four segments. In the first section, a list of questions (each question related to one indicator) was divided into thematic units referring to each analyzed dimension: artistry, creativity, entrepreneurship, leadership, and managerial issues. All questions were closed, and a five-point Likert scale was formed to answer: *definitely not*, *rather not*, *hard to say*, *rather yes*, and *definitely yes*. In the second part of the investigation, questions were raised describing relationships of the analyzed dimensions to the other dimensions. In the third segment, the respondents explained their identity concerning each of the dimensions. Finally, the fourth part included questions classifying the respondents, i.e., gender, age, education, their assessment of their own identity (as a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, leader).

The nonparametric chi-square test of independence dedicated to small samples that do not have a normal distribution was used to verify the hypotheses. The pairs of the observed values were compared with pairs of the expected values for each hypothesis. The p-value of the tests was < 0.001 . Data analysis was executed using IBM SPSS and MS Excel. Due to the minor size of the sample ($n = 160$), complex statistics were not executed. Therefore, this article exhibits only some conclusions from the whole investigation.

The survey entitled “Perception of creativity, artistry, entrepreneurship, leadership and managerial abilities” lasted 34 days, i.e., from 20th December 2020 to 23rd January 2021. Two

undistinguishable surveys, one in English and the other in Polish, were distributed by direct contact (sending requests to participate in the survey) and using indirect public utensils (social networks, collective messages to various types of communities). The number of people asked to participate in the investigation is estimated at approximately 2–3 thousand. Eight hundred seventy-nine people were interested in taking part in the survey, which was judged by clicking on the link leading to the survey. The authentic contribution to the study, consisting of filling in the questionnaire, was attended by 160 individuals, which is 18.2% of those interested in taking part in the research. The average time spent filling in the questionnaire was almost 33 minutes, and the typical respondent was 38 years old. Among the respondents: women represented 42.5% and men 57.5%; people with higher education (bachelor, master, engineer) 64.57%, people with doctoral, postdoctoral, or professor degrees 18.90%, people with secondary education 15.75%. The respondents originated from 28 countries: 74% from developed countries and 26% from developing countries (United Nations, 2021). 71.7% were from European countries, 28.3% from non-European countries; 49.6% from Poland, and 50.4% from other countries.

Current state of knowledge

Communism as the almighty demon, and ethnocentric individualism as an internal way of individual's determinism, are two dominant metatheories explaining post-communist societies' social capital weakness. Dilemmas, exceeding generations and material differences, occupy the minds of both national decision-makers and creative individuals on whom the quality of the social fabric depends. Weak but socially approved social capital practices combine corruption, bribery, and favoritism and achieving institutional fairness. Decades of convergence with mature democracies help people have different aspirations, well suited to the context of

post-communist transformation, to make up for the delay of decades gripping the jaws of communism (Soaita & Wind, 2020). Change between publicly- and private-owned resources influences people's minds, behaviors, and goals (Huber & Montag, 2020). Researchers investigated the quality of social capital among many post-communist societies (Dolšak, 2019; Markowska-Przybyła, 2020; Nicoara, 2018; Soaita & Wind, 2020).

Creator's identity may be explicated in the context of personalities dealing with profit- or non-profit organization's creator (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011), classical arts – literature creator (Ottery, 2006), music creator (Tillay & Chapman, 2019), new arts – anime creator (Reysen et al., 2020), social media content creator (Maynard, 2021), religious institution creator (Jones & Massa, 2013), fake-news or rumor creator (Dong et al., 2019). Academics accentuate the shifting contexts and need for regulation to these deviations.

An artist's identity has been described historically as an artisan, a genius, a doer, a God's will doer, a master, a holy man in touch with the hidden, a cultural aristocrat, a knowledge worker, a professional, an entrepreneur, a freedom maker, an influencer, a value or idea guardian, a collaborator, a superman (Deresiewicz, 2020; Tatarkiewicz, 2015). In addition, the artist's identity may be identified as a copyist, a conceptualist, an artistic craftsman (artisan), and a creator (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a).

The manager may be perceived as an administrator (an official), a manager-theoretician, a professional, a creative manager (a leader). A manager with extraordinary creativity and competence in his field can be named a management artist; it will also be authorized to call the manager as an artist/virtuoso who, achieving his ideas, knows how to organize reality according to his intentions (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a). Researches of educational institutions reveal factors affecting managerial creativity (alphabetically): action-oriented, confidence, domain expertise, emotional stability, innovative leadership attributes, openness, professional development, risk tolerance (Alsuwaidi & Omar, 2020). The

literature emphasizes the intense influence of managers on their employees' creativity (Williams, 2001), but the level of creativity among managers varies depending on many factors, e.g., gender (Ahmad & Zadeh, 2016). Creativity also has its paradoxes in the form of assumptions and unanswered questions (DeFillippi, Grabher, & Jones, 2007).

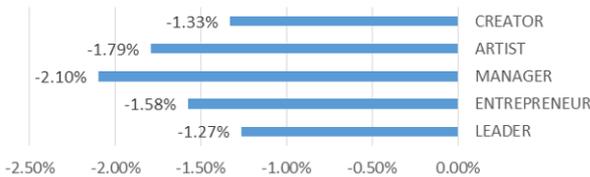
The literature shows that the level of a leader's self-identity impacts vision communication with collaborators and subordinates positively (Venus et al., 2019). The narcissistic personality has an essential impact on a leader's identity integration (Chen, 2018), but it may negatively impact the organization (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020b). Transformational leadership and procedural justice positively and meaningfully affect manager trust, and manager trust positively impacts creating a maintainable organizational identity (Erat, Kitapçı, & Akçin, 2020).

Results and Discussion

Discussing each research hypothesis separately, from the statistical point of view, we can say that: H1 (Polish citizens perceive the creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader differently than citizens of the rest of the world) is verified negatively. The *chi-square* value amounted to 390.35 for a creator, 394.21 for an artist, 406.27 for a manager, 40747 for an entrepreneur, and 411.35 for a leader. For the $df = 49$, using the chi-square distribution table, the chi-square value = 85.3506 was found. Based on the above, the results are statistically significant for the significance level of $p = 0.001$. H2 (The differences in perception of creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader by Polish and non-Polish citizens are not the same and vary in the case of each of the above identities) is verified negatively. The *chi-square* value = 40,193. For the $df = 4$, using the chi-square distribution table, the chi-square value = 18.4668. It means that the result is statistically significant for the significance level of $p =$

0.001. In each investigated creative identity case, the means of the 50 features perceived by Polish citizens are lower less than 2.10% comparing to non-polish citizens. It can be said that Polish citizens perceive creative identities slightly weaker than the rest of the world: see figure 1.

Figure 1. Differences in perception of investigated creative identities: Polish versus non-Polish citizens



Source: own elaboration.

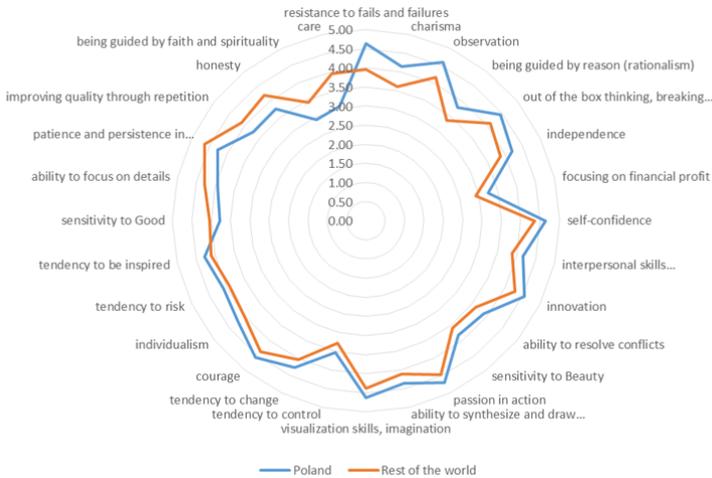
The negative verification of research hypotheses was astonishing and should be perceived as a novelty in the investigated area. Although both hypotheses were statistically verified negatively, the qualitative analysis of the in-depth characteristics of the investigated identities reveals that these identities interpenetrate and are considered to be more or less complementary.

Creator’s identity

The ten most important features of a creator’s identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): passion in action, self-confidence, resistance to fails and failures, visualization skills (imagination), observation, courage, innovation, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), originality, ability to synthesize and draw conclusions. On the other hand, the ten most critical features of a creator’s identity perceived by non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): patience and persistence in achieving goals, passion in action, visualization skills (imagination), courage, self-confidence,

originality, ability to set goals, ability to focus on details, innovation, honesty.

Figure 2. Perception of the most differently assessed features of a creator's identity

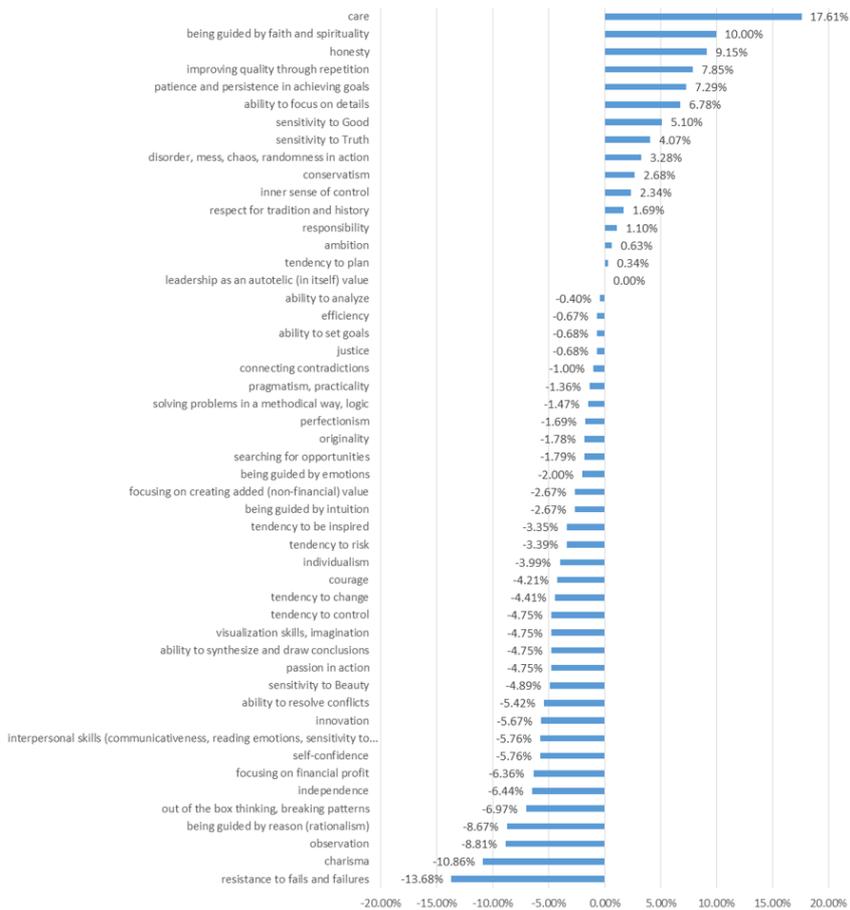


Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the particular 50 examined characteristics of the creator's identity by Polish citizens compared to non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the creator's identity perceived as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): resistance to fails and failures, charisma, observation, being guided by reason (rationalism), out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), independence, focusing on financial profit, self-confidence, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), innovation. The ten features of the creator's identity seen as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): conservatism, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), sensitivity to Truth, sensitivity to Good, ability to focus on details, patience and persistence in achieving goals, improving quality through repetition, honesty, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the creator's identity perceived the most similarly by

Polish and non-Polish citizens are pragmatism (practicality), connecting contradictions, justice, setting goals, efficiency, ability to analyze, leadership, a tendency to plan, ambition, responsibility. The variety of disparities in the answers referring to the creator’s identity seen by Polish and non-Polish citizens may be observed in figure 2 and figure 3.

Figure 3. Perception of a creator’s identity: Poland versus the rest of the world

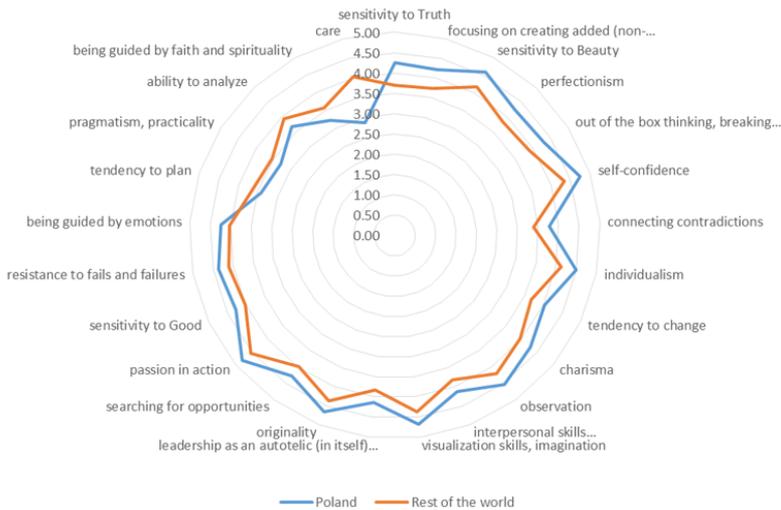


Source: own elaboration.

Artist's identity

The ten most principal features of an artist's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): passion in action, self-confidence, visualization skills, imagination, originality, sensitivity to Beauty, observation, patience and persistence in achieving goals, individualism, tendency to be inspired, resistance to fails and failures. Conversely, the ten most vital features of an artist's identity seen by non-Polish citizens individuals are (in descending order): passion in action, patience and persistence in achieving goals, visualization skills (imagination), originality, improving quality through repetition, self-confidence, ability to focus on details, tendency to be inspired, courage, ambition.

Figure 4. Perception of the most differently assessed features of an artist's identity



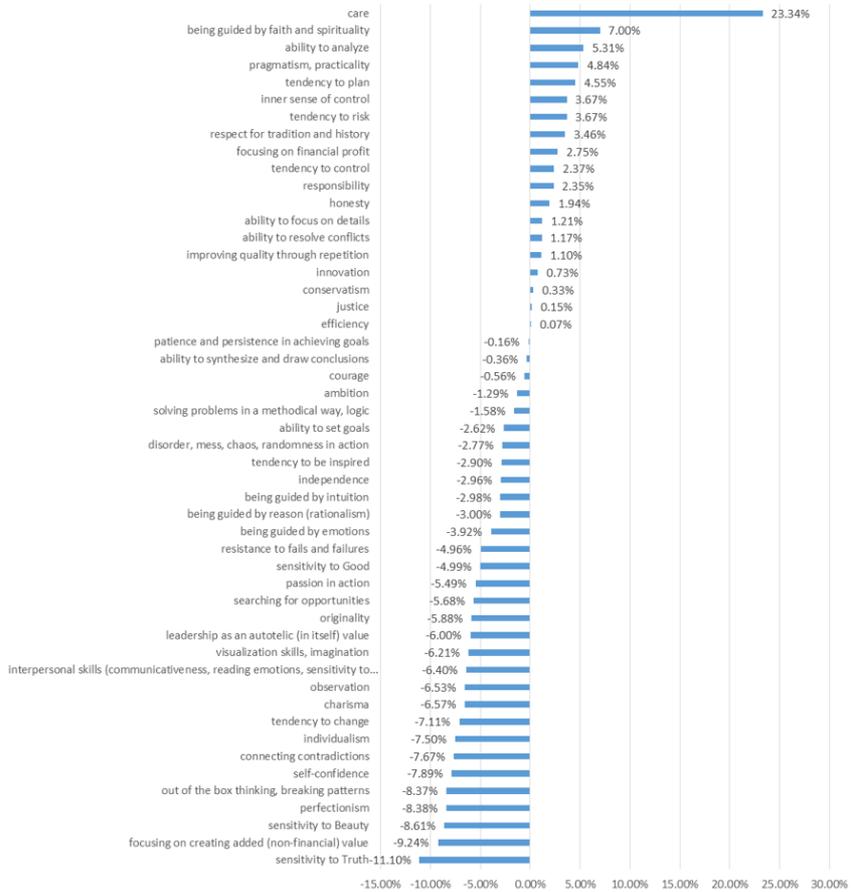
Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the particular 50 studied qualities of the artist's identity by Polish and non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the artist's identity perceived as the



least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): sensitivity to Truth, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, sensitivity to Beauty, perfectionism, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), self-confidence, connecting contradictions, individualism, tendency to change, charisma. The ten attributes of the artist's identity perceived as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): a tendency to control, focusing on financial profit, respect for tradition and history, a tendency to risk, an inner sense of control, a tendency to plan, pragmatism (practicality), ability to analyze, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the artist's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are courage, ability to synthesize and draw conclusions, patience and persistence in achieving goals, efficiency, justice, conservatism, innovation, improving quality through repetition, ability to resolve conflicts, ability to focus on details. The whole spectrum of differences in the responses about the artist's identity perceived by Polish and non-Polish citizens shows figure 4 and figure 5.

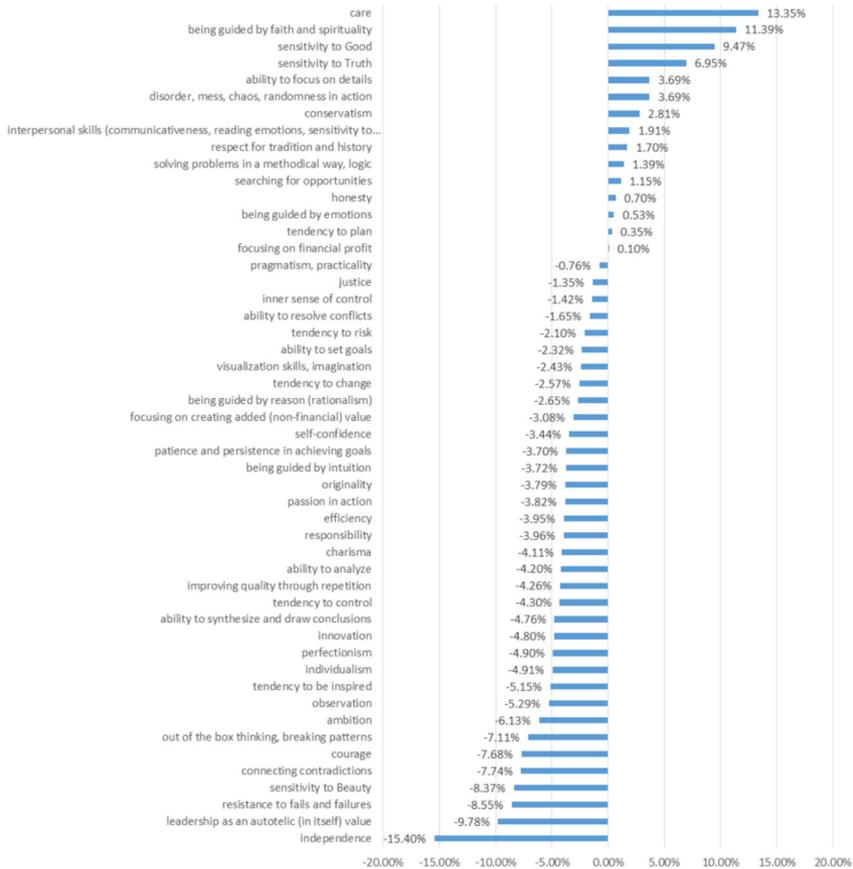
Figure 5. Perception of an artist's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world



Source: own elaboration.

Manager's identity

Figure 6. Perception of a manager's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world



Source: own elaboration.

The ten most important features of a manager's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): efficiency, responsibility, ability to analyze, patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to set goals, ability to resolve conflicts, self-confidence, a tendency to plan, resistance to fails and failures, ambition.

The ten most important features of a manager’s identity perceived by non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): a tendency to plan, efficiency, ability to resolve conflicts, responsibility, ability to set goals, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to analyze, self-confidence, searching for opportunities.

Figure 7. Perception of the most differently assessed features of a manager’s identity



Source: own elaboration.

