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PORTRAIT OF TEACHER TRAINER IN NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

SUMMARY.

Introduction. *Such a marketing technique as clients' or customers' portrait creation assists in analyzing needs of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education. The research question is as follows: What is portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education? **The aim of the study** is to analyze portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education underpinning elaboration of a new research question on manual content organisation in non-formal adult education.*

Materials and methods. *The present research involves a process of analysing the meaning of such key concepts as teacher trainer, portrait, pen portrait, biography, image and profile. Moreover, the study demonstrates how the key concepts are related to the idea of "non-formal adult education". The exploratory type of the comparative study has been applied. Interpretive research paradigm was used. The empirical study involved a focus group of eight teacher trainers in non-formal adult education from Belgium, Germany, Latvia and Poland, September 2015. **Results.** *The respondents' views on the portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education are homogeneous. **Conclusions.** *The findings of the research allow drawing a portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education. A new research question is formulated: How should the content of the manual be organized in order to meet the needs of teacher trainers described in the portrait of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education? Directions of further research are proposed.***

Keywords: *teacher trainer, non-formal adult education, portrait, pen portrait, biography, image, profile*

INTRODUCTION

Non-formal adult education involves certain groups of participants that are considered to be the key actors in non-formal adult education. These groups shown in Figure 1 include

- learners,
- teachers and
- teacher trainers.

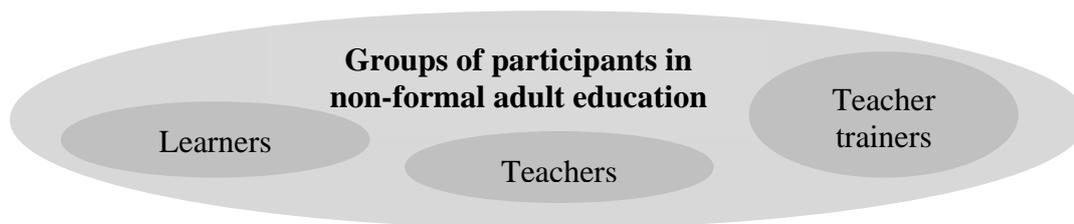


Figure 1: Groups of key actors in non-formal adult education

Since non-formal adult education has become a hot topic for the educational policy’s agenda of the European Union (Zaščerinska, Aļeksejeva, Aļeksejeva, Andreeva, Gloņina, & Zaščerinskis, 2015), *teacher training is of great importance as teachers are a success factor in non/formal adult education. Teacher training in particular and non-formal adult education in general* are actively adopting a business model as well considering the participants of non-formal adult education to be clients or customers (Ahrens, Purvinis, Zaščerinska, Andreeva, 2015). This business model implies the strategy of meeting clients’ or customers’ needs. This strategy employs such a marketing technique to analyse clients’ or customers’ needs as clients’ or customers’ portrait creation as demonstrated in Figure 2.

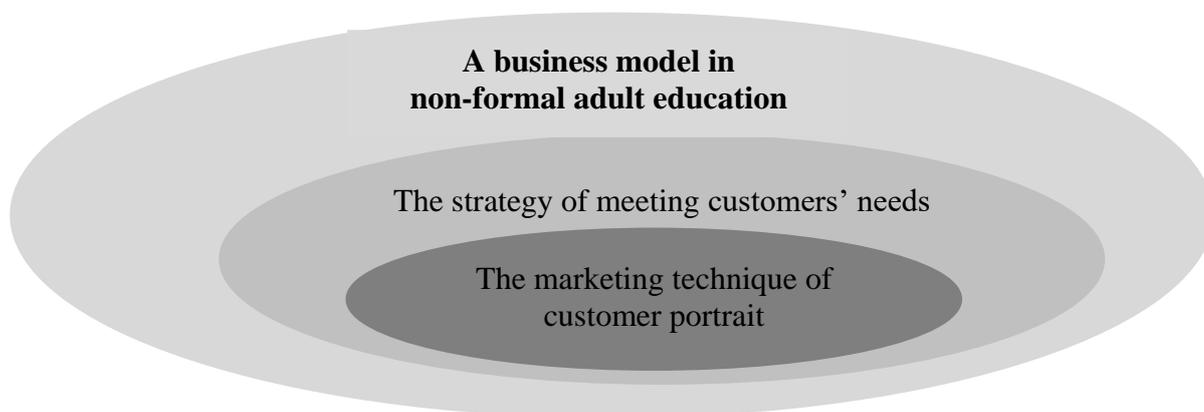


Figure 2: The relationship between the business model in non-formal adult education, the strategy of meeting customers’ needs and the marketing technique of customer’s portrait

Against this background, the portrait of in-company trainers in initial and continuing vocational training focused on competence requirements, certification and validation (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2012) was only created. Such a lacuna in non-formal adult education has to be filled in.

The research question is as follows: What is portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education?

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of study is to analyze portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education underpinning elaboration of a new research question on manual content organisation for teacher trainers in non-formal adult education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research involves a process of analysing the meaning of such key concepts as *teacher trainer, portrait, pen portrait, biography, image and profile*. Moreover, the study demonstrates how the key concepts are related to the idea of “non-formal adult education”. The study presents how the steps of the process are related: theoretical framework on portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education → empirical study within a multicultural environment → conclusions.