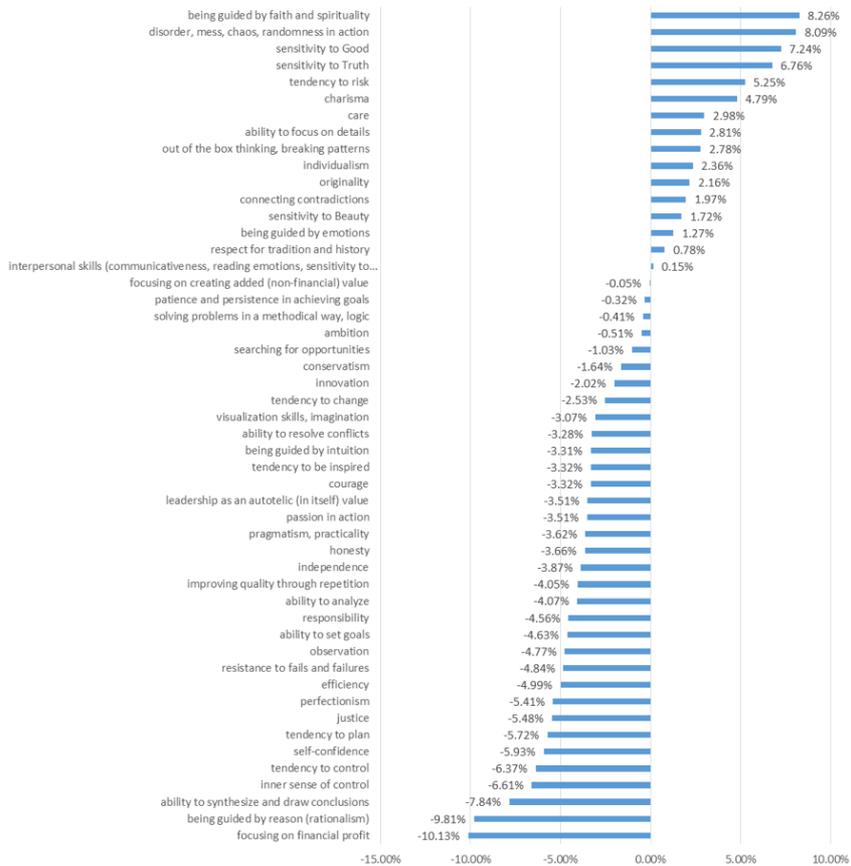
Perception of the particular 50 investigated features of the manager’s identity by Polish citizens compared to non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the manager's identity perceived as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): independence, leadership, resistance to fails and failures, sensitivity to Beauty, connecting contradictions, courage, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), ambition, observation, tendency to be inspired. The ten features of the manager’s identity perceived as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): solving problems in a methodical way (logic), respect for tradition and his-



tory, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), conservatism, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), ability to focus on details, sensitivity to Truth, sensitivity to Good, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the manager's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are the ability to resolve conflicts, an inner sense of control, justice, pragmatism (practicality), focusing on financial profit, a tendency to plan, being guided by emotions, honesty, searching for opportunities, solving problems in a methodical way (logic). The range of differences in the manager's identity perceived by managers and nonmanagers shows figure 6 and figure 7.

Entrepreneur's identity

Figure 8. Perception of an entrepreneur's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world

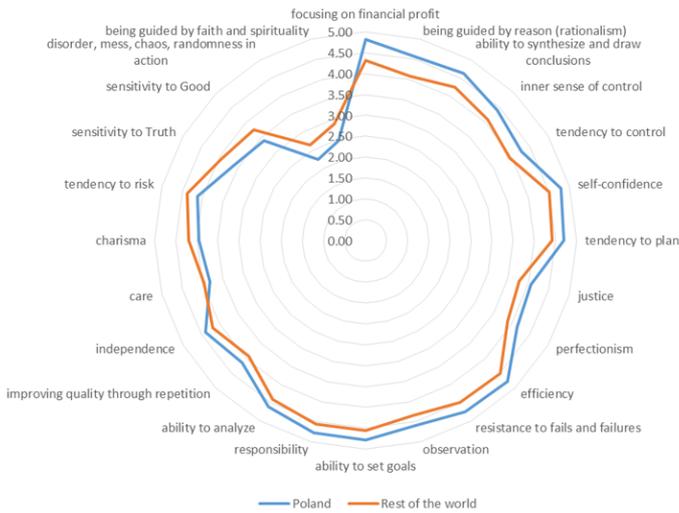


Source: own elaboration.

The ten most important features of an entrepreneur's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): focusing on financial profit, self-confidence, ability to set goals, responsibility, efficiency, resistance to fails and failures, searching for opportunities, a tendency to plan, patience and persistence in achieving goals, courage. The ten most important features of an

entrepreneur’s identity perceived by non-Polish citizens individuals are (in descending order): patience and persistence in achieving goals, searching for opportunities, setting goals, responsibility, ambition, efficiency, courage, self-confidence, resistance to fails and failures, innovation.

Figure 9. Perception of the most differently assessed features of an entrepreneur’s identity



Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the particular 50 examined features of the entrepreneur’s identity by Polish and non-Polish citizens reveal the following conclusions. The ten features of the entrepreneur's identity seen as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): focusing on financial profit, being guided by reason (rationalism), ability to synthesize and draw conclusions, an inner sense of control, tendency to control, self-confidence, a tendency to plan, justice, perfectionism, efficiency. The ten features of the entrepreneur’s identity seen as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): individualism, out of the box thinking, breaking patterns, ability to focus on details, care, charisma, a tendency to risk, sensitivity to Truth,

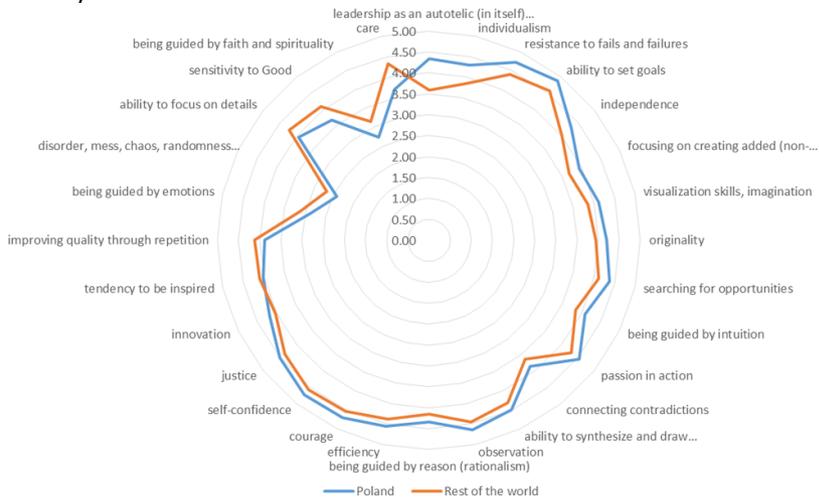
sensitivity to Good, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), being guided by faith and spirituality. The ten features of the entrepreneur's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are: conservatism, searching for opportunities, ambition, methodically solving problems (logic), patience and persistence in achieving goals, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), respect for tradition and history, being guided by emotions, sensitivity to Beauty. The variety of disparities in the answers referring to the entrepreneur's identity seen by Polish and non-Polish citizens displays figure 8 and figure 9.

Leader's identity

The ten most important features of a leader's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): the ability to set goals, charisma, ability to resolve conflicts, resistance to fails and failures, self-confidence, courage, patience and persistence in achieving goals, responsibility, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), observation. The ten most important features of a leader's identity perceived by non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): charisma, responsibility, ability to resolve conflicts, patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to set goals, self-confidence, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), courage, ambition, a tendency to plan.

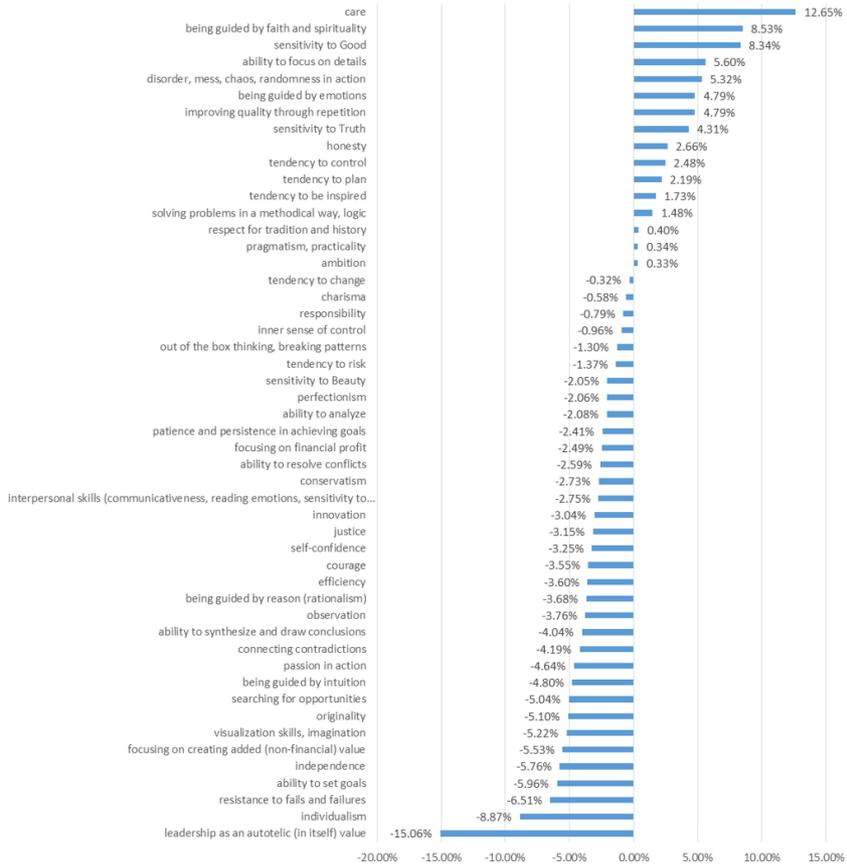


Figure 10. Perception of the most differently assessed features of a leader's identity



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 11. Perception of a leader’s identity: Poland versus the rest of the world



Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the specific 50 explored features of the leader’s identity by Polish and non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the leader’s identity perceived as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): leadership as an autotelic (in itself) value, individualism, resistance to fails and failures, ability to set goals, independence, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, visualization skills

by intuition. The ten features of the leader's identity perceived as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): a tendency to control, honesty, sensitivity to Truth, improving quality through repetition, being guided by emotions, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), ability to focus on details, sensitivity to Good, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the leader's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are a tendency to risk, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), an inner sense of control, responsibility, charisma, a tendency to change, ambition, pragmatism (practicality), respect for tradition and history, solving problems in a methodical way (logic). The whole range of differences in perception of the leader's identity by managers and non-managers displays figure 10 and figure 11.

Final remarks

The limitations of the research are: 1) The research was run during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic; 2) The research sample (n = 160) was relatively small in comparison to the analyzed problem; 3) Conclusions cannot be widely representative due to complexity of the research problem.

The research results can be used by: 1) Leaders and managers for a) better understanding the layers of personality and complex identity in the context of Polish culture, b) comparison of own identity with the general perception of a particular role in reference do Polish society; 2) Researchers wanting to investigate the similarities and differences between identity and its perception in area of creative identities in reference do Polish perspective.

Potential questions for future qualitative research or the hypothesis for further quantitative investigations may be the following: 1) Self-perception may vary from the perception of the identity depending on the belonging to the particular society; 2) Self-perception is similar to the identity features perceived by society if their nation structure is similar.

References

Adler, N. J. (2006). The arts & leadership: Now that we can do anything, what will we do? *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 5(4), 486–499. DOI: 10.5465/AMLE.2006.23473209.

Ahmad, S. M., & Zadeh, Z. F. (2016). Gender Differences on the Variables of Emotional Intelligence, Creative-Potential and Job Satisfaction in Managers. *Pakistan Journal of Psychology*, 47(2), 61–77. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=129038829&site=ehost-live>. Access: 2021/04/06

Alsuwaidi, K. A. K. Y., & Omar, A. J. (2020). Structural model of principals' innovative leadership attributes on managerial creativity. *International Journal of Sustainable Construction Engineering and Technology*, 11(2), 150–156. DOI: 10.30880/ijscet.2020.11.02.017.

Alvesson, M., & Blom, M. (2015). Less Followership, Less Leadership? An Inquiry Into the Basic But Seemingly Forgotten Downsides of Leadership. *M@n@gement*, 18(3), 266–282.

Baker, S., Marshburn, D. M., Crickmore, K. D., Rose, S. B., Dutton, K., & Hudson, P. C. (2012). What do you do? Perception of nurse manager responsibilities. *Nursing Management*, 43(12), 24–29. DOI: 10.1097/01.NUMA.0000422890.99334.21.

Bayrakci, B., Forouz, A., Şahin, A. B., Abali, M., & Aliyeva, G. Z. (2009). Disease painting or painting disease: How does illness and hospitalisation affect children's artistry? *Perception*, 38(11), 1721–1727. DOI: 10.1068/p6138.

Bulei, I., Mihalcioiu, V., & Tucmeanu, A. (2014). The Professional vs. the Manager – Identity Issues and Key Features. *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies*, 5(3), 31–36.

Bureau, S., & Zander, I. (2014). Entrepreneurship as an art of subversion. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 30(1), 124–133. DOI: 10.1016/j.scaman.2013.12.002.

Carroll, B., & Levy, L. (2008). Defaulting to management: Leadership defined by what it is not. *Organization*, 15(1), 75–96. DOI: 10.1177/1350508407084486.

- Chen, L. (2018).** Thinking paradoxically: How and when female narcissistic leaders integrate gender–leader identities. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 46(2), 339–352. DOI: 10.2224/sbp.6910.
- Clarke, J. S., & Holt, R. (2019).** Images of entrepreneurship: Using drawing to explore entrepreneurial experience. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 11(June), 2019–2021. DOI: 10.1016/j.jbvi.2019.e00129.
- Damáσιο, M. J., & Bicacro, J. (2017).** Entrepreneurship education for film and media arts: How can we teach entrepreneurship to students in the creative disciplines? *Industry and Higher Education*, 31(4), 253–266. DOI: 10.1177/0950422217713110.
- DeFillippi, R., Grabher, G., & Jones, C. (2007).** Introduction to paradoxes of creativity: managerial and organizational challenges in the cultural economy. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28, 511–521. DOI: 10.1002/job.
- Deresiewicz, W. (2020).** *The Death of the Artist: How Creators Are Struggling to Survive in the Age of Billionaires and Big Tech*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Dolšák, N. (2019).** Bowling Together: Mobilization of Collective Action by Environmental NGOs. *Nonprofit Policy Forum*, 8(1), 25–44. DOI: 10.1515/npf-2016-0025.
- Dong, X., Liu, Y., Wu, C., Lian, Y., & Tang, D. (2019).** A double-identity rumor spreading model. *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and Its Applications*, 528. DOI: 10.1016/j.physa.2019.121479.
- Dufour, L., Maoret, M., & Montani, F. (2020).** Coupling High Self-Perceived Creativity and Successful Newcomer Adjustment in Organizations: The Role of Supervisor Trust and Support for Authentic Self-Expression. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57(8), 1531–1555. DOI: 10.1111/joms.12547.
- Elstad, B., & Jansson, D. (2020).** From Artist to Manager—Working Conditions, Career Satisfaction, and Professional Identity among Graduated Arts Management Students. *Journal of Arts Management Law and Society*, 50(3), 184–198. DOI: 10.1080/10632921.2020.1746717.
- Erat, S., Kitapçı, H., & Akçin, K. (2020).** Managerial perception and organizational identity: A comparative analysis. *Sustainability*, 12(6), 1–16. DOI: 10.3390/su12062278.

- Fauchart, E., & Gruber, M. (2011).** Darwinians, communitarians, and missionaries: The role of founder identity in entrepreneurship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(5), 935–957. DOI: 10.5465/amj.2009.0211.
- Gangi, J. (2018).** Classical guitar study as creativity training: Potential benefits for managers and entrepreneurs. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 4(45), 1–10. DOI: 10.3390/joitmc4040045.
- Hallier, J. (2004).** Embellishing the past: Middle manager identity and informality in the implementation of new technology. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 19(1), 43–62. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-005X.2004.00127.x.
- Hatch, M. J., Kostera, M., & Koźmiński, A. K. (2006).** The three faces of leadership: Manager, artist, priest. *Organizational Dynamics*, 35(1), 49–68. DOI: 10.1016/j.orgdyn.2005.12.003.
- Hracs, B. J. (2015).** Cultural Intermediaries in the Digital Age: The Case of Independent Musicians and Managers in Toronto. *Regional Studies*, 49(3), 461–475. DOI: 10.1080/00343404.2012.750425.
- Huber, P., & Montag, J. (2020).** Homeownership, Political Participation, and Social Capital in Post-Communist Countries and Western Europe. *Kyklos*, 73(1), 96–119. DOI: 10.1111/kykl.12218.
- Jankurová, A., Ljudvigová, I., & Gubová, K. (2017).** Research of the nature of leadership activities. *Economics and Sociology*, 10(1), 135–151. DOI: 10.14254/2071-789X.2017/10-1/10.
- Jones, C., & Massa, F. G. (2013).** From Novel Practice to Consecrated Exemplar: Unity Temple as a Case of Institutional Evangelizing. *Organization Studies*, 34(8), 1099–1136. DOI: 10.1177/0170840613492073.
- Lähdesmäki, M. (2012).** Construction of owner-manager identity in corporate social responsibility discourse. *Business Ethics*, 21(2), 168–182. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8608.2011.01644.x.
- Lehmann, J., & Gaskins, B. (2019).** Learning scientific creativity from the arts. *Palgrave Communications*, 5 (95), 1–5. DOI: 10.1057/s41599-019-0308-8.
- Leso, G., Dias, G., Ferreira, J. P., Gama, J., & Couceiro, M. S. (2017).** Perception of Creativity and Game Intelligence in Soccer. *Creativity Research Journal*, 29(2), 182–187. DOI: 10.1080/10400419.2017.1302779.

- Lewis, K. V., Ho, M., Harris, C., & Morrison, R. (2016).** Becoming an entrepreneur: Opportunities and identity transitions. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 8(2), 1–6. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-02-2015-0006>.
- López-Fernández, M., Romero-Fernández, P. M., & Aust, I. (2018).** Socially responsible human resource management and employee perception: The influence of manager and line managers. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 10(12), 1–19. DOI: 10.3390/su10124614.
- Lord, R. G., & Brown, D. J. (2001).** Leadership, values, and subordinate self-concepts. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 133–152.
- Lutas, M., Nistor, R., Radu, M., & Beleiu, I. (2020).** Perceptions regarding the profile of an ideal project manager. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 22(54), 608–622. DOI: 10.24818/EA/2020/54/608.
- Markowska-Przybyła, U. (2020).** Does social capital matter for total factor productivity? Exploratory evidence from Poland. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(23), 1–25. DOI: 10.3390/su12239978.
- Maynard, A. D. (2021).** How to Succeed as an Academic on YouTube. *Frontiers in Communication*, 5. DOI: 10.3389/fcomm.2020.572181.
- McHugh, K. E. (2015).** Touch at a distance: toward a phenomenology of film. *GeoJournal*, 80(6), 839–851. DOI: 10.1007/s10708-015-9650-6.
- Nicoara, O. (2018).** Cultural Leadership and Entrepreneurship As Antecedents of Estonia’s Singing Revolution and Post-Communist Success. *Baltic Journal of European Studies*, 8(2), 65–91. DOI: 10.1515/bjes-2018-0016.
- Nikolski, K. (2015).** Leadership and Management: Practice of the Art of Influence. *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series*, 2(1), 31–39.
- Nowak, S. (2007).** *Metodologia Badań Społecznych*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Ottery, J. R. (2006).** Who are they and what do they have to do with what i want to be? “the writing of multicultural identity and college success stories for first-year writers.” In *Identity Papers: Literacy and Power in Higher Education* (pp. 122–137). Logan: Utah State University Press.

Postuła, A., & Majczyk, J. (2018). Managers and leaders in need of entrepreneurial competences. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 6(1), 91–103. DOI: 10.15678/EBER.2018.060105.

Raso, R., Fitzpatrick, J. J., & Masick, K. (2020). Clinical nurses' perceptions of authentic nurse leadership and healthy work environment. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 50(9), 489–494. DOI: 10.1097/NNA.0000000000000921.

Reysen, S., Katarzaska-Miller, I., Plante, C. N., Roberts, S. E., Gerbasi, K. C., Brooks, T. R., & Tague, A. M. (2020). Anime and global citizenship identification. *The Phoenix Papers*, 4(2), 48–61. DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/JXPTQ.

Soaita, A. M., & Wind, B. (2020). Urban Narratives on the Changing Nature of Social Capital in Post-Communist Romania. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 72(4), 712–738. DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2020.1718064.

Stuke, K. B. (2013). Understanding Leadership Through Leadership Understandings. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 7(2), 55–61. DOI: 10.1002/jls.21291.

Szostak, M. (2020). Creativity and Artistry in Organ Music. *The Organ*, 391, 24–31. Retrieved from <https://depot.ceon.pl/handle/123456789/19170>. Access: 11.03.2021.

Szostak, M., & Sułkowski, Ł. (2020a). Manager as an artist: Creative endeavour in crossing the borders of art and organizational discourse. *Creativity Studies*, 13(2), 351–368. DOI: 10.3846/cs.2020.11373.

Szostak, M., & Sułkowski, Ł. (2020b). Kitsch in Management: characteristic forms, carriers and propagators. In *Education Excellence and Innovation Management: A 2025 Vision to Sustain Economic Development during Global Challenges: Proceedings of the 35th International Business Information Management Association Conference (IBIMA)* (pp. 7584–7598), 1–2 April 2020. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345996764_Kitsch_in_Management_characteristic_forms_carriers_and_propagators. Access: 14.03.2021.

Szostak, M., & Sułkowski, Ł. (2021a). Identity crisis of artists during the COVID-19 pandemic and shift towards entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 9(3), 87–102. DOI: 10.15678/EBER.2021.090306.

- Szostak, M., & Sułkowski, Ł. (2021b).** The Identity and Self-Perception of Artists-Managers. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 19(1), 372–386. DOI: 10.21511/ppm.19(1).2021.32.
- Taleghani, M. (2012).** Impact of Attitudes on Managers Creativity. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 40, 65–70. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.03.162.
- Tatarkiewicz, W. (2015).** *Historia estetyki*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Tillay, R., & Chapman, C. C. (2019).** A new digital method for assessing the diversity of creator identities in the howard-tilton memorial library media services DVD collection. *Music Reference Services Quarterly*, 22(1–2), 57–64. DOI: 10.1080/10588167.2019.1601421.
- Toscher, B. (2019).** Entrepreneurial Learning in Arts Entrepreneurship Education: A Conceptual Framework. *Arti*, 8(1), 3–22.
- Toscher, B. (2020).** Blank Canvas: Explorative Behavior and Personal Agency in Arts Entrepreneurship Education. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 9(2), 19–44. DOI: 10.34053/artivate.9.2.115.
- United Nations (2021).** *Country classification*. World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP2020_FullReport.pdf. Access: 02.04.2021.
- Venus, M., Johnson, R. E., Zhang, S., Wang, X. H. (Frank), & Lanaj, K. (2019).** Seeing the Big Picture: A Within-Person Examination of Leader Construal Level and Vision Communication. *Journal of Management*, 45(7), 2666–2684. DOI: 10.1177/0149206318761576.
- Walter, H. M. (2015).** *Artist, Professional, Gentleman: Designing the Body of the Actor-Manager, 1870–1900*. London: Royal College of Art.
- Williams, S. (2001).** Increasing employees' creativity by training their managers. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 33(2), 63–68. DOI: 10.1108/00197850110385642.
- Wilson, C., & Brown, M. (2012).** Sound, space, image and music: Hybridity in creative process through technology, interactivity and collaboration. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education*, 5(1), 89–107. DOI: 10.1386/jmte.5.1.89_1.

Wolf, C. (2019). Not lost in translation: Managerial career narratives and the construction of protean identities. *Human Relations*, 72(3), 505–533. DOI: 10.1177/0018726718778094.

Woodward, J. B., & Funk, C. (2010). Developing the artist-leader. *Leadership*, 6(3), 295–309. DOI: 10.1177/1742715010368768.

Zhou, J., Shin, S. J., & Cannella, A. A. (2008). Employee self-perceived creativity after mergers and acquisitions: Interactive effects of threat-opportunity perception, access to resources, and support for creativity. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 44(4), 397–421. DOI: 10.1177/0021886308328010.

Mónica Vallejo Ruiz

University of Murcia Faculty of Education,
Murcia, Spain
monicavr@um.es
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0461-3926

José Miguel Niezto Cano

University of Murcia Faculty of Education,
Murcia, Spain
nietos@um.es
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8156-1632

Antonio Portela Pruaño,

University of Murcia Faculty of Education,
Murcia, Spain
aportela@um.es
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3264-8971

**M^a Begoña Alfageme
González**

University of Murcia Faculty of Education,
Murcia, Spain
alfageme@um.es
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4148-7620

Ana Torres Soto

University of Murcia Faculty of Education,
Murcia, Spain
ana.t.s@um.es
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0832-8580

**M^a Luisa García
Hernández**

University of Murcia Faculty of Education,
Murcia, Spain
luisagarcia@um.es
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1267-2571

Generational Diversity among Teachers in the Workplace: Implications for Teacher Relationships, Identity and Development

ABSTRACT

Objective: This contribution aims to introduce a conceptual framework on generational diversity of teachers in order to analyze and understand its influence on the processes and results of professional interaction in schools.

Methodology: In this conceptual piece, first, the relevance of generational diversity among teachers in their workplace is examined and justified, emphasizing the increasing aging of teaching staff. Next, generational diversity is explored by analyzing the concept of generation and the attributes used to distinguishing generations (particularly, age). Furthermore, evidence is considered regarding the impact on the construction of teacher relationships, paying particular attention to the context of collaborative relationships between teachers belonging to different generations and its effects on teacher learning and identity.

Findings: Conclusions are drawn as to the potentialities of intergenerational learning.

Value added: Despite representing a clear challenge for the educational organizations, generational diversity and intergenerational collaboration among teachers and school leaders have been scarcely studied so far.

Recommendations: Conclusions are drawn as to the potentialities of intergenerational learning and implications for professional induction and collegial professional development are presented as well.

Key words: Teachers, generations, teacher diversity, teacher collaboration, teacher professional development.

JEL codes: I21, I24, I28, J71, J26

Introduction

Even though it has seldom been dealt with in specialized literature, teachers' aging is a tangible reality which is becoming increasingly important (Kaskie, 2017). This tendency can be explained by the gradual aging of the population in certain areas of the labor market but, also, by other key factors linked to one's professional career expansion: better health conditions, job security, a greater commitment and satisfaction with one's job or uncertainties regarding retirement (Kaskie, 2017; Paganelli & Cangemi, 2019).



This phenomenon intersects, in turn, with the growing and steady integration of teachers in a temporary, provisional, and even precarious fashion, to the extent that it represents a considerable proportion of the total of teachers, although it is true that it is difficult to specify its size due to the contractual relationship which binds said staff with the institution (Beaton, 2017). The factors which explain this other tendency do not limit to those of an economic nature, but include changes in the student population, changes in study plans or in the relationship with the labor market (Levin & Montero, 2014). In any case, the working conditions of these teachers are more adverse than those of the previously alluded to, in relation to senior teachers. Moreover, while it can be assumed that these teachers are usually younger than those linked to the institution in a more secure way, there is evidence that among the former, a significant variance has been taking place, not presenting a huge disparity in their average age with respect to the latter (Levin & Montero, 2014).

This way, it can be considered that teaching institutions have gradually turned into workplaces where age has become (and will continue to do so) progressively more important and, consequently, teachers of different generations coexist in these workplaces, carrying out the work that they are meant to do. And this generational diversity has a great significance as a phenomenon which explains the existing diversity in organizations.

Certainly, teachers' generational replacement is a crucial challenge yet to be tackled; one which gets more and more attention in our educational system (Romero-Tena, Perera, & Martín-Gutiérrez, 2020). However, the challenge of addressing the generational diversity already identifiable among the teaching staff does not seem a lesser one, and this is likely to persist for a prolonged period of time. On the other hand, said diversity can eventually lead to significant improvements in the quality of education or training and, in general, in the institutions responsible for providing these.

This is evidenced, on the one hand, by their direct connection with the construction of the teaching profession identity, considering the generation itself as a determining, almost constituent, factor of that identity and, on the other, by its relationship with the development and learning of the teaching profession, regarding generational diversity as the context and driving force of collaborative relationships.

Conceptual framework

Organizational diversity and generational attributes

The way in which organizational diversity has been understood is not homogeneous, but rather significantly diverse. Nevertheless, certain common patterns can be identified (Qin, Muenjohn, & Chhetri, 2014). In particular, it is common to use this notion to make reference, at least ultimately, to the differences between the people who compose the organization, differences which are usually related to the (shared) attributes identifiable in them.

There is growing attention to the phenomenon of differences in terms of certain personal characteristics, to the extent that it has been habitual to notice the large number of attributes and, hence, the differences that can be deemed relevant in the organizational environment.

In certain occasions, the available information on personal traits has been utilized to infer collective characteristics, attributed to the organization as a whole. From that point of view, the organization is not diverse per se, but it is so inasmuch as its members differ between each other to a greater or lesser degree, with respect to one or more attributes (Harrison & Klein, 2007). More specifically, it is common to equate diversity with the distribution that said members display in relation to those attributes, so the organization



will be more or less diverse (that is, heterogeneous or homogeneous) depending on the greater or lesser variance in the personal characteristics considered relevant, respectively (Qin, Muenjohn, & Chhetri, 2014). This way, for instance, Harrison & Klein (2007, p. 1200) defined organizational diversity as “the distribution of differences between the members of a unit with respect to a common attribute “X”, such as gender, race, nationality, the type of contractual relationship with the organization, the position held in it, the duty performed... Among these examples of attributes that condition diversity, the first three are included within the category of the usually labelled “demographic” factors.

Age is precisely another demographic factor that gets increasingly more attention when characterizing the observable diversity in an organization. This way, it has been considered a specific form of diversity, relevant to the organization (Boehm & Kunze, 2015). Differences in relation to age are not important per se but depending on other differences explicitly relevant to the organization they are linked to. Among these, the following have been emphasized: health, cognitive capacities, performance at work, work engagement, performance at work, and wellbeing at the workplace (Hertel & Zacher, 2018).

Generations: conceptual outlooks

The concept of generation has been addressed from different perspectives leading to a great deal of conceptual variation which requires further explanation. Two perspectives can be highlighted among those: generations understood as a succession of descendants bound by a relationship, and the generations understood as a cohort of equals in relation to the period of birth and, therefore, their age (for instance, Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010). This latter perspective has two important variations. If, on the one hand, it has been equated to a birth cohort (that is, the group of people born within the same period) (Green et al., 2012), the

generation has also been linked to the fact of sharing a number of singular experiences and, therefore, perspectives, ideas, values, attitudes or behaviors, in line with what Karl Mannheim designates (see, for instance Timonen & Conlon, 2015). In this way, belonging to a generation would entail having experienced the same social or historical events or situations which impact, due to the sociological context, in a certain manner on that group of individuals (Green et al., 2012). This would explain how events which affect people of all ages impact differently on different generations, as said events may be endowed with similar values, characteristics and beliefs which differ from those of the members of other birth cohorts.

Especially in the case of organizations, the life stage in which people are found at the time (for example, the stage in one's professional life) is also a basic gauge to identify generations and generational differences can be explained by "the fact that individuals are at the time in a different life stage" (Kelan, 2014, p. 22). In the characterization of generational differences, the existing literature has highlighted that the social differences between generations also carry over to the workplace (Lyons & Kuron, 2014).

This way, it is possible to differentiate between generations according to the era and the technological and digital phenomena which characterize it (thus, differentiating between digital natives and immigrants, or Generation Xers, Generation Y and Generation Z), assuming that the knowledge, beliefs, emotions, habits, etc., which are attributed to them shape a different identity for each generation. An exhaustive review of Woodward et al. (2015) in the specialized literature on this issue has evidenced the existence of generational differences regarding six areas:

1. Communication and technology;
2. Work motivation or preferred working characteristics;
3. Work values;
4. Work attitudes;
5. Conduct in the workplace or at the university degree;
6. Leadership preferences or behaviors.



However, the same authors stress that there is not a unanimous consensus which explains the generational differences and that “popular” generations that have emerged in this context do not result from proven empirical evidence. It would be necessary, hence, to reconsider the concept of “generation”, adopting the teachers’ perspective to determine which groupings are made and in relation to which identity attributes.

Impact of generational diversity

The potentiality associated with generational diversity among teachers in schools, while scarcely or partially evidenced, is normally linked to effects in processes of professional interaction and their subsequent results, particularly in the shape of learning associated with areas of teachers’ thinking and behavior which are built and developed over the years.

Inter-professional relationships

What relationship is there between generational diversity and the professional relationships that teachers cultivate in their workplace, the school environment? To which extent does belonging to a generation determine or shape the process and the result of those teaching relationships? And, in that case, which generational attributes affect which relational dimensions?

As the interactions between teachers in the school environment and, singularly, the relationships of collaboration depend to a great extent on the conditions in which these are produced, it is reasonable to think that generational diversity is bound to acquire a special relevance for the development and efficiency of those relationships. As Geeraerts et al. (2018) state, the learning which is derived from the interaction between teachers of different generations brings about opportunities for promoting professional development.

In this line, empirical evidence shows that professional development (multi and interprofessional) between different generations benefits all of them. For instance, Kardos and Johnson (2007) affirmed, after completing their research, that the development of an “integral professional culture” characterized by the professional exchange between more and less experienced teachers led to successful schools. Other studies have given evidence of the contribution that professionals belonging to older generations can make to those of a younger generation (Geeraerts, Vanhoof, & Van den Bossche, 2016). The benefits that a more veteran generation can yield in a less experienced one have also been evidenced, though to a lesser degree (Lerham, 2008). All this involves assuming that there are significant generational differences between teachers which can influence their professional development and learning.

The interactive processes which take place between generationally different people and groups (as it is the case of veteran and retired teachers who act as mentors, on the one hand, and those who are acquiring their initial training as teachers, novice teachers or beginners, on the other), bring about or at least contribute to professional learning and, especially, professional development (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2009; Ropes, 2013). But while the importance given to the interaction between professionals belonging to different generations is patent, the attention has been focused on the contribution that professionals related to older generations can make to those affiliated with younger ones (Geeraerts, Vanhoof, & Van den Bossche, 2016). Much less attention has been paid in the specialized literature to the contribution that the latter can make to the former in the workplace (Murphy, 2012). The influence, therefore, on the collaborative professional development could be bidirectional.

In this regard, these patterns have been identified and characterized in formal modalities of collaborative professional development, but also in more subtle and informal processes, which tend to acquire a special relevance in intergenerational learning (Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans, & Donche, 2016; Marcelo & Vaillant, 2018).

Likewise, the few studies which are more centered on this issue are focused on the transmission and transfer of knowledge between teachers of different generations (Brücknerová & Novotný, 2017; Geeraerts, Tynjälä, & Heikkinen, 2018; Geeraerts, Vanhoof, & Van den Bossche, 2016).

But it is worth conjecturing that generational idiosyncrasies in a context of collaboration contribute to the introduction of challenges (Stoll, Harris, & Handscomb, 2012) or “dissonances” (Menter & McLaughlin, 2015; Opfer & Pedder, 2011) which promote:

- Activities demanding the participants’ inquiry and reflection in relation to relevant problems in the professional practice (Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Loughran, 2010).
- Activities in which the asymmetry between knowledge and experience is more pronounced (Huizinga, 2012; Murphy, 2012; Yip & Kram, 2016).

In this regard, it would be appropriate to consider the possibility of exploring other forms of collaboration in which the asymmetry related to the experience is the opposite of the one expected, and even those in which said symmetry is less pronounced or practically non-existent. If the opportunities of teachers’ interaction are constant and prolonged in time, their impact on professional learning will be greater, not only regarding their influence on the cognitive and instrumental aspect of teaching behavior, but also on the emotional component (for example, learning to know and experiencing passion for teaching).

Similarly, if learning has, as we will see later, a transformative character, it could impact on the professional dispositions (for instance, a way of thinking and performing one’s profession), an aspect which, in turn, can contribute to providing greater perspectives of continuation in the profession (Henderson & Noble, 2015; Santoro, Pietsch, & Borg, 2012). Otherwise, these synergistic effects would increase its potential efficacy when the collaboration is perceived as an effort which supports the transformational endeavor (Kennedy, 2014). When transformations are produced in

teachers' professional aptitudes, these tend to be reflected on the professional performance, so these changes end up having a positive repercussion on the students' learning process. What is more, these latter changes can again influence the professional "agency" of teachers and, consequently, their search for new experiences of professional development (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

Teachers' professional identity

What relation is there between the generational attribute and teachers' professional identity? To what extent does the link to one or another generation determine or shape said identity? And in that case, which generational attributes affect which identity dimensions?

Identity can be characterized as a generational identity. There is a direct relationship between both constructs, in the sense that belonging to a generation contributes, as a contextual factor, to the construction of the collective (or socio-professional) dimension of one's own identity.

This singular complex construct is not static nor is it uniform and evolves throughout time due to the influence of the cognitions and emotions which the teacher develops when interacting with the environment they are part of, which includes the relationships with their colleagues in the workplace.

The identity, to begin with, involves perceiving oneself as a certain type of person (or professional) and being acknowledged as such within a specific context (Marcelo & Gallego Domínguez, 2018). However, the view on who I am as a professional and as a teacher is a more complex one, as a result of the multiple and diverse dimensions it encompasses. In a comprehensive approach to professional identity, various authors (Abu-Alruz & Khasawneh, 2013; Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens, & Zijlstra, 2020; Hong, Greene, & Lowery, 2016) point at the following:



- Motivation (why do I want to teach/why am I teaching?);
- Self-image (what am I like/how do I see myself?);
- Self-esteem (how do I value myself?/am I able to?);
- Commitment (to what extent do I commit/get involved in?);
- Task perception (which are my role and duties?);
- Job satisfaction (does my job fulfil me?).

We can observe so far a certain correspondence with the variables that were linked above with the effects of age as a generational attribute. However, other authors (McDonough & McGraw, 2021; O'Neill, Hansen, & Lewis, 2014) focus their attention, instead, on the teachers' dispositions, understood as inclinations towards certain ways of thinking about teaching and the teaching profession, assuming that these imply in turn other predispositions to certain actions or behaviors. Not unlike the notion of attitudes, also professional outlooks or orientations, what is remarkable in our opinion is that all these lines of research offer valuable conceptual frameworks to analyze and comprehend the identity attributes and generational diversity within the teaching profession, and as a result, teaching diversity.

In this sense, it is reasonable to conclude that the interaction between teachers of different generations, especially when it is close and prolonged in time, will have a greater impact on the development of different professional identities and that such development will be larger when that interaction brings about a learning process. This is evidenced by studies on initiation programs or professional integration which involve both novice and beginner teachers and experienced or veteran ones. These initiatives promote a specific context (of action and interaction of both types), where professional identity can be built in an evolutionary and interpersonal manner, in such a way that the individual reflects and negotiates meanings and emotions on certain aspects about his/her role and teaching duties.

Professional learning and development

As we can observe, the evidence available supports the idea that generational diversity between teachers can impact positively on the teaching collaboration processes which take place in schools, bringing about professional learning and development. But it is important to deepen into the relationship of influence established between generational attributes and professional learning processes in specific contexts of collaboration, taking into account different particularities which could be attributed to learning processes.

On the one hand, what different generations learn from each other is not always defined and explicit, but usually ambiguous and tacit, which happens frequently in the case of learning professional dispositions. Obviously, the fact that learning takes place incidentally and informally does not necessarily mean that it will not be carried out deliberately, as it is the case with professional initiation programs, where the role of mentors is deemed fundamental (Swap, Leonard, Shields, & Abrams, 2001). Anyway, the propositional character does not end in the conscious possibilities, as Schugurensky (2000) states: intentionality, or even being conscious about the subject, are not necessary preconditions for incidental or socialization experiences to bring about learning.

For his part, Illeris (2017) talks about sensitivity and dynamic balance between will, motivation and emotion as precursors of action in teachers' professional learning processes. In any case, learning will entail two different processes which need to be activated in the individual and which can be produced simultaneously or separately; on the one hand, a process of "interaction" between the individual and his/her environment (social and material); on the other, an internal psychological process (cognitive and

affective) of “acquisition” of the specific contents of the learning process (Illeris, 2017, p. 24).

On the other hand, what is learned by means of intergenerational relationships (and, therefore, the type of change that this promotes) may vary depending on the sense or basic objective that the learning process adopts (Calleja, 2014; Ukpodoku, 2016), specifically:

- Transmission, when the acquisition, reproduction and accumulation of steady and even static content (for example, certain facts, skills, norms, or values) are sought for.
- Transformation, when a finer, or more satisfactory personal-global balance (a new way to think, feel, and act) is sought for by means of assessment or review (reflection) of the previous outlook.

Various authors (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & Mckinney, 2007; Kennedy, 2014) call attention to the fact that teachers’ learning simultaneously activates multiple and different facets in teachers, that is:

- Personal: referred to the teacher’s beliefs, values and attitudes along with interests and motivations to fulfil which contribute enormously to the construction (and change) of the professional identity, as well as the teacher’s self-confidence and his/her sense of self-efficacy;
- Social: referred to relational skills between individuals and groups in a context which facilitates the acceptance and assumption of risks. These contribute to the access to new resources, obtaining personal support and they encourage the reconstruction of the professional identity, through the mediation of the new beliefs, meanings and expectations which are shared;
- Occupational: referred to the construction of connections between theory and practice together with the intellectual stimulation and professional relevance. The workplace itself (school, classroom) is the most appropriate

environment to stimulate learning inasmuch as it facilitates the awareness of one's actions and their consequences.

Additionally, the eclectic character of professional learning can be manifested in other ways. For instance, Eteläpelto et al. (2014) consider that professionals and communities exert "agency" when they influence, take decisions and adopt positions regarding their work and professional identity (view of themselves and commitment as actors with ideals, interests, beliefs, values and ethical and professional standards). This recent construct, agency, would be a necessary quality for the teachers to be able to renegotiate their work identity contextually and develop their professional practice continuously and perfectly; relevant learnings normally associated with a singular type of teaching interaction, as is the case with collaboration (Durksen, Klassen, & Daniels, 2017).

Conclusions and Implications

Firstly, it is necessary to research more deeply about which type of generational groupings the teachers' are currently doing and based on which attributes. In this sense, it is important to characterize these groupings defining the respective similarities and differences and clarifying the value assigned to those. Emphasizing the concept of generation and characterizing it is relevant to be able to comprehend the professionally significant generational singularities which can be identified within them.

Presumably, well-grounded knowledge on generational attributes and their diversity in schools will provide us with a solid foundation to tackle two important and complex challenges (Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010) which the educational system features, specifically:

- The loss of knowledge and skills in older generations, who usually possess a variety of resources which are difficult to replace, at least in a limited amount of time (Fibkins, 2012) and which are deemed valuable, especially regarding ex-



perience, when it comes to mentoring those who debut in the profession, no matter how qualified they are;

- The need to enable the interaction between generationally diverse professionals and identify ways in which to manage and participate in the intergenerational professional development in the workplace requires focusing the attention on the generational differences and singularities which are professionally relevant. Besides, ageism is conceived as a hindering element for this specific challenge.

However, despite representing a clear challenge for the educational organizations, these have been scarcely studied so far (Watts, 2014). For this reason, after that initial research, it is necessary to delve into the effects which enhance or instead impair generational diversity, that is, their impact or influence on the teacher's professional learning and development. The wealth of knowledge available suggests that there are relevant implications for social relationships and those of professional collaboration which should be taken into consideration if we want to turn generational diversity into an opportunity to improve the educational institutions. The commonly accepted idea of making the workplace a learning environment (Billett, 2004) is in line with the idea of generational diversity as an instrument to construct more effective opportunities for teachers' training and pedagogical guidance, particularly in the scope of the initiation in the professional career and collegiate professional development.

The specialized literature and the limited evidence on how to tackle those challenges reveal the necessity of focusing on lines of research which deepen into these aspects and provide empirical evidence of their influence. Said evidence needs to be appropriately expanded as well as contextualized with the purpose of making it updated and endowing it with a greater consistency with regard to its political and practical implications.

Apart from that, delving into these characterizations (or other possible ones), considering other aspects they interact with (the nature of the learning processes, for instance) and highlighting the

importance of these in multi/intergenerational initiatives would allow to develop environments and methods of collaboration between teachers which facilitate intergenerational professional learning, creating an opportunity for change and enhancement of the teaching identities and competencies, as well as an increase of the quality of the action plans in teaching institutions.

Acknowledgements: This contribution is framed within the research project (RTI2018-098806-B-I00) “Intergenerational Professional Development in Education: Implications for the professional initiation of teachers” (DePrInEd), funded by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (Spanish State Research Agency, State R&D Program Oriented to the Challenges of the Society, 2018 Call for Research Proposals).



References

- Abu-Alruz, J., & Khasawneh, S. (2013).** Professional identity of faculty members at higher education institutions: a criterion for workplace success. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 18(4), 431–442. DOI: 10.1080/13596748.2013.847235.
- Beaton, F. (2017).** Just in time and future-proofing? Policy, challenges and opportunities in the professional development of part-time teachers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 22(1), 19–30. DOI: 10.1080/1360144X.2016.1261354.
- Billett, S. (2004).** Workplace participatory practices: conceptualising workplaces as learning environments. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 16(6), 312–324. DOI: 10.1108/13665620410550295.
- Boehm, S. A., & Kunze, F. (2015).** Age diversity and age climate in the workplace. In P. M. Bal, D. T. A. M. Kooij, D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Aging workers and the employee-employer relationship* (pp. 33–55). New York: Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-08007-9_3.
- Brücknerová, K., & Novotný, P. (2017).** Intergenerational learning among teachers: overt and covert forms of continuing professional development. *Professional Development in Education*, 43(3), 397–415. DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2016.1194876.
- Calleja, C. (2014).** Jack Mezirow's conceptualisation of adult transformative learning: a review. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 20(1), 117–136. DOI: 10.7227/JACE.20.1.8.
- Durksen, T., Klassen, R., & Daniels, L. M. (2017).** Motivation and collaboration: the keys to a developmental framework for teachers' professional learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 53–66. DOI: 10.1016/j.tate.2017.05.011.
- Eteläpelto, A., Vähäsantanen, K., Hökkä, P., & Paloniemi, S. (2014).** Identity and agency in professional learning. In S. Billett, C. Harteis, H. Gruber (Eds.), *International handbook of research in professional and practice-based learning* (pp. 645–672). New York: Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-017-8902-8_24.
- Fibkins, W. L. (2012).** *Stopping the brain drain of skilled veteran teachers: retaining and valuing their hard-won experience*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Fraser, C., Kennedy, A., Reid, L., & Mckinney, S. (2007). Teachers' continuing professional development: contested concepts, understandings and models. *Journal of In-service Education*, 33(2), 153–169. DOI: 10.1080/13674580701292913.

Geeraerts, K., Tynjälä, P., & Heikkinen, H. L. T. (2018). Inter-generational learning of teachers: what and how do teachers learn from older and younger colleagues? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(4), 479–495. DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2018.1448781.

Geeraerts, K., Vanhoof, J., & Van den Bossche, P. (2016). Teachers' perceptions of intergenerational knowledge flows. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 56, 150–161. DOI: 10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.024.

Green, A. P., Eigel, L. M., James, J. B., Hartmann, D., & McLean, K. M. (2012). Multiple generations in the workplace: exploring the research, influence of stereotypes, and organizational applications. In W. C. Borman, J. W. Hedge (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of work and aging* (pp. 483–500). Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195385052.013.0146.

Hanna, F., Oostdam, R., Severiens, S. E., & Zijlstra, B. J. H. (2020). Assessing the professional identity of primary student teachers: design and validation of the teacher identity measurement scale. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 64, pp. 1–10. DOI: 10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.100822.

Harrison, D. A., & Klein, K. J. (2007). What's the difference? diversity constructs as separation, variety, or disparity in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1199–1228. DOI: 10.5465/amr.2007.26586096.

Henderson, R., & Noble, K. (2015). *Professional learning, induction and critical reflection: building workforce capacity in education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9781137473028.

Hertel, G. & Zacher, H. (2018). Managing the aging workforce. In D. S. Ones, N. Anderson, H. K. Sinangil, C. Viswesvaran (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of industrial, work and organization psychology* (2nd Edition, pp. 396–428), Volume 3. New York: Sage.

Hong, J., Greene, B., & Lowery, J. (2016). Multiple dimensions of teacher identity development from pre-service to early years of teaching: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 43(1), 84–98. DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2017.1251111.



Huizing, R. L. (2012). Mentoring together: a literature review of group mentoring. *Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 20(1), pp. 27–55. DOI: 10.1080/13611267.2012.645599.

Illeris, K. (2017). *How we learn: Learning and non-learning in school and beyond*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Joshi, A., Dencker, J. C., Franz, G., & Martocchio, J. J. (2010). Unpacking generational identities in organizations. *The Academy of Management Review*, 35(3), 392–414. DOI: 10.5465/AMR.2010.51141800.

Kardos, S. M., & Johnson, S. M. (2007). On their own and presumed expert: new teachers' experiences with their colleagues. *Teachers College Record*, 109(9), 2083–2106. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=12812>. Access: 16.08. 2021.

Kaskie, B. (2017). The academy is aging in place: assessing alternatives for modifying institutions of higher education. *The Gerontologist*, 57(5), 816–823. DOI: 10.1093/geront/gnw001.

Kelan, E. K. (2014). Organising generations. What can sociology offer to the understanding of generations at work? *Sociology Compass*, 8(1), 20–30. DOI: 10.1111/soc4.12117.

Kennedy, A. (2014). Understanding continuing professional development: the need for theory to impact on policy and practice. *Professional Development in Education*, 40(5), 688–697. DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2014.955122.

Kyndt, E., Gijbels, D., Grosemans, I., & Donche, V. (2016). Teachers' everyday professional development: Mapping informal learning activities, antecedents, and learning outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 86, 1111–1150. DOI: 10.3102/0034654315627864.

Lerham, S. (2008). Novices and teachers journeying into real world teaching: how a veteran learns from novices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 204–215.

Levin, J. S., & Montero, L. (2014). Divided identity: Part-time faculty in public colleges and universities. *The Review of Higher Education*, 37(4), 531–558. DOI: 10.1353/rhe.2014.0033.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (2014). Teachers as professionals: evolving definitions of stall development. In L. E. Martin, S. Kragler, D. J. Quatroche, K. L. Bauseman (Eds.), *Handbook of professional development in education. Successful models and practices* (pp. 3–21). New York: Guilford Press.

Lieberman, A., & Pointer Mace, D. H. (2009). The role of 'accomplished teachers' in professional learning communities: uncovering practice and enabling leadership. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15(4), 459–470. DOI: 10.1080/13540600903057237.

Loughran, J. J. (2010). Seeing knowledge for teaching teaching: moving beyond stories. *Studying Teacher Education*, 6(3), 221–226. DOI: 10.1080/17425964.2010.518490.

Lyons, S., & Kuron, L. (2014). Generational differences in the workplace: a review of the evidence and directions for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35. DOI: 10.1002/job.1913.

Marcelo, C., & Gallego Domínguez, C. (2018). ¿Quién soy yo como maestro? Construcción de la identidad profesional en docentes principiantes. In I. Cantón Mayo, M. Tardif (Eds.), *Identidad profesional docente* (pp. 45–56). Madrid: Narcea.

Marcelo, C., & Vaillant, D. (2018). *Hacia una formación disruptiva de docentes. 10 claves para el cambio*. Madrid: Narcea.

McDonough, S., & McGraw, A. (2021). Thinking dispositions for teaching: enabling and supporting resilience in context. In C. F. Mansfield (Ed.), *Cultivating teacher resilience* (pp. 69–83). Singapore: Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-981-15-5963-1.

Menter, I., & McLaughling, C. (2015). What do we know about teachers' professional learning? In C. McLaughlin, P. Cordingley, R. McLellan, V. Baumfield (Eds.), *Making a difference turning teacher learning inside-out* (pp. 31–52). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murphy, W. M. (2012). Reverse mentoring at work: fostering crossgenerational learning and developing millennial leaders. *Human Resource Management*, 51(4), 549–574. DOI: 10.1002/hrm.21489.



O'Neill, J., Hansen, S., & Lewis, E. (2014). *Dispositions to teach: review and synthesis of current components and applications, and evidence of impact.* New Zealand: Massey University, Institute of Education. Retrieved from <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/DispositionsReportFinal100914.pdf>. Access: 16.08.2021.

Opfer, V. D., & Pedder, D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of Educational Research, 81*, 376–407. DOI: 10.3102/0034654311413609.

Paganelli, A., & Cangemi, J. (2019). Effects of aging faculty. *Education, 139*(3), 151–157. Retrieved from <https://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/pdf/quiet-time-research/Quiet-Time-on-Social-Emotional-Learning.pdf>. Access: 16.08.2021.

Qin, J., Muenjohn, N. & Chhetri, P. (2014). A review of diversity: conceptualizations: variety, trends, and a framework. *Human Resource Development Review, 13*(2), 133–157. DOI: 10.1177/1534484313492329.

Romero-Tena, R., Perera, V. H., & Martín-Gutiérrez, A. (2020). Factors that influence the decision of Spanish faculty members to retire. *British Educational Research Journal, 46*(1), 58–74. DOI: 10.1002/berj.3566.

Ropes, D. (2013). Intergenerational learning in organizations. *European Journal of Training & Development, 37*(8), 713–727. DOI: 10.1108/EJTD-11-2012-0081.

Santoro, N., Pietsch, M., & Borg, T. (2012). The passion of teaching: learning from an older generation of teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 38*(5), 585–595. DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2013.739796.

Schugurensky, D. (2000). *The forms of informal learning: towards a conceptualization of the field* (WALL Working Paper No. 19). Centre for the Study of Education and Work, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Retrieved from <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/2733/2/19formsinformal.pdf>. Access: 16.08.2021.

Stoll, L., Harris, A., & Handscomb, G. (2012). *Great professional development which leads to great pedagogy: nine claims from research.* National College for School Leadership. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335707/Great-professional-development-which-leads-to-great-pedagogy-nine-claims-from-research.pdf. Access: 16.08.2021.

Swap, W., Leonard, D., Shields, M., & Abrams, L. (2001). Using mentoring and storytelling to transfer knowledge in the workplace. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 18(1), 95–114. DOI: 10.1080/07421222.2001.11045668.

Timonen, V., & Conlon, C. (2015). Beyond Mannheim: Conceptualising how people ‘talk’ and ‘do’ generations in contemporary society. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 24, 1–9. DOI: 10.1016/j.alcr.2015.03.001.

Ukpodoku, O. N. (2016). Realizing transformative learning and social justice education: unpacking teacher education. In S. M. Tomlinson-Clarke, D. L. Clarke (Eds.), *Social justice and transformative learning: culture and identity in the United States and South Africa* (pp. 113–142). Abingdon: Routledge.

Watts, N. (2014). Grumpy old teachers? An Insight into the life experiences of veteran teachers. In M. P. Moreau (Ed.), *Inequalities in the teaching profession: a global perspective* (pp. 87–100). London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9781137328601_5.

Woodward, I., Vongswasdi, P., & More, E. (2015). *Generational diversity at work: a systematic review of the research* (Working Paper No. 2015/48/OB). INSEAD. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2630650.

Yip, J., & Kram, K. E. (2016). Developmental networks: Enhancing the science and practice of mentoring. In D. A. Clutterbuck, F. K. Kochan, L. G. Lunsford, N. Dominguez, J. Haddock-Millar (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of mentoring* (pp. 88–104). New York: Sage.

Jagat Bahadur Kunwar

South-Eastern Finland University
of Applied Sciences – Kouvola Campus,
Kuovola, Finland
jagat.kunwar@xamk.fi
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7612-5841

The Influence of Culture on Collaborative Learning Practices in Higher Education

Received: 04-06-2021; Accepted: 01-07-2021

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study systematically identifies the various pertinent cultural dimensions and the group processes involved in collaborative peer learning before empirically exploring their associations among a sample of university students.

Methodology: Twenty statements encompassing various cultural dimensions that could possibly influence students' preferences towards collaborative peer learning practices were incorporated into a survey. The data were collected from 147 multicultural students studying applied sciences in Finland. Chi-squared test

of independence was used to test the association between the cultural dimension scores for students and their stated preferences for collaborative learning practices.

Findings: A major finding of this study is that learners from diverse cultural backgrounds have differing modes of engaging in the eight separate collaborative learning processes. The findings clearly reveal that students from cultures that are hierarchical, collectivist, less bound by rules, and traditional are less likely to have any prior familiarity with peer-learning methods. It seems relatively clear that the power distance and collectivism dimensions have the greatest impact on shaping the preferences of students for collaborative peer-learning methods.

Value Added: Very few studies have looked at how the cultural backgrounds of students can influence their use of, and preferences towards, collaborative peer-learning methods. This study identifies key processes in collaborative learning practices, which are shaped by culture as communication, decision-making, leadership, evaluation, trust building, the expression of disagreement, scheduling, and persuasion within a peer group.

Recommendations: This study found that Hofstede's framework might be too constraining when understanding how culture shapes a student's preferences towards collaborative peer learning in the educational context. It would be even more fruitful to develop an altogether endogenous framework that is more suitable for exploring the influence of culture on learning and education. Such a model should identify the various dimensions of culture beyond those of national identity and consider how they jointly influence attitudes towards collaborative learning rather than considering them in isolation. This model should also take a more dynamic approach towards both culture and learning.

Key words: culture, collaborative learning, peer learning, higher education, Hofstede, group processes

JEL codes: I23, M16, M30, A22, A23

Introduction

There is no doubt that higher education is increasingly internationalising alongside globalisation (Healey, 2008; Teichler, 2009), and

the resulting student migration has increased the presence of intercultural contacts among international students (Dunne, 2013). On the other hand, collaborative peer-learning methods, which involve various structures where students work in small groups, have become increasingly common practices in higher education. However, previous research (Popov et al., 2012; Dennehy, 2015; Cagiltay, Bichelmeyer, & Akilli, 2015) has provided conflicting evidence about the influence of culture on shaping a student's preferences towards collaborative learning practices.

Some studies suggest that intercultural contact can be potentially beneficial to students participating in collaborative peer learning through enhanced academic and social adjustment (Wang, 2012), intercultural development, and reciprocal tolerance (Volet, 2004). Others, meanwhile, suggest that cultural diversity in collaborative peer-learning groups fosters positive learning outcomes, such as a well-developed social awareness, divergent perspectives, and problem-solving skills (Cantor, 2004).

There are also several challenges involved in arranging multicultural collaborative learning, and these can lead to negative learning outcomes (Dunne, 2013). These include prejudices and stereotypical attitudes towards culturally distant students, among others. Unresolved cultural conflicts can have an adverse effect on collaborative learning, because they arouse negative emotions and divert the peer group's attention away from achievable tasks (Ayoko, Callan, & Härtel, 2008). Troubled interpersonal group dynamics, differences in the working and interactional styles of group members, and dysfunctional communication can all result in negative emotions emerging in a collaborative learning group (Barron 2003).

To ensure positive learning outcomes for the students and the host institution, it is vital to understand the factors that shape the preferences of multicultural students towards collaborative peer learning. This study seeks to explore how the cultural backgrounds of students influence their orientation towards collaborative peer-learning arrangements. This study focusses on group dynamics and

learning processes and how they are shaped by the participants' cultural backgrounds, because it is important to understand these issues (Cohen, 1994; Cagiltay, Bichelmeyer, & Akilli, 2015; Rozkwitalska, Sułkowski, & Magala, 2017; Rozkwitalska et al., 2017). Although some previous studies have already dealt with aspects of group dynamics in a multicultural group (Popov, et al., 2012), very few studies specifically deal with how cultural dimensions can influence the preferences of participants with regards to collaborative peer learning and the processes therein.

This study aims to contribute to this area by first identifying the cultural dimensions that are likely to influence collaborative peer-learning preferences and practices. Existing studies in this area focus excessively on business management issues (Zhou & Shi, 2011; Rozkwitalska et al., 2017) and disregard the collaborative learning perspective in the context of higher education. This study systematically identifies the various pertinent cultural dimensions and the group processes involved in collaborative peer learning before empirically exploring their associations among a sample of university students. A wide range of similar studies have tended to apply Hofstede's largely accepted 6D model of culture (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) while trying to understand the relationship between culture and group processes, albeit without sufficient critical reflection. This study also establishes how empirically valid Hofstede's 6D model is within the educational context. Given the widespread adoption of Hofstede's 6D model in contexts ranging from management to education, this issue also clearly warrants further investigation.

Literature review

Key concepts

Collaborative peer learning is defined as "learning which occurs through social interaction between peers, directed towards the

accomplishment of a common task” (Magin, 1982, p. 108), and this definition has remained largely unchanged in the years since. For example, Cronise (2016) considers it as an approach where the experiences of individual learners are shared to collectively construct solutions. Collaborative peer learning can therefore be considered an interaction between each student and his or her peers through structured protocols to achieve a common goal by developing a shared mental model and a system of accountability (Newell & Bain, 2018).

Culture, meanwhile, is defined as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from those of another” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 6). Although there are several other significant frameworks for analysing the different dimensions of culture, this study uses Hofstede’s 6D model to understand collaborative peer learning processes for several reasons. Indeed, Hofstede himself pointed out the important implications of his framework within the context of teaching and learning (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), and it is probably the most-applied model in comparative cross-cultural research (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010). The six dimensions in Hofstede’s model cover the dimensions used in other comparable frameworks, such as Schwartz’s seven value types (Schwartz, 1992), Hall’s classification of culture (Hall, 1959), and the GLOBE project (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfmand, 2002). More importantly, Hofstede’s model is used as the basis for identifying several group processes in Erin Meyer’s ‘cultural map’ (Meyer, 2014), which is used in this study. What is more, a further aim of this study is to evaluate the applicability of Hofstede’s 6D model within the context of various collaborative learning processes.

Cross-cultural differences can be understood using the six different dimensions within Hofstede’s 6D model. The ‘Individualism vs. Collectivism’ (IDV) dimension refers to the degree of interdependence that a society maintains among its members. The ‘Power Distance Index’ (PDI) is defined as the degree to which power imbalances and inequality are accepted as normal in a society.

'Masculinity' (MAS) refers to the degree to which individuals in a society prefer to be the best (masculine) or do what they like best (feminine). The 'Uncertainty Avoidance Index' (UAI) relates to the extent to which a society feels uncomfortable with unpredictable situations and thus tries to avoid such situations. 'Time orientation' (LTO) is the degree to which a culture maintains its link with the past when dealing with the present and the future. The final dimension, 'Indulgence vs. Restraint' (IVR), deals with whether a society places importance on curbing desire to achieve long-term gains (restraint) or regards immediate gratification as a cultural norm (indulgence) (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

Despite the success and applicability of Hofstede's 6D model, there are also ample critiques available. The most obvious one is the assumption that human values are explained solely by the national culture (Chiang, 2005) or that all members of a culture exhibit the same cultural values (Williamson, 2002). Even if we allow for the existence and importance of national culture, the model does not adequately demonstrate that national culture determines individual actions. The impact on individual behaviour is dependent upon several other contextual factors and situational variability (McSweeney, 2002). The most dominant critique of the model further suggests that the model conflates country and cultural effects, provides indication of existence but not the magnitude of cultural effects and ultimately, is not comprehensive in its inclusion of cultural values (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006; Beugelsdijk, Kostova, & Roth, 2017). Moreover, from a more critical perspective, it has been claimed that this model – instead of being representative of societal cultures – privileges the western masculine managerial viewpoint (Ailon, 2008). Despite these well-known flaws of Hofstede's 6D model, several empirical studies, including this, use the model as it provides quantitative and approximate measures of rich cultural variety (Williamson, 2002).

Cultural influences on collaborative learning preferences

If learning occurs through social interaction, it must also depend on the cultural context in which it occurs (Lattuca, 2016; Manikutty, Anuradha, & Hansen, 2007). Although peer collaboration is becoming increasingly common in higher education, it may not be equally preferred across various cultures. For example, collaborative peer learning is a diffused form of learning with minimal hierarchical imposition from the instructor, so it may not be commonly found in hierarchical cultures where there is a greater power distance between the teacher and students (Manikutty, Anuradha, & Hansen, 2007). On the other hand, in collectivist cultures, didactic methods with a focus on cooperative learning are more common (Kennedy, 2002; Ngwainmbi, 2004).

Previous research (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010) has broadly dealt with the impact of heterogeneous group members on group dynamics, but few studies have dealt specifically with the aspects of group dynamics in a multicultural group (Popov, Brinkman, Biemans, Mulder, & Kuznetsov, 2012). Based on these studies, important collaborative group learning processes, which are influenced by culture, can be separated into eight distinct processes within a group: communicating, evaluating, leading, persuading, deciding, trusting, disagreeing, and scheduling (Meyer, 2014). According to Meyer (2014), these eight processes can comprehensively describe the cultural orientations of individuals towards group processes (Meyer, 2014). Thus far, however, group processes have been largely studied within the context of global business. In contrast, this study shows how Hofstede's cultural dimensions affect the orientation of participants towards these processes within the context of collaborative peer learning.

The literature suggests that in low-context cultures (Hall, 1959), people are trained to communicate literally and explicitly (Meyer, 2014), while in the high-context cultures, communication is subtler

and relies upon subconscious assumptions of common reference points and shared knowledge (Hall, 1959). This suggests that students from low-context cultures may prefer very explicit, written, and codified forms of communication modes when compared to students from high-context cultures.

Individualistic cultures, meanwhile, are more direct, and they emphasize task-related information in their communication (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfmand, 2002). Task-focused individualistic people also tend to prefer the explicit documentation of group processes and outcomes, so they want precise objectives, structured learning, detailed assignments, strict timetables, and an unambiguous assessment (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In collectivist cultures, meanwhile, the focus on preserving group harmony suggests that individuals from these cultures are less prone to strongly communicating their individual viewpoints.

It has also been suggested that individualists engage in peer collaboration largely for calculative reasons, and they seek an equitable division of tasks, assessments, and learning outcomes (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In collaborative peer groups, individualists may also not contribute fully, or they may even actively undermine group progress, which is a phenomenon known as 'social loafing' (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979), when there is no appropriate system for individual reward. In collectivist cultures, in contrast, the outcome is considered a collective effort.

One of the fundamental tenets of collaborative peer learning is consensual decision-making (Cronise, 2016). It is common in some cultures for authoritative figures to make decisions unilaterally (Meyer, 2014). In an educational context, this means that instructors are expected to exert greater influence (Smith & Dugan, 1998). In more egalitarian cultures that prefer consensual decision-making, students are more inclined to resolve group issues among themselves.

The approaches to building trust and relationships also differ across cultures. In collaborative learning groups, relationship-building approaches among peers can either be

task- or relationship-focused (Meyer, 2014). Individuals from hierarchical cultures are more likely to be task-oriented than relationship-oriented (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) because they are more concerned with establishing structures than seeking the opinions of subordinates (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). In contrast, collectivist individuals value stable relationships, so they consequently invest more time and effort in developing them. Moreover, in cultures with a long-term mindset, the selection of peers in collaborative groups is motivated by a desire to develop long-lasting relationships that will help achieve professional ambitions (Manikutty, Anuradha, & Hansen, 2007).

Cultural background can also influence individual tendencies to confront others and display disagreements emotionally (Meyer, 2014). Indeed, in the cognitivist view of knowledge, learning occurs through conflict (Lattuca, 2016). How these disagreements are expressed, however, varies between cultures. In individualistic cultures, disagreements are expressed directly, and this is viewed as being productive and having no direct consequences for personal relationships. In contrast, due to the emphasis on group harmony in collectivist cultures, highly collectivist individuals prefer to avoid direct confrontation and adopt mediation approaches instead (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010).

Different cultures can also have different senses of time (Hall, 1959). For example, those with a monochronic perception of time perform tasks sequentially and without interruption, so sticking to routines and completing tasks on time are important scheduling principles. In contrast, in cultures with a polychronic perception of time, tasks are performed in a fluid manner, with many activities being undertaken at once (Meyer, 2014). Hence, there are variations in how the strictness of schedules may be perceived by peer group members with different cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, Nisbett, Choi, Peng, and Norenzayan (2001) suggest that there is a relationship between cultural background and cognition. Based on 'linguistic determinism', they separate 'Western' and 'Eastern' ways of processing knowledge and information.

The 'Western' way consists of categorising objects and applying formal reasoning processes, whereas the 'Eastern' way thinks more in terms of informal relationships. In collectivistic, high-context societies, knowledge is intuitively decoded from a holistic context using multiple sources (Von Queis, 2005). The 'Eastern' method of cognition is therefore largely a consequence of collectivism (Manikutty, Anuradha, & Hansen, 2007). In summary, 'Western' individuals tend to favour analytic cognition, while people from 'Eastern' cultures tend to engage in holistic cognition. As a result, the culture can directly influence which argument is considered more persuasive. In some cultures, deductive reasoning is prioritized, so principles will be discussed before application. In other cultures, inductive reasoning is prioritized, and so application will be discussed before principles (Meyer, 2014).

Method

A range of possible preferences towards collaborative peer-learning practices were discussed in the previous section based on students' cultural dimensions. These preferences were incorporated into a survey as statements. The identified processes related to communicating, evaluating, leading, persuading, deciding, trusting, disagreeing, and scheduling within a collaborative group (Meyer, 2014). Altogether, twenty statements encompassed various cultural dimensions that could possibly influence students' preferences towards collaborative peer learning practices. These statements are summarized in table 1.

All the statements were Likert scale items with three choices: 'disagree', 'neither agree nor disagree', and 'agree'. In addition to these, the survey also solicited demographic information about the respondents, including their familiarity with collaborative learning practices. The questionnaire was set up using the Webropol system (Taimitarha, 2011), and a public link was sent to



students attending various universities in Finland. There are currently 25 universities of applied sciences in Finland. The data were collected from students during the winter of 2020 and the early spring of 2021. Some 147 respondents completed the survey.

Table 1. Preference statements included in the survey

Use and experience of collaborative peer learning	I prefer to collaborate with peers rather than work alone (pref_group) Peer learning is not common in my culture (pref_notcommon) I have to depend upon others too much to complete group tasks (pref_toodependence)
Communicating	It is important to write down agreements to prevent future misunderstanding (com_recap) I only speak when I am invited to speak (com_speakinvited)
Evaluating	There is more free-riding in a multicultural group (pref_freeriding) I prefer to be told bluntly if I have done poor work (evaluate_blunt) I feel uncomfortable when I am praised in front of others (evalatte_singledout)
Deciding & Leading	Problems should be resolved among peers without involving the instructor (decide_resolvewithin) A single person should make decisions for the group (decide_leader)
Trusting	I invite people to collaborate only if they can do their job well (trust_taskjob) I do not trust anyone until I know them personally (trust_spendtime) I help other peers even if it is not related to the tasks (trust_giveassistance) I am suspicious of people from unfamiliar cultures (trust_suspiciousculture)
Disagreeing	Challenging opinions of peers ruin personal relationships (disagree_challengeengender) I am visibly emotional when I disagree with someone (disagree_emotional) When somebody disagrees with me, I take it personally (disagree_personally)
Scheduling	Schedules should not change often (schedule_fixed) I usually complete my work just before the deadline (schedule_justbeforedeadline)
Persuading	I need to see the big picture before I understand my task roles (cognition_bigpicture)

Source: author's own elaboration.

The nationalities of the students were used to assign scores to them based on various cultural dimensions using the ‘Hofstede Insights’ database (Hofstede Insights, 2020). This database provides an extensive list of scores, ranged 1 to 100, over six different cultural dimensions for many different countries. Higher scores represent stronger characteristics. For this research, these numerical scores were converted to categorical scores by using the median as a cut-off point for each dimension. These categorical scores, namely ‘low’ or ‘high’, were then assigned to respondents according to their nationalities.

Subsequently, the chi-squared test of independence was used to test the association between the cultural dimension scores for students and their stated preferences for collaborative learning practices (table 1). This statistical method was appropriate for use because the variables are ordinal and non-normally distributed (Huberty & Morris, 1989). Further association tests were also conducted for the various other demographic characteristics of the students and their preferences regarding collaborative learning practices. The IBM SPSS Statistics version 24.0 software for Windows was used to analyse the data.

Results

There were 147 (N = 147) respondents from different countries, with Finland, Russia, China, India, and Nepal being most represented. The number of respondents were split roughly equally in terms of gender (49.7% male and 50.3% female). Most respondents (57.1%) were between 21 and 25 years of age, with 42.9% of the respondents being in their second year of study and 30.6% being in their first year.

Some 41.89% of the student sample came from egalitarian cultures, compared to 58.11% from hierarchical cultures. Students who were identified as collectivist comprised 56.67% of the sample, with 43.24% coming from more individualistic countries. Those students considered as coming from feminine cultures made up 78.38% of the sample,

while 21.62% of the sample were deemed as originating from masculine cultures. Students from cultures with a long-term orientation constituted 58.10% of the sample, compared to 41.90% from cultures with a short-term orientation. Finally, 62.20% of the respondents came from cultures leaning more towards instant gratification, while 37.80% of the students came from more restrained cultures. The general characteristics of the respondents are summarised in more detail in table 2.

Table 2. The characteristics of the sample

Respondents			
Demographics		N	%
Gender	Male	73.00	49.66
	Female	74.00	50.34
Age	< 20	21.00	14.29
	21–25	84.00	57.14
	26–30	23.00	15.65
	31–40	15.00	10.20
	41–50	4.00	2.72
	> 51	0.00	0.00
University year	1	45.00	30.61
	2	63.00	42.86
	3	26.00	17.69
	> 3	13.00	8.84
Power Distance Index (PDI)	Low	62.00	41.89
	High	86.00	58.11
Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)	Low	84.00	56.76
	High	64.00	43.24
Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)	Low	116.00	78.38
	High	32.00	21.62
Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)	Low	66.00	44.59
	High	82.00	55.41
Long term orientation (LTO)	Low	62.00	41.90
	High	86.00	58.10
Indulgence versus restraint (IVR)	Low	56.00	37.80
	High	92.00	62.20

Note: The scores for PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO and IVR were obtained from Hofstede Insights .

Source: author's own elaboration.



The chi-squared test of independence was used to determine the strength and direction of any associations between the respondents' scores for the six cultural dimensions and their statements about collaborative learning processes (see table 1). The results of this are provided in table 3.

Table 3. Associations between cultural scores and collaborative learning preferences

Cross tabulation of selected variables	Cultural dimension (N = 147)	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Chi-squared test of independence
PDI * pref_notcommon	PDI1	74.2%	16.1%	9.7%	$\chi^2(2) = 40.83^{**}$ p = .00
	PDI2	25.9%	15.3%	58.8%	
PDI * pref_freeriding	PDI1	46.8%	32.3%	21.0%	$\chi^2(2) = 12.86^{**}$ p = .00
	PDI2	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	
PDI * com_recap	PDI1	21.0%	21.0%	58.1%	$\chi^2(2) = 11.29^{**}$ p = .00
	PDI2	4.7%	15.3%	80.0%	
PDI * trust_suspiciousculture	PDI1	77.4%	14.5%	8.1%	$\chi^2(2) = 11.84^{**}$ p=.00
	PDI2	50.6%	23.5%	25.9%	
IDV * pref_notcommon	IDV1	26.2%	14.3%	59.5%	$\chi^2(2) = 40.92^{**}$ p = .00
	IDV2	73.0%	17.5%	9.5%	
IDV * pref_freeriding	IDV1	20.2%	39.3%	40.5%	$\chi^2(2) = 12.43^{**}$ p = .00
	IDV2	46.0%	33.3%	20.6%	
IDV * com_recap	IDV1	4.8%	14.3%	81.0%	$\chi^2(2) = 12.01^{**}$ p = .00
	IDV2	20.6%	22.2%	57.1%	
IDV * trust_suspiciousculture	IDV1	51.2%	22.6%	26.2%	$\chi^2(2) = 10.99^{**}$ p = .00
	IDV2	76.2%	15.9%	7.9%	
MAS * trust_suspiciousculture	MAS1	66.4%	13.8%	19.8%	$\chi^2(2) = 12.24^{**}$ p = .00
	MAS2	45.2%	41.9%	12.9%	
UAI * pref_notcommon	UAI1	27.3%	19.7%	53.0%	$\chi^2(2) = 17.60^{**}$ p = .00
	UAI2	61.7%	12.3%	25.9%	
UAI * pref_freeriding	UAI1	18.2%	39.4%	42.4%	$\chi^2(2) = 10.90^{**}$ p = .00
	UAI2	42.0%	34.6%	23.5%	
LTO * pref_notcommon	LTO1	75.8%	14.5%	9.7%	$\chi^2(2) = 43.06^{**}$ p=.00
	LTO2	24.7%	16.5%	58.8%	
LTO * pref_freeriding	LTO1	48.4%	32.3%	19.4%	$\chi^2(2) = 15.94^{**}$ p = .00
	LTO2	18.8%	40.0%	41.2%	
LTO * disagree_emotional	LTO1	12.9%	54.8%	32.3%	$\chi^2(2) = 12.77^{**}$ p = .00
	LTO2	20.0%	25.9%	54.1%	
Gender * trust_spendtime	1	31.5%	16.4%	52.1%	$\chi^2(2) = 13.28^{**}$ p = .00
	2	50.0%	27.0%	23.0%	

Note: PDI1 = Low PDI, PDI2 = High PDI (Other scales similarly expressed for IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO, IVR)

**p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, two tailed. (Only **p < 0.01 in the table)

Source: author's own elaboration.

The results presented in table 3 only include the highly significant associations. They reveal that students from power-distanced and collectivist cultures both exhibit similar preferences towards collaborative learning methods. Such students have less prior experience with collaborative peer-learning methods, and they also prefer to not work in multicultural teams, with them suspecting that more free-riding occurs in such teams. They also tend to be suspicious of cultures other than their own and require time to develop trust in others, and they prefer that agreements be formalised whenever they are made among peers.

Some other cultural dimensions also exert significant influences on the students' preferences for collaborative learning practices. For example, students from feminine cultures are less suspicious of individuals from other cultures, so they need less time to develop trusting relationships with them. Students from both conservative cultures and those with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance tend to be less familiar with collaborative learning methods. They also prefer to work alone instead of collaborating with peers, with them fearing free-riding practices within a multicultural collaborative group. What is more, students from more conservative cultures express strong emotions when disagreeing with their peers. In terms of demographic characteristics, only the gender of the respondents had any impact on shaping their preferences for collaborative peer-learning practices, with the results suggesting that males need more time than females to develop trusting relationships with their peers.

Discussion

The results clearly reveal that students from cultures that are hierarchical, collectivist, less bound by rules, and traditional are less likely to have any prior familiarity with peer-learning methods.

These four cultural dimensions are characteristic of most South Asian countries – such as India, China, Nepal, and Bangladesh – which were strongly represented in the sample. This clearly indicates that students from this region may not have sufficient previous experience of working in collaborative peer groups. They may therefore require an additional orientation when beginning studies in a very different culture, as is the case with most ‘Western’ nations. This result is significant, because in theory, highly collectivist cultures should be familiar with collaborative learning. However, the results suggest that educational systems in South Asian countries tend to use it less frequently. This may be because there can be disjuncture between the culture and the education system in a society (Signorini, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009). Nevertheless, given that these cultures represent the largest and fastest growing source of education consumers, while collaborative learning methods are designed elsewhere, this seems to be an important issue to consider (Edmundson, 2007).

It seems relatively clear that the power distance and collectivism dimensions have the greatest impact on shaping the preferences of students for collaborative peer-learning methods. It may, however, be a misguided endeavour to consider the influence of individual cultural dimensions on shaping students’ preferences towards collaborative learning. For example, when we consider South Asian students, their high degree of collectivism suggests that they should be inclined towards collaborative approaches for learning, but their high degree of power distance suggests the opposite. In a culture with a strong power distance dimension, teachers assume an authoritative role in education at the expense of collaborative learning. Hence, the interaction between the dimensions of individualism vs. collectivism (IDV) and power distance index (PDI) warrants further investigation. More broadly, however, this strongly suggests that we should consider the com-

bined influence of the different cultural dimensions on attitudes towards peer-learning processes rather than trying to isolate them individually.

Whereas most of the theoretical expectations derived from Hofstede's 6D model were confirmed in this study, some findings were contradictory. For instance, it suggests that students from collectivist cultures should be more familiar with peer-learning methods, but the results indicate otherwise. Hofstede's model also suggests that individuals from collectivist cultures tend to prioritize group goals over individual gains, yet the results of this study suggest that students from collectivist cultures often prefer to collaborate less with peers, with them suspecting unequal individual gains in learning outcomes and evaluations. In addition, and contrary to expectations, those who scored lower according to the uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) preferred to have fixed schedules. Some of these contradictory findings suggest that individual scores for cultural dimensions based on nationalities are not as static as Hofstede's 6D model implies. This further indicates that certain aspects of collaborative learning are adopted within the new environment, even though they may not be compatible with the preferences of the students' original culture.

Conclusions

This study was undertaken to comprehend how cultural dimensions influence the preferences of students for collaborative peer learning. A major contribution of this study was showing how Hofstede's cultural dimensions affect the orientation of participants towards various group processes in the context of collaborative peer learning. A major finding of this study is that learners from diverse cultural backgrounds have differing modes of engaging in the eight separate collaborative learning processes. It is therefore

vital to consider the cultural aspects of learners and support individual learners in enabling them to interact efficiently and achieve their goals in collaborative learning. This is even more important when there is a high degree of intercultural contact. Culture matters in collaborative peer-learning arrangements, although not necessarily in the same way as suggested by previous research, most notably Hofstede's model.

The findings of this study also have several managerial implications. Given that several European higher school institutions have gradually expanded international programs targeted to multicultural students, it is essential to design them in such way that they are compatible or tailored towards the cultural orientations of foreign students. This study also reveals that a particular group of students with a certain kind of cultural orientation have less familiarity and preferences towards collaborative learning methods. Given the ubiquity of collaborative learning as a pedagogy tool in several higher education institutions, incoming students with such preferences or level of familiarity may need additional training or orientation regarding collaborative learning methods. When forming groups to complete course tasks, administrators and instructors need to be aware of the possible conflicts emanating from differences in cultural orientation, preferences, and familiarity with collaborative learning methods. Instructors most definitely need to consider tailoring evaluating schemes to assess individual performances in a collaborative learning team. Higher education marketers also should think about marketing their programs in a culturally compatible methods with associated marketing materials, advertisements, and communication channels.

This study has several limitations, however. Firstly, the sample of respondents comprised only foreign students who were studying at Finnish universities of applied sciences, so the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts. The sample also over-repres-

ents South Asian students, although this may reflect a general global trend where South Asian students are increasingly becoming the primary consumers of global education services (Edmundson, 2007; Van Bouwel & Veugelers, 2013; OECD, 2021). Despite the availability of several alternative frameworks for understanding cultural dimensions, this study focused on Hofstede's 6D model, so any shortcomings of Hofstede's model also apply to this study. Indeed, this is one of the more crucial findings of this study. However, as discussed earlier, Hofstede's 6D model also covers the dimensions identified in the other common alternative frameworks. Finally, although this study highlights many cultural preferences regarding collaborative learning practices, it does not discuss how to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative learning, so future research should investigate this issue.

Previous research has already cast some doubt on the empirical validity of Hofstede's cultural dimensions in the educational context. Likewise, many of this study's findings also contradict the theoretical expectations, further supporting this doubt. What is more, the application of Hofstede's framework within the educational context has been accused of oversimplifying cultural differences, using inconsistent categories, and viewing culture as a static construct. It is strongly debatable as to whether nationality can, or should be, used as a proxy for individual scores for cultural dimensions. This study also supports the notion that Hofstede's 6D model oversimplifies a culture by reducing it to standalone factors rather than considering their combined simultaneous effects. Furthermore, the model also conceptualizes culture in a rather static way because it disregards the fact that several aspects of culture can be adapted to a new learning environment.

However, previous researchers have stopped short of suggesting steps towards building a new framework for cultural dimensions, one that is more attuned with learning and education.

Future research should therefore consider building a more appropriate framework for understanding the dimensions related to cross-cultural learning. It would be even more fruitful to develop an altogether endogenous framework that is more suitable for exploring the influence of culture on learning and education. Such a model should identify the various dimensions of culture beyond those of national identity and consider how they jointly influence attitudes towards collaborative learning rather than considering them in isolation. This model should also take a more dynamic approach by accepting that many cultural aspects of collaborative learning can be learned within a new learning environment.

References

- Ailon, G. (2008).** Mirror, mirror on the wall: Culture's consequences in a value test of its own design. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(4), 885–904.
- Ayoko, O., Callan, V., & Härtel, C. (2008).** The Influence of Team Emotional Intelligence Climate on Conflict and Team Members' Reactions to Conflict. *Small Group Research*, 39(2), 121–149.
- Barron, B. (2003).** When Smart Groups Fail. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 12(3), 307–359.
- Beugelsdijk, S., Kostova, T., & Roth, K. (2017).** An overview of Hofstede-inspired country-level culture research in international business since 2006. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48, 30–47.
- Bochner, S., & Hesketh, B. (1994).** Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism, and Job-Related Attitudes in a Culturally Diverse Work Group. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 25(233).
- Cagiltay, K., Bichelmeyer, B., & Akilli, G. K. (2015).** Working with multicultural virtual teams: critical factors for facilitation, satisfaction and success. *Smart Learning Environments*, 2(11), 1–16.
- Cantor, N. (2004).** Introduction. In P. Gurin, J.S. Lehman, E. Lewis, E. L. Dey, S. Hurtado, & G. Gurin, *Defending diversity. Affirmative action at the University of Michigan* (pp. 1–16). Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Chiang, F. (2005).** A critical examination of Hofstede's thesis and its application to international reward management. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(9), 1545–1563.
- Cohen, E. G. (1994).** Restructuring the classroom: Conditions for productive small groups. *Review of Educational Research*, 64(1), 1–35.
- Cronise, R. (2016).** Collaborative Learning: A Next Step in the Training of Peer Support Providers. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 39(3), 292–294.
- Dennehy, E. (2015).** Hofstede and learning in higher level education: an empirical study. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 9(3), 323–339.
- Dunne, C. (2013).** Exploring motivations for intercultural contact among host-country university students: An Irish case study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 37(5), 567–577.
- Edmundson, A. (2007).** *Globalized E-Learnig Cultural Challenges*. Hershey: Information Science Publishing.
- Hall, E. T. (1959).** *The silent language*. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc.

- Healey, N. M. (2008).** Is higher education in really ‘internationalising’? *Higher Education, 55*, 333–355.
- Hofstede Insights (2020).** *Hofstede Insights*. Retrieved from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/>. Access:17.08.2020.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010).** *Cultures and Organizations: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- House, R., Javidan, M., Hanges, P., & Dorfmand, P. (2002).** Understanding cultures and implicit leadership theories across the globe: an introduction to project GLOBE. *Journal of World Business, 37*(1), 3–10.
- Huberty, C. J., & Morris, J. D. (1989).** Multivariate analysis versus multiple univariate analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 105*, 302–308.
- Kennedy, P. (2002).** Learning cultures and learning styles: myth-understandings about adult (Hong Kong) Chinese learners. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 21*(5), 430–455.
- Kirkman, B. L., Lowe, K. B., & Gibson, C. B. (2006).** A quarter century of “Culture’s Consequences”: A review of empirical research incorporating Hofstede’s cultural values framework. *Journal of International Business Studies, 37*(3), 285–320.
- Latane, B., Williams, K., & Harkins, S. (1979).** Many Hands Make Light The Work: The Causes and Consequences of Social Loafing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*(6), 822–832.
- Lattuca, L. R. (2016).** Learning Interdisciplinarity: Sociocultural Perspectives on Academic Work. *The Journal of Higher Education, 73*(6), 711–739.
- Magin, D. J. (1982).** Collaborative peer learning in the laboratory. *Studies in Higher Education, 7*(2), 105–117.
- Manikutty, S., Anuradha, N., & Hansen, K. (2007).** Does culture influence learning styles in higher education? *International Journal of Learning and Change, 2*(1), 70–87.
- McSweeney, B. (2002).** Hofstede’s Model of National Cultural Differences and their Consequences: A Triumph of Faith—a Failure of Analysis. *Human Relations, 55*(1), 89–118.
- Meyer, E. (2014).** *The culture map: breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business*. New York: PublicAffairs.
- Newell, C., & Bain, A. (2018).** *Team-Based Collaboration in Higher Education Learning and Teaching: A Review of the Literature*. Singapore: Springer.
- Ngwainmbi, E. K. (2004).** Communication in the Chinese Classroom. *Education, 125*(1), 63–76.

Nisbett, R. E., Choi, I., Peng, K., & Norenzayan, A. (2001). Culture and systems of thought: Holist versus analytic cognition. *Psychological Review*, 108(2), 291–310.

OECD(2021). Retrieved from Foreign / International Students Enrolled: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN>. Access: 4.06.2021.

Popov, V., Brinkman, D., Biemans, H. J., Mulder, M., & Kuznetsov, O. N. (2012). Multicultural Student Group Work in Higher Education: An Explorative Case Study on Challenges as Perceived by Students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36(2), 302–317.

Rozkwitalska, M., Chmielecki, M., Przytuła, S., Sulkowski, L., & Basinska, B. A. (2017). Intercultural interactions in multinational subsidiaries: employee accounts of ‘the dark side’ and ‘the bright side’ of intercultural contacts. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 12(2), 214–239.

Rozkwitalska, M., Sułkowski, Ł., & Magala, S. (Eds.) (2017). *Intercultural Interactions in the Multicultural Workplace: Traditional and Positive Organizational Scholarship*. Geneva: Springer International Publishing Switzerland.

Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 25(1), 1–65.

Signorini, P., Wiesemes, R., & Murphy, R. (2009). Developing alternative frameworks for exploring intercultural learning: a critique of Hofstede’s cultural difference model. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(3), 253–264.

Smith, P. B., & Dugan, S. (1998). Individualism, Collectivism and the Handling of Disagreements: A 23 Country Study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 22(3), 351–367.

Stahl, G. K., Maznevski, M. L., Voigt, A., & Jonsen, K. (2010). Unraveling the effects of cultural diversity in teams: A meta-analysis of research on multicultural work groups. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41(4), 690–709.

Taimitarha, S. (2011). Web questionnaires with Webropol: a guide for Hanken-users. *Hanken School of Economics*. Retrieved from <https://www.hanken.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/webquestionnaireswithwebropol20.pdf>. Access: 21.07.2021.

Teichler, U. (2009). Internationalisation of higher education: European experiences. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 10, 93–106.

Van Bouwel, L., & Veugelers, R. (2013). The Determinants of Student Mobility in Europe: The Quality Dimension. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 3(2), 172–190.

Wang, Y. (2012). Mainland Chinese students’ group work adaptation in a UK business school. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17(5), 523–535.

Williamson, D. (2002). Forward from a critique of Hofstede's model of national culture. *Human Relations*, 55(11), 1373–1395.

Volet, S. (2004). Challenges of internationalisation: Enhancing intercultural competence and skills for critical reflection on the situated and non-neutral nature of knowledge. In P. P. Zeegers, K. K. Dellar-Evans, *Language & academic skills in higher education* (pp. 1–10). Adelaide: Flinders University.

Von Queis, D. (2005). *Teaching and learning in different cultures: requirements for culturally sensitive instruction*. Paper presented in the Proceedings of the First International Conference. Singapore, October 5–7: CD ISBN 981-05-4450-2.

Zhou, W., & Shi, X. (2011). Culture in groups and teams: A review of three decades of research. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 11(1), 5–34.

Olivia Gillard

Canterbury Christ Church University,
Canterbury, United Kingdom
oliviagillard@outlook.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5180-6261

The Role of Virtual Experiences in Increasing Knowledge, Motivation, Independence and Cultural Capital from Disadvantaged Pupils in England

Received: 03-07-2021; Accepted: 30-07-2021

ABSTRACT

Objective: To investigate the impact of virtual learning experiences (VLEs) in school amongst disadvantaged 9 to 11-year-olds: specifically, do virtual experiences increase their knowledge, motivation and independence in learning about a topic, and does this increase their cultural capital.

Methodology: Participants explored virtual experiences on countries around the world, with the number of facts learnt before and after recorded. Questionnaires were also completed to record views of virtual experiences.

Findings: Findings suggest virtual experiences were successful in teaching participants new information, and increased their independence and motivation to engage with learning, and thus could be successful in increasing cultural capital. Significance difference testing revealed that disadvantaged pupils recorded fewer facts than non-disadvantaged pupils, and therefore virtual experiences were not sufficient to close this disadvantage gap.

Value Added: The value of virtual experiences being woven into curriculums is discussed as a platform for teaching cultural knowledge.

Recommendations: Virtual learning experiences should be considered a core resource for teachers when planning and should be embedded into the curriculum to enhance learning experiences for disadvantaged pupils. Further research should continue to explore the use of VLEs in Primary schools, and the impact of VLEs on cultural capital.

Key words: cultural capital, education, virtual experiences, disadvantage, inequality

JEL codes: I24

Introduction

Within England, educational disadvantage is of high prevalence, such that disadvantaged children (defined as pupil premium pupils who receive free school meals from the Government due to a low household family income (Gov, 2020)) are significantly behind their more affluent peers. It is believed that pupil premium pupils are academically 18 months behind their peers when they take their GCSEs (exams taken at 16 years old, results of which are likely to influence future prospects). Furthermore, with less than half of disadvantaged pupils meeting their age-related expectations by the time they are 11 years old, they are also three-times more likely to be excluded from school (Teach First, 2020).



Teach First, a charity which aims to train teachers and leaders to challenge this disadvantage, places teachers in England's most deprived areas to work to address this disadvantage gap: I am a Teach First ambassador, completing my teaching training through the charity and working in two of England's most deprived coastal areas.

Middle leaders, those who work under senior leadership and support in the delivery of whole school visions, in English primary schools (schools educating pupils between 4 and 11 years old) have been recognised as being one of the most influential individuals in making a difference in schools (Hammersley-Fletcher & Strain, 2011), working as the middle communicator between the senior leadership (headship team), and the teaching and support staff. Within 2020, I was a middle leader of upper key stage two (9 to 11-year-olds), leading the teaching team of six classes and writing a thesis on Educational Leadership (Gillard, 2020), when schools closed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. This thesis took full advantage of opportunities opened by the closures, which forced pupils to engage with remote learning and ensured that pupils had to engage in their education online. During the online learning, I presented pupils with virtual experiences – experiences they are unlikely to otherwise encounter (exploring other countries virtually, for example) – in the space of their own homes. Since the time of writing, I remain working in a heavily disadvantaged coastal school, now as a member of the senior leadership team. This article therefore focuses on what can be learnt from such a period, discussing the extent to which educators and disadvantaged pupils would benefit from including virtual experiences in their curriculums, specifically as a platform for increasing cultural knowledge, motivation and independence in learning, alongside the benefit of transformative leadership in reducing the disadvantage gap for pupils.

Critical Literature Review

The following literature review summarises academic research across both leadership in schools and cultural capital, deriving an

initiative for change that utilises technologies and virtual experiences to positively impact disadvantaged pupils.

Leadership in schools

Transformative leadership (Shields, 2010) is a leadership style specifically proposed for educational settings that is reflective of the wider social and moral environments within a school's education system. It is reflective of education being not only academic success, but also the ability to participate in society (Shields, 2009), and therefore school leadership should account for the social, cultural and academic needs of the pupils. Transformative leaders find themselves facing a challenge in the tension and inequality amongst pupils in their care, and should work to release every child's potential, recognising the benefit on society that each pupil could have. Case studies of schools that had adopted a transformative leadership structure, culture and pedagogy found that the experience of school life increased for pupils, alongside their test scores.

Transformative leadership theory is therefore, given the educational disadvantage in England, one that clearly recognises the challenge that leaders in areas of educational disadvantage face, and given the personal context at the time of this research project and at present, is also the leadership style I resonate most closely with. If school leaders cannot show passion and outrage at the predisposed life chances of those who come from a low-income family, how can schools ever address the disadvantage gap that is evident in everything from the contents of a pupil's pack lunches to their academic success?

It is not a theory without its limitations, however. The theory is still clearly in its youth when compared to the more traditional transformational leadership (Robbins & Coulter, 2007) and transactional leadership (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013) approaches, both of which are discussed at length in my previous thesis (Gillard, 2020), and have been recognised as being effective within the educational literature (e.g. Bogler, 2001). However, in a chapter that is written to analyse strategies at reducing such a gap, a transformative leadership approach is considered the most appropriate for schools which have an inbuilt understanding of such



disadvantage, and with leaders who are willing to challenge the predisposed outcomes.

Cultural Capital

What is it?

‘Cultural capital’ was first used to define how power in society was transferred and social class was maintained (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2019), with different sources of cultural capital identified over time. Bourdieu (1984) defined objective, embodied and institutionalised forms of cultural capital. Objective refers to what you own or have witnessed: cultural goods, exposure to literature and works of art. Embodied cultural capital is your development of language, your mannerisms and the quality of your preferences and hobbies, whilst institutionalised cultural capital refers to your qualifications and education credentials. These forms of cultural capital have continued to evolve over time, with technical cultural capital also of relevance to a 21st century society, referring to marketable skills such as your use of computers (Bennett et al., 2009).

Ofsted, the inspection service for the quality of education provided in schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about>), released its most recent school inspection framework (guidance as to what schools should be providing for their pupils) and for the first time, it referenced the importance of providing children with cultural capital: an ambitious curriculum should be constructed such that it is “designed to give all learners, particularly those most disadvantaged... the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life,” (Ofsted, 2019, p. 9). They do not provide a clear definition with regard to what its expectations are for this provision, however I would argue that the needs of the pupils in every school are distinctly different and therefore it is intentional to give educators the power to implement the teaching of cultural capital that is most beneficial to its own pupils. The needs of cultural knowledge are likely to significantly vary between pupils attending an international school, to those with high proportions of free school meals pupils, for example. The following definition of a pupil with cultural

capital, is outlined in an article by the Cultural Learning Alliance (2019), and is therefore the definition that will be used going forwards in this research project:

Someone with good cultural capital is an individual who is **knowledgeable** about a wide range of **culture** and is comfortable discussing its value and merits. It is someone who through being given a vast array of **experience** and access to skill development, will be able to **independently** deploy knowledge in a range of given situations.

From this definition, it is important to extract key skills that are needed for an individual to achieve a 'good' cultural capital. This definition highlights the importance of knowledge, and how an individual must have access to a range of information about a wide range of culture to independently discuss it across contexts. In order to gain and retain such knowledge, an individual must also be motivated to learn in the first place. The links between motivation, the learning of knowledge and the value of independence are evident across the academic literature, with a higher motivation resulting in a higher engagement with learning (Singh, Granville, & Dika, 2002), and independence being key for deep learning to occur (Kyndt, Raes, Dochy, & Janssens, 2013). Therefore, the role of virtual experiences on independence, motivation and knowledge will be fundamental in measuring such a multi-faceted concept of cultural capital.

Its Impact

Bourdieu (1984) concluded that the greater cultural capital you have, the more powerful you are within society. Further educational research has identified the role of parental support and its impact on cultural capital. Specifically, middle and upper-class parents are more likely to invest in their child's education, both directly and indirectly (Montacute & Cullinane, 2018). They are both more likely to invest in extracurricular activities and school trips, whilst also having and providing the knowledge and networks to



support their children to make informed decisions in school applications, university and career options, to take actions to maximise acceptance chances and have the confidence and ability to support home learning. The Class Ceiling Project (Laurison, Miles, & Friedman, 2015) has revealed that professionals from affluent backgrounds earn, on average, £6,800 more than colleagues in the same role with working class backgrounds. In other words, even those disadvantaged pupils who are successful at beating their predicted trajectories and gain professional roles, remain at an economic disadvantage relative to their more affluent peers.

Furthermore, Hirsch, Kelt and Trefill (1988) defined cultural literacy as reading comprehension requiring both decoding and a wide background knowledge – an idea that has continued to be developed with schema theory. In other words, the more you know, the greater working memory available to process a text and new information (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). Those deprived of cultural capital have less of such knowledge to pass onto their offspring and hence, the issue is circular (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2019). Those more privileged children turn their objective and embodied cultural capital to institutionalised: acquiring credentials and education and thus, are more likely to obtain advantaged careers in our society. Therefore, it is key, as educators and transformative school leaders we are teaching children to have the knowledge and experiences that enable them to classify as having a high cultural capital and can function as well-informed individuals when they leave school (Riches, 2020).

Cultural capital in virtual learning

The use of virtual learning to support education has been limited, both developing in line with 21st Century technologies and with the evolving demands of the British curriculum. Virtual learning environments (VLES) have been the most frequently used virtual platforms, defined as learner-centred platforms facilitating the offering of active learning opportunities, including specific tutor

guidance and group work by the tutor and learners (Stiles, 2000). It is predominantly used across Western cultures as a platform for school management (administrative tasks, such as the register or grading).

Virtual experiences have been scarcely examined in the education literature previously. Virtual worlds have been created for archaeological research (Sanders, 2014) and visual story telling (Danilicheva et al., 2009). Virtual tours have been used to develop spatial skills (Kurtuluş, 2013) and in teaching physical geography (Kingston et al., 2012). Raskind, Smedley and Higgins (2005) analyse the impact of virtual trips in schools specifically, recognising that accessing experiences virtually helps to build and shape a learning experience where a trip would not be possible, such as to the Amazon rainforest or inside an active volcano. Whilst educational trips are acknowledged as having a substantial impact on learning, connecting learning to real world experiences, that otherwise may not be encountered, is key and often lacking (Tuthill & Klemm, 2002). Stainfield et al. (2000) outline that, despite the advantages, many teachers fail to take their children on excursions for a range of reasons, including a lack of funds. Hence, schools with limited funds and high levels of deprivation encounter fewer school trips than others in more privileged situations. Therefore, virtual trips, tours and experiences could provide a substitute where real visits are not possible, whether it be due to lack of funding or locational restrictions.

Following national lockdowns of schools and tourist attractions, cultural experiences became virtually available: businesses worldwide made their landmarks, museums, zoos and aquariums available over the internet, to enable individuals worldwide to engage online whilst they were physically closed. This gave the opportunity for children to access worldwide experiences virtually, such as tours of the Louvre and a virtual walk of the Great Wall of China, and thus the opportunity for them to experience a wide range of new cultural experiences from their own homes. Should these virtual experiences be beneficial in a time where trips are not

physically possible, schools could overcome their barriers for physical trips by using virtual experiences to provide children with a substitute for the physical experiences and culture gained by their more privileged peers. However, the question is would these virtual experiences be sufficient to increase the cultural knowledge of disadvantaged pupils, and increase their motivation and independence in learning such knowledge?

As a result, this chapter explores the answers to the following two questions:

1. Can virtual experiences contribute to the motivation, independence, knowledge and cultural capital of 9 to 11-year-old pupils?
2. Should virtual experiences be used as a platform to reduce the disadvantage gap in cultural capital?

Methodology

Design

As the author of the research is the teacher and leader of the pupils, this research follows an action research design frame. With this comes an awareness of the bias that is imparted on the research from my involvement with the participants (Mertler, 2009) and thus, tentative conclusions will be drawn. Ethical clearance was sought and gained for this project, and adhered to throughout.

Participants

The participants were a convenience sample of those who engaged with the online learning, shown in Table 1. All children were between 9 and 11 years of age.

Table 1. Percentage demographics of participants who engaged with virtual learning

Demographic	Frequency (Percentage)
Male	25 (36.8%)
Female	43 (63.2%)
Pupil Premium	41 (60.3%)
Non-Pupil Premium	27 (39.7%)
Total	68 (100%)

Source: research by the author.

Data Collection

The original research (Gillard, 2020) conducted researched collection over a four-week period, with different topics of virtual experiences each week. For this article, one of these weeks – virtual experiences of countries around the world – is commented on and analysed. Additionally, overall trends across the four-week period of data collection are discussed to allow discussion around engagement, motivation and independence over time.

Two methods of data collection were used to measure the responses for virtual learning, using a mixed-methods approach. To measure a quantitative account of ‘knowledge’, participants recorded the facts relating to ‘countries around the world’ before and after they had engaged with the virtual experiences. Following this, a questionnaire was given to the participants to measure enjoyment, independence and motivation for using the virtual experiences, and using them again in the future. It also asked participants whether they have visited another country before, as this would allow a comparison of physical and virtual experiences.



Methods

Pre-topic Knowledge

Initially, children were asked to complete a mind map where they recorded all the information they already know about different countries around the world. It was made clear this was a pre-knowledge task, and participants were instructed not to complete any research before completing it.

Virtual Experiences

Upon completion of the pre-knowledge mind map, a series of virtual experiences were shared for different countries, including virtual tours of the Louvre, the Great Wall of China, and the Egyptian pyramids. Participants were encouraged to explore a range of these links across a three-day period. Within the instructions, participants were reminded this was a three-day task, and they should spend an appropriate amount of time exploring. No prompts or questions were provided.

Post-topic Knowledge

Following this three-day immersion in experiences, children will be asked to record all the new information they have learnt on the post-knowledge mind map, giving them the freedom to present and record information how they wish. On completion of this mind map, participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire on their views of the virtual learning they had just completed.

Leadership

With regard to the leadership elements of implanting these virtual experiences for the pupils, weekly virtual meetings were held with my phase team to discuss the elements of Google classroom that

were successful or posing challenges for the teachers. Furthermore, despite not leading elements of online learning or experiences, these meetings also included support staff to involve them in the process and ensure they are fully aware of the experiences that our pupils are receiving whilst at home.

In addition to the above, following my own personal reflections and those shared by my team, I also reported weekly to the senior leadership to inform them of the progress and engagement, as well as any concerns with online learning.

Data Analysis

‘Knowledge’ mind map analysis

In order to compare the ‘knowledge gained’ through virtual experiences, the number of facts recorded by participants was compared at the pre-knowledge (before the virtual experience) and the post-knowledge (after the virtual experience) stage of the topic. Using SPSS (a computer programme which conducts statistical analysis), inferential statistics were conducted to assess whether the knowledge gained upholds against significant testing, where $p < .05$. A comparison of means was conducted against statistical significance in order to compare facts for disadvantaged (pupil premium) and non-disadvantaged (non-pupil premium) pupils.

Questionnaire analysis

Quantitative responses were compared through descriptive statistics to identify trends and patterns within the data. Qualitative responses were coded using a constant comparative method, using a coding frame derived from the participant’s responses, with descriptive statistics used to analyse the coded responses.



Leadership

A reflexive analysis was conducted on my experiences as a leader within the action-research project, and as a teacher and leader within the school, discussing alignment with leadership styles, successes, and challenges throughout.

Fieldwork and Findings

Knowledge Gained from countries around the world – Mind Map Analysis

Table 2. Mean number of facts recorded at each stage of countries round the world virtual learning

Demographic	Pre-Knowledge	Post-Knowledge	Total Knowledge
Total Participants	6.88	14.16	20.99
Pupil Premium	6.59	11.91	18.49
Non-Pupil Premium	7.33	17.59	24.78

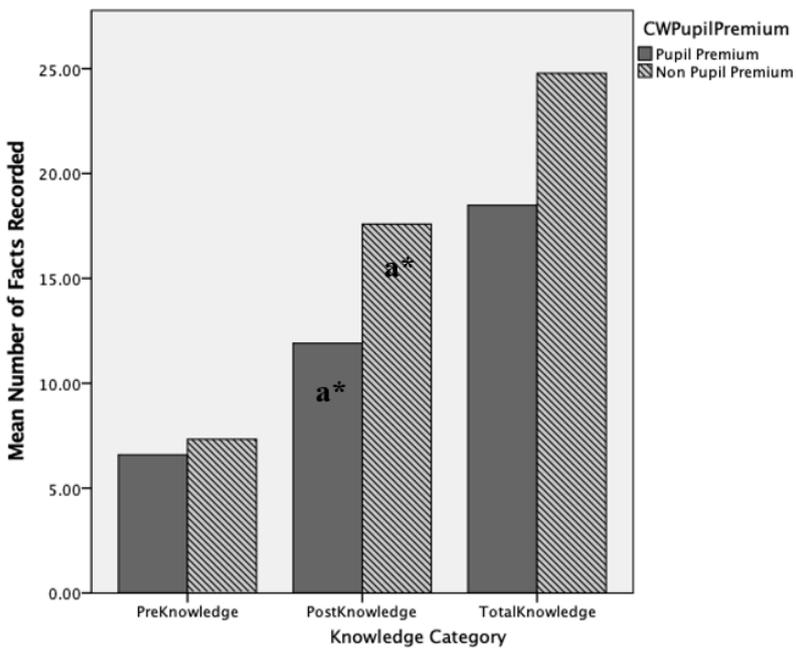
Source: research by the author.

The mean number of countries around the world facts recorded by participants in the three stages of knowledge throughout this phase can be seen in Table 2, comparing all pupils, pupil premium and non-pupil premium participants. A paired samples t-test was conducted, and revealed there was a significant difference in the pre- and post-knowledge countries around the world facts recorded, such that participants recorded significantly more facts following the virtual experience, paired $t(67) = -6.18, p < 0.5$. This was true for both pupil premium, paired $t(40) = -5.47, p < 0.5$, and non-pupil premium children, paired $t(26) = -4.12, p < 0.5$.

Pupil premium children have recorded fewer countries around the world facts than non-pupil premium children, however a one-way ANOVA revealed pupil premium children recorded significantly fewer facts than non-pupil premium children only at the post-knowledge stage $F(1,66) = 4.06, p < .05$, seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Graph showing mean number of ‘Around the World’ facts for pupil premium compared to non-pupil premium participants. N/B: a* indicates statistical significance

Bar Chart Showing the Knowledge of Each Part of ‘Countries around the World’ research for Pupil Premium compared to Non-Pupil Premium Children



Source: research by author.



Questionnaire analysis

Questionnaire data was analysed by topic, with comparisons conducted for both pupil premium status and gender. Each is revealed under the subheadings below.

Knowledge Gained

97.1% of participants reported they had learnt something new after exploring the virtual experience of countries around the world, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency (percentage in parenthesis) of participants who reported they had learnt something new following virtual experiences of countries around the world

Demographic	Frequency (Percentage) Learnt Something New
Male	24 (96%)
Female	42 (97.7%)
Pupil Premium	40 (97.6%)
Non-Pupil Premium	26 (96.3%)
Total	66 (97.1%)

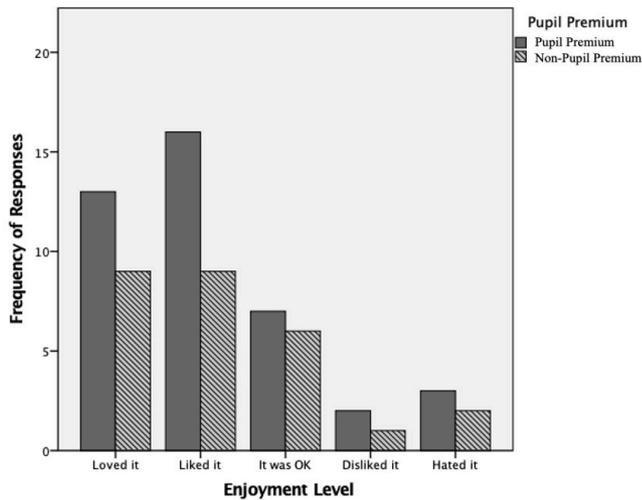
Source: research by author.

Previous Experiences

Figure 2 reveals the number of participants who had visited another country before, split into pupil premium and non-pupil premium participants, such that half (51.5%) of the sample had visited another country before: 41.5% of pupil premium have not travelled abroad, compared to 59.3% of non-pupil premium children.

Figure 2. Bar graph showing percentage of pupil premium and non-pupil premium participants who had visited another country before, at the time of the research questionnaire

Bar graph showing comparison of enjoyment levels for countries around the World virtual experience for pupil premium compared to non-pupil premium children



Source: research by author.

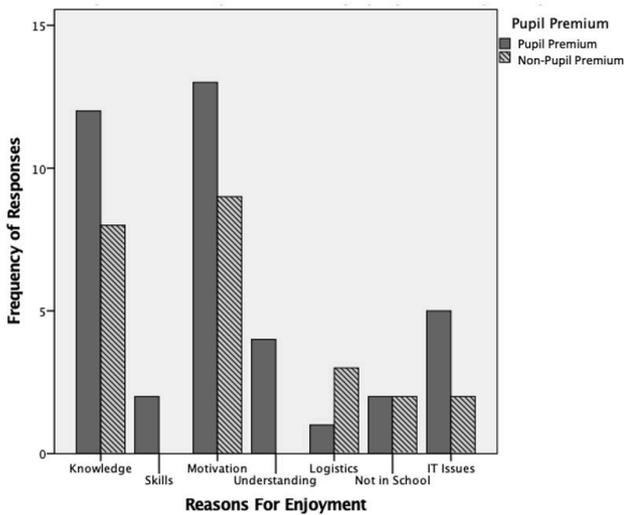
Enjoyment and motivation

Participants were given a scale of 1 to 5 to rank their enjoyment of the virtual learning experience; results can be seen in Figure 3a, with 69.2% of participants reporting they liked or loved the experience, a decline on reports from the first two experiences. Following this, participants were given the opportunity to explain why they felt this way, from which answers were coded. The most common reason for enjoying the virtual learning, like with the first week, was motivational reasons, such as it being interesting or fun

to use, seen in Figure 3b. Each is split to compare responses for pupil premium and non-pupil premium children.

Figure 3a. Graph showing enjoyment levels for countries around the world virtual experiences compared to non-virtual experiences, for pupil premium and non-pupil premium children

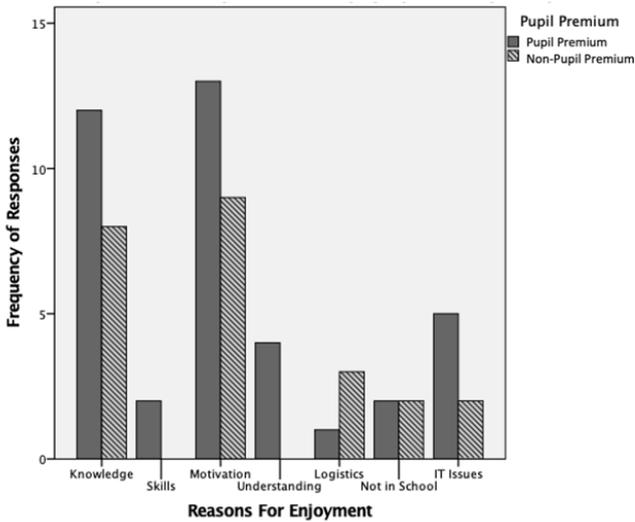
Bar graph showing reasons for enjoyment of virtual learning for pupil premium compared to non-pupil premium participants



Source: research by author.

Figure 3b. Graph showing reasons for enjoyment for virtual learning for pupil premium compared to non-pupil premium children

Bar graph showing reasons for enjoyment of virtual learning for pupil premium compared to non-pupil premium participants



Source: research by author.

Future Use

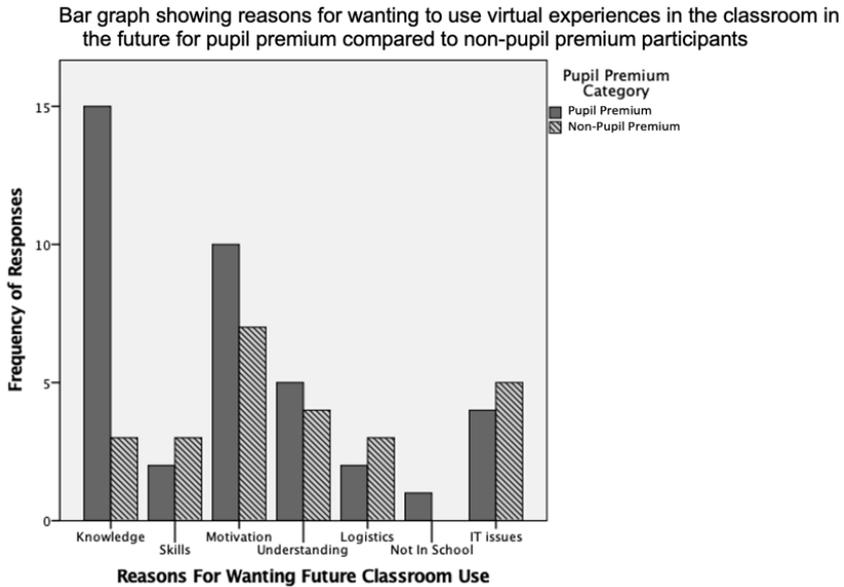
Finally, participants were asked whether they would like to use this virtual learning in the future, 88.9% of who stated they would, seen in Table 4. Reasons for this preference can be seen in Figure 4, with the most highly ranked reason being to increase knowledge and for motivational reasons, as with the previous topics reasoning.

Table 4. Frequency (percentage in parenthesis) of participants who would like to use the virtual experiences for learning in the future

Demographic	Frequency (Percentage) Use in the Classroom in the Future
Male	56 (82.4%)
Female	21 (84%)
Pupil Premium	35 (81.4%)
Non-Pupil Premium	32 (78%)
Total	24 (88.9%)

Source: research by author.

Figure 4. Graph showing reasons participants would like to use the virtual learning in the future



Source: research by author.

Note, the other three weeks of data collection follow very similar data patterns and trends, seen in Gillard (2020).

Data Trends Across Research

Trends across the four-week data collection have been analysed within this section, looking at overall enjoyment, motivation, independence, and knowledge.

Engagement Over Time

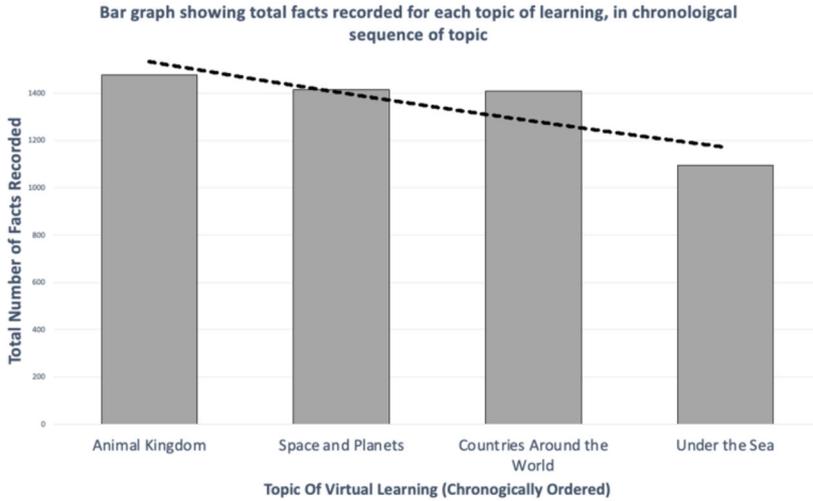
There was a slight decrease in participant numbers across the four weeks, seen in Table 5. In addition to this, Figure 5 illustrates the downward trend of total facts recorded throughout the research, such that the total number of facts recorded by participants decreased across the four weeks, a total difference of 379 facts.

Table 5. Total number of participants throughout each week of virtual experiences

Topic of Learning	Participant Number
Animal Kingdom	73
Space and Planets	72
Countries Around the World	68
Under the Sea	65

Source: research by author.

Figure 5. Bar graph showing total number of facts recorded across each week of the virtual learning

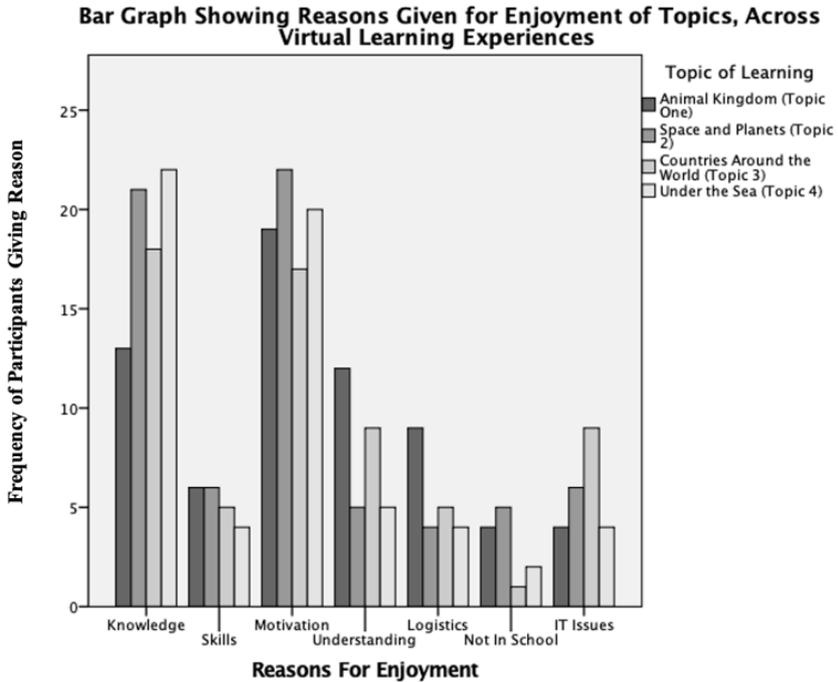


Source: research by author.

Enjoyment and Motivation Over Time

In each questionnaire, participants were given the opportunity to qualitatively express the reasons they had enjoyed the virtual experience. These responses were then coded into reason categories, which has been tracked across each topic as shown in Figure 6. Whilst there are fluctuations across topics for most categorised reasons, motivational reasons have remained high across all topics. Additionally, there is a clear upward trend of the number of instances knowledge was given as a reason for enjoying the virtual learning, which included references to learning, facts and information.

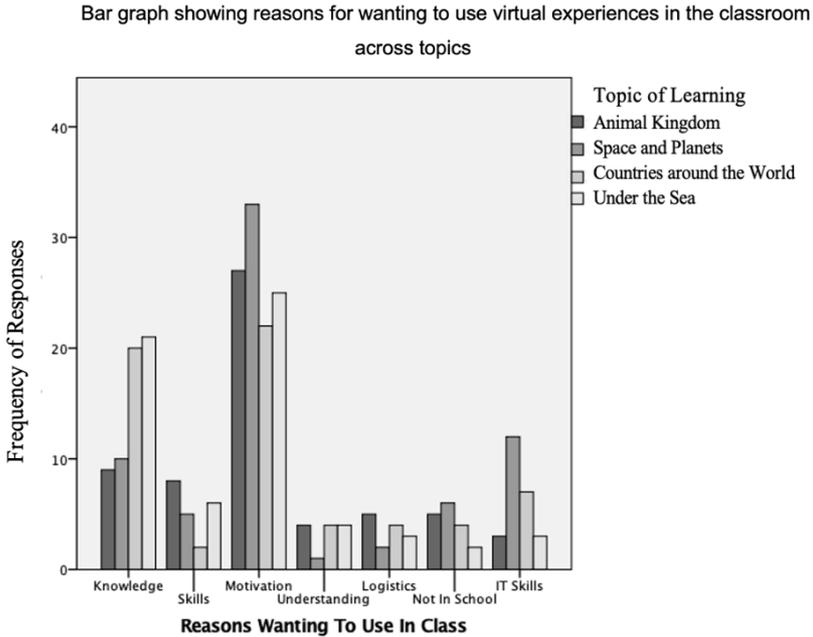
Figure 6. Bar graph showing categorised reasons of enjoyment for virtual learning across the four week, for each topic



Source: research by author.

In a similar trend, the reasons for participants wanting to use these virtual experiences in the classroom is shown in Figure 7, with motivational incentives remaining high, and knowledge-based reasons increasing across the four topics.

Figure 7. Bar graph showing categorised reasons of participants wanting to use virtual experiences in class across the four weeks, for each topic

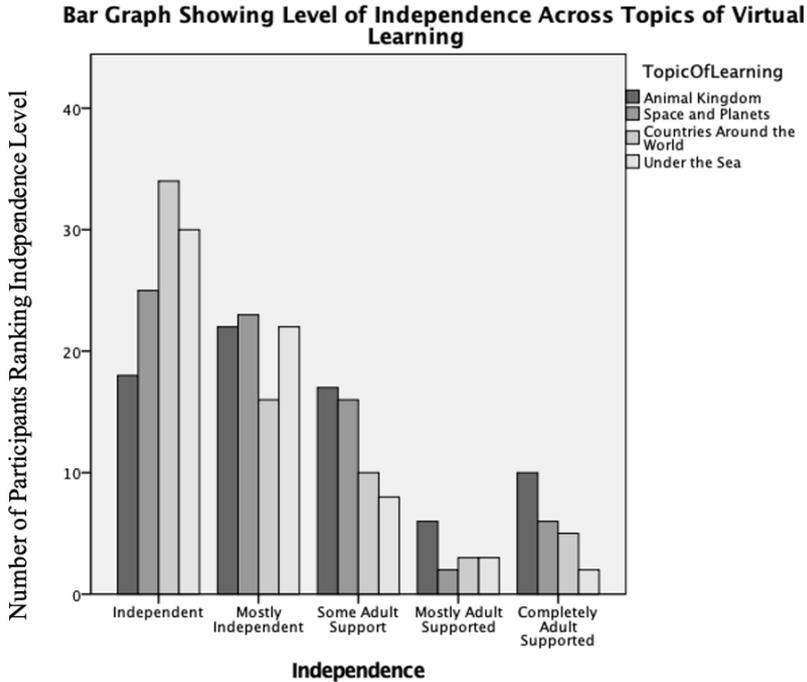


Source: research by author.

Independence

Within the questionnaires, participants rated, on a scale of 1 to 5, how much adult support they had throughout the virtual learning, where one was completely independent and 5 was completely adult-supported. This is plotted by topic and therefore across time in Figure 8. As illustrated, the number of participants rating themselves as independent is on an upward trend across each week of virtual learning, whilst the number of participants reporting adult support is following a downward trend across time, within each topic.

Figure 8. Graph showing participant's self-rated independence levels across time, for each topic



Source: research by author

Analysis and Discussion

Fieldwork discussion

Analysis of the facts recorded before and after the virtual experiences revealed that participants knew significantly more facts following the virtual experience than before. This would suggest that the virtual experiences have been successful in increasing participant knowledge for countries around the world, and thus suggests it has been successful in increasing this sample's objective cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Supporting this, across each of

selves as having learnt something new, with 100% of participants reporting this in half of the topics. Furthermore, when asked why they were enjoying the virtual learning experience, the number of responses that stated gaining knowledge as a reason for enjoying it increased across each topic, suggesting that participants were also aware of their knowledge gain through the experiences, and saw this as an incentive to continue.

Schema theory (Bartlett, 1932) refers to knowledge as a web, such that the more prior knowledge you have about a topic, the greater vocabulary and understanding you have beforehand, the more successfully you will learn new information, building connections and links across the new and old material. Specifically in education, cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) suggests the greater your initial understanding and knowledge of a concept, your working memory is then more readily available to absorb new information that is presented. This then results in the Matthew Effect: those who know more information initially can gain more information throughout new learning (Stanovich, 2009; Duff, Tomblin, & Catts, 2015), as seen in cultural literacy – with a greater background knowledge, the more working memory available to process the new information (Carrell & Esiterhold, 1983). The Matthew Effect is represented here, such that pupil premium children consistently record fewer facts than non-pupil premium children both pre- and post-virtual experience. When virtual experiences are given to pupil premium pupils, it would appear the disadvantage gap remains, as non-pupil premium children gain more facts than pupil premium children.

Pupil premium children recorded significantly fewer facts after the virtual experience than non-pupil premium children, and as a result, had less overall knowledge regarding countries around the world than their more privileged peers. Here, it would seem evident that knowing less originally, with almost 60% of pupil premium children having not visited another country before, has resulted in limiting the overall knowledge that can be gained for the virtual learning experience of countries around the world.

Whilst the mind maps were a successful tool in allowing pupils to record their facts throughout the virtual experiences, there are obvious limitations. Firstly, I have referred to children's knowledge around each topic as quantified by the number of facts they have recorded at each stage. Whilst this has been beneficial given the circumstances of COVID-19 and home learning being the only tool as a way to quantify learnt knowledge, knowledge itself is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be defined by the number of facts a child records. With so many external influences, such as adult support or the use of additional resources to help, alongside the recording of facts not necessarily demonstrating whether a child has a full understanding of the concepts they are recording, it is unlikely volume of facts recorded is a very valid tool for measuring knowledge. However, it has provided a quantitative indicator of what a child knows, and could suggest some tentative conclusions that virtual learning experiences may be a platform to increase a child's knowledge and experiences of a topic, and in turn, their cultural capital.

In addition to the analysis of the number of facts recorded, questionnaires provided an insight into participant enjoyment, motivation and independence when completing the work. Enjoyment levels were high for the countries around the world experiences, with 69.2% stating they loved or liked the virtual experiences. Furthermore, 88.9% of participants said they would like to use the virtual experiences again in the classroom in the future, with motivation being the most frequently stated reason for wanting to do so, in line with previous research (Kolias et al., 2005). Motivation has an evidenced relationship with learning, such that the more motivated you are, the more engaged you are (Singh, Granville, & Dika, 2013). Moreover, reasons for not enjoying the virtual experiences or for not wanting to use the experiences in the future were predominately due to technology issues or due to concerns that they were currently not in school. Should such virtual experiences be worked into an in-school curriculum, with teacher support for both technology issues and queries that arise,

comments such as “I like it when a teacher shows you how to do it,” and “it’s better when your teacher talks to you about it in the lesson” would no longer be a concern. As outlined in previous research (Keller, 2006; 2009; Babić, 2012), the success of VLEs is dependent on access to computers and the internet, as well as internet speed and technical support at home, disadvantaging those already disadvantaged even further through the digital divide (Cooper & Stewart, 2017), thus it is unsurprising technical issues have been raised.

Kolias et al. (2005) reported that VLEs give pupils greater learning responsibility, and thus promote the independence of learners. This is replicated in this research, such that learner self-ranking of their independence increased across the four topics. This again is promising for the promotion of cultural capital in this sample of learners, with cultural capital defined as being able to independently apply the cultural knowledge across concepts and topics. Thus, the increase in independence across time and decrease in adult support is promising. However, in line with independence increasing, engagement with the virtual experiences decreased over time, such that participant numbers declined each week, and the overall number of facts recorded in total for each topic decreased across topics. It is well recognised in education that motivation and engagement for topics, tasks and concepts can decrease over time, with teachers working hard to tailor learning to children’s interests and to keep their engagement and interest in their learning (Blumenfeld, Kempler, & Krajcik, 2006). Across these four weeks however, each task was repetitive, with the exception of the virtual learning links which varied in line with each topic. Thus, it is not surprising that engagement for the learning dipped across the project. It should not go unnoticed however, that the increase of independence over time resulted in a decrease in adult support over time. It could therefore be the case that engagement decreased with the learning, and the number of facts recorded decreased as participants were left to be independent with the learning, and thus, an adult was not checking their work or encouraging

participants to do more. The Montacute and Cullinane (2008) research outlines that parental support at home has a substantial impact on a child's cultural capital, with Babić (2012) recognising that virtual learning is unsuccessful without access to technical support at home. Thus, without high levels of parental engagement consistently to help their children with technological support, it is unlikely the virtual experiences will have their greatest impact.

Reflexive Analysis: Leadership

It is argued that reflexivity is central to action research, as it requires the conscious awareness that the researcher has been involved with every stage of the research and has a relationship with the participants (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). It has been clear to me whilst being a leader throughout a period of time where disadvantaged pupils were found to be, yet again, behind their more affluent peers due to the digital divide, that I clearly resonate most with the transformational leadership style (Shields, 2010). I found myself facing a huge challenge of the inequality for disadvantaged pupils, heightened in national school closures and their lack of access to technology outlined in the digital divide, and schools were at risk of letting down their most vulnerable pupils in a time of their greatest needs (Cooper & Stewart, 2017). This project, as outlined by Shields (2010), became a task of challenging the inappropriate privilege that occurred within the global pandemic, whilst viewing it as an opportunity to see how technology can be utilised moving forwards in order to support disadvantaged pupils in closing the disadvantage gap. Giving children the opportunity to experience topics and not assuming they have had the experience would appear to benefit children in this sample. Thus, as suggested by Raskind, Smedley & Higgins (2005), virtual school trips to places impossible to visit, like an active volcano or the amazon rainforest, is beneficial, but within this sample of significant deprivation and low levels of previous experiences, localised cultural capital should not be assumed and virtual learning

experiences should be embedded wherever possible. The success of over 60% of pupils engaging with these virtual learning experiences with such high motivation and independence, and thus likely increased cultural capital, resulted in conversations within this school context to weave virtual experiences throughout the school curriculum, in addition to the physical experiences of school trips, moving forwards. Thus, on reflection of this action research project, the frustration and challenge experienced in a transformative leadership style has resulted in a school-wide change of experiences for all pupils, aiding those disadvantaged the most.

Conclusion

This action research project set out to answer the following two research questions:

1. Can virtual experiences contribute to the motivation, independence, knowledge and cultural capital of 9 to 11-year-old pupils?

It would appear that, for this sample of pupils in a primary school on the East coast, virtual experiences have contributed to the gain of knowledge (defined as the number of facts learnt), the independence and motivation of pupils, and therefore increased the cultural capital of participants, following the definition defined in this chapter.

2. Should virtual experiences be used as a platform to reduce the disadvantage gap in cultural capital?

Whilst there has been a likely gain in knowledge in the number of facts recorded following virtual learning experiences for all pupils, the disadvantage gap very much remains. The pupil premium children recorded significantly fewer facts than non-pupil premium children, at every stage of the learning. Thus, virtual experiences alone are not enough to remove the gap, however, it would certainly appear they have done no harm, as a gain in knowledge following the experience is only beneficial.

The conclusions outlined to each question above are incredibly tentative, with them applying only to the context and participants outlined within this study. The concepts studied within this project are complex and cannot be measured simply in ways that this research has attempted to, with the number of facts nor through uncontrolled self-responses to questionnaires, and thus, generalisability and validity of the concepts discussed is limited beyond the context of this study. What this research has done however, is highlight that virtual experiences could be beneficial in line with and beyond previous research, and they should be considered regularly within primary teacher's planning, not just when a school trip is not possible (Raskind, Smedley, & Higgins, 2005).

Further research should continue to explore the value of virtual experiences beyond a school closures context too, where support and engagement can be measured and controlled within the classroom rather than at home. VLEs have previously been researched most predominantly in secondary schools, however the closures saw the need for pupils of all ages to access online learning and such opportunities would allow for schools to be prepared for any situations in the future. It has highlighted to schools the value of teaching a computing curriculum, ensuring that children are fluid in the use of technology across contexts. Moreover, virtual experiences' impact on cultural capital should be explored further, perhaps with a wider definition and measurement of cultural capital beyond the quantity of facts recorded, as it is clear from the multi-faceted definitions that this is an oversimplified measurement.

With regard to leadership, a reflexive approach has made it clear that transformative leadership is the one I personally align to. Working in schools with high levels of disadvantage, I find myself frustrated and personally motivated to challenge the inequality posed to pupil premium pupils within our education system. Given the localised success of the project, with virtual experiences being embedded across the school curriculum, it would appear that this leadership approach has been beneficial within this context, as the



inequality of the pupils has been the motivation behind each action. It is only by feeling a sense of injustice towards those limited by their social contexts, that we as educators will be successful in working towards a shared experience for all pupils, over a range of platforms – including virtual – and thus, in challenging the disadvantage gap so evident within England’s education system.

References

- Babić, S. (2012).** Factors that influence academic teacher's acceptance of e-learning technology in blended learning environment. In A. Guelfi, E. Pontes, S. Kofuji (Eds.), *E-Learning-Organizational Infrastructure and Tools for Specific Areas* (pp. 3–18). IntechOpen. DOI: 10.5772/28682.
- Bartlett, F. C. (1932).** *Remembering*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E., Warde, A., Gayo-Cal, M., & Wright, D. (2009).** *Culture, Class, Distinction*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Blumenfeld, P. C., Kempler, T. M., & Krajcik, J. S. (2006).** Motivation and cognitive engagement in learning environments. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Learning Sciences* (pp. 475–589). Cambridge University Press.
- Bogler, R. (2001).** The influence of leadership style on teacher job satisfaction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(5), 662–683.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984).** *Distinction*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Carrell, P. L., & Eisterhold, J. C. (1983).** Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy. *TESOL quarterly*, 17(4), 553–573.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011).** *Research methods in education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Cooper, K., & Stewart, K., (2017).** Does money affect children's outcomes? *London School of Economics and Political Science*, 21(3), 8–70.
- Cultural Learning Alliance (2019).** What is cultural capital? *Cultural Learning Alliance*. Retrieved from <https://culturalliance.org.uk/what-is-cultural-capital>. Access: 13.02.2020.



Danilicheva, P., Klimenko, S., Baturin, Y., & Serebrov, A. (2009). Education in virtual worlds: Virtual storytelling. In *2009 International Conference on Cyber-World*, (pp. 333–338). IEEE.

Duff, D., Tomblin, J. B., & Catts, H. (2015). The influence of reading on vocabulary growth: A case for a Matthew effect. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, *58*(3), 853–864.

Gillard, O. (2020). *Do virtual experiences build children’s cultural capital, and can they be utilised as a platform to reduce the disadvantage gap?* (unpublished masters thesis). Canterbury: Canterbury Christ Church University.

Gov (2020). Pupil premium. *Gov.uk*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium>. Access: 01.03.2020

Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Strain, M. (2011). Power, agency and middle leadership in English primary schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, *37*(5), 871–884.

Hirsch Jr, H. D., Kett, J. F., & Trefil, J. (1988). *The dictionary of cultural literacy*. Houghton Mifflin: Boston.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about>. Access: 15.03.2020.

Keller, C. (2006). Technology acceptance in Academic Organisations: Implementation of Virtual Learning Environments. In *Proceeding of the 14th European Conference on Information Systems*. Gothenburg: Sweden.

Keller, C. (2009). User Acceptance of Virtual Learning Environments: A case Study from Three Northern European Universities. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, *25*(1). Retrieved from [http://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol25/iss1/3825\(38\)](http://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol25/iss1/3825(38)). Access: 03.03.2020.

Kingston, D. G., Eastwood, W. J., Jones, P. I., Johnson, R., Marshall, S., & Hannah, D. M. (2012). Experiences of using mobile technologies and virtual field tours in Physical Geography: implications for hydrology education. *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, *16*(5), 1281–1286.

Kolias, V., Mamalougos, N., Vamvakoussi, X., Lakkala, M., & Vosniadou, S. (2005). Teachers' attitudes to and beliefs about web-based Collaborative Learning Environments in the context of an international implementation. *Computers & Education, 45*(3), 295–315.

Kurtuluş, A., (2013). The effects of web-based interactive virtual tours on the development of prospective mathematics teachers' spatial skills. *Computers & Education, 63*, 141–150.

Kyndt, E., Raes, E., Dochy, F., & Janssens, E. (2013). Approaches to learning at work: Investigating work motivation, perceived workload, and choice independence. *Journal of Career Development, 40*(4), 271–291.

Laurison, D., Miles, A., & Friedman, S. (2015). Introducing the class ceiling. *The Sociological Review, 63*(2), 259–289.

Mertler, C. A. (2009). *Action research: Teachers as researchers in the classroom*. Chicago: Sage.

Montacute, R., & Cullinane, C. (2018). Parent power 2018: how parents use financial and cultural resources to boost their children's chances of success. *Sutton Trust*. Retrieved from <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Parent-Power-2018.pdf>. Access: 15.03.2020.

Odumeru, J. A., & Ogbonna, I. G. (2013). Transformational vs. transactional leadership theories: Evidence in literature. *International Review of Management and Business Research, 2*(2), 355.

Ofsted (2019). *School inspection handbook*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook>. Access: 15.03.2020.

Raskind, M., Smedley, T. M., & Higgins, K. (2005). Virtual technology: Bringing the world into the special education classroom. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 41*(2), 114–119.



Riches, A. (2020). What does Ofsted mean by 'cultural capital'? *Tes.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.tes.com/news/what-does-ofsted-mean-cultural-capital>. Access: 17.03.2020.

Robbins, S. P., & Coulter, M. (2007). *Management* (9th ed.). London: Prentice-Hall.

Sanders, D. H., (2014). Virtual heritage: researching and visualizing the past in 3D. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*, 2(1), 30–47.

Shields, C. M. (2009). Transformative Leadership: A Call for Difficult Dialogue and Courageous Action in Racialised Contexts. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, 37(3), 53–69.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational administration quarterly*, 46(4), 558–589.

Singh, K., Granville, M., & Dika, S. (2002). Mathematics and science achievement: Effects of motivation, interest, and academic engagement. *The journal of educational research*, 95(6), 323–332.

Stainfield, J., Fisher, P., Ford, B., & Solem, M. (2000). International virtual trips: a new direction? *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 24(2), 255–262.

Stanovich, K. E. (2009). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Journal of Education*, 189(1–2), 23–55.

Stiles, M.K. (2000). Effective learning and the virtual learning environment. In *EUNIS 2000: Towards Virtual Universities: Proceedings of the European University Information System 2000 Conference* (pp. 171–180), INFOSYSTEM 2000. Poznan: Instytut Informatyki Politechniki Poznanskiej.

Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. *Cognitive science*, 12(2), 257–285.

Teach First (2020). The issue. *Teach First*. Retrieved from <https://www.teach-first.org.uk/inequality-education>. Access: 03.03.2020.

Tuthill, G., & Klemm, E. B. (2002). Virtual field trips: Alternatives to actual field trips. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 29(4), 453–468.

eISSN2543-831X



SPOŁECZNA AKADEMIA NAUK