The novel contribution of this paper is a new research question on manual content organisation for teacher trainers in non-formal adult education.

Our target population to generalize the portraits of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education is teacher trainers in non-formal adult education.

Our empirical results obtained during a focus group interview at the Wisamar Educational Institute, Leipzig, Germany, September 16, 2015 show that the teacher trainer portraits in non-formal adult education in Belgium, Germany, Latvia and Poland are homogeneous.

The remaining part of this paper is organized as follows: Section 1 introduces the definitions of portrait of teacher trainer. The associated results of empirical studies will be presented in Section 2. Finally, some concluding remarks are provided followed by a short outlook on interesting topics for further work.

Theoretical Framework

The meaning of such key concepts as *teacher trainer*, *portrait* and *pen portrait* is studied in the present part of the contribution.

Along with the term *portrait*, the terms *image* (Kaļķe, Baranova, 2015) and *profile* are used in scientific literature. However, image describes a purposefully created view of people or things (Lejniece, 2005, 31) or, in other words, phenomena. While portrait and profile are aimed at ensuring a real-world picture, profile includes portrait. Therefore, the *portrait* is part of *profile* as illustrated in Figure 3.



Figure 3: The relationship between profile and portrait

It should be noted that didactical-methodological profile of adult learning facilitators via opinion of adult educators in Latvia and Lithuania (Surikova, Zuzeviciute, 2015) has been analysed.

In the present research, by client or customer, teacher trainer is meant as teacher trainers in non-formal adult education play a vital role in helping teachers develop their talents and fulfill their potential for personal growth and well-being, and in helping them acquire the complex range of knowledge and skills that they will need as citizens and as workers (Communication, 2007).

By teacher trainer portrait, a description of a teacher trainer or a group of teacher trainers that includes demographic, socio-economic, geographic, and psychological characteristics, education history and teaching areas, etc. Teacher trainer portrait can be expressed in a variety of such forms as painting, drawing, photograph, verbal and/or pen portrait, etc. as indicated in Figure 4.

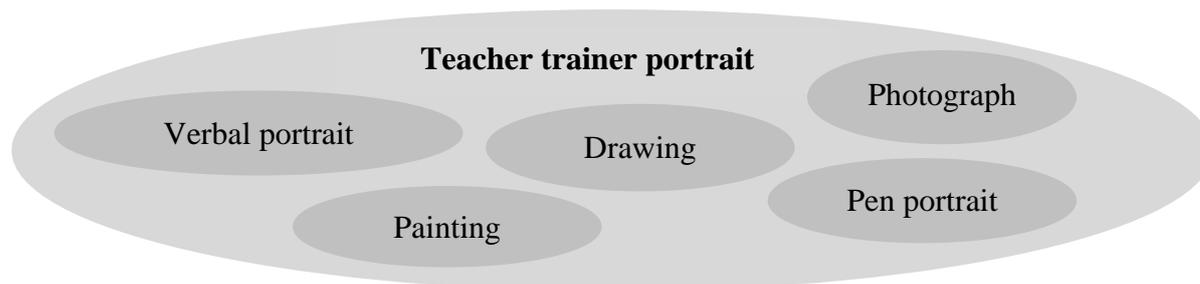


Figure 4: Forms of teacher trainer portrait

In the present contribution, teacher trainer pen portrait is in the focus of attention as it requires only such an equipment as a pen and sheet of paper. In comparison, creation of teacher trainer portrait in other forms demands for a photcamera, paints, easels, craft materials, etc. Pen portrait means a character sketch written in words on a sheet of paper by pen. *Pen portrait* and *biography* are used synonymously in the present contribution.

Empirical Research

The present part of the contribution demonstrates the design of the empirical study, survey results and findings of the empirical study.

The design of the present empirical study comprises the purpose and question, sample and methodology of the present empirical study as demonstrated in Figure 5.

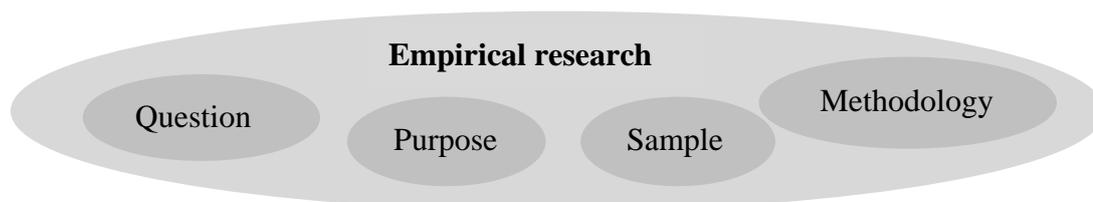


Figure 5: Elements of the design of the empirical study

The research question is as follows: What are portraits of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education in selected European countries?

The aim of the study is to compare portraits of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education in selected European countries via a focus group interview.

The present empirical study involved a focus group of eight teacher trainers in non-formal adult education from different European countries during the transnational project meeting «*E-process in E-learning*» that took place in Leipzig, Germany, September 16, 2015. All the respondents have been awarded a higher education degree in different sciences such as philology, sociology, primary education, etc. As the respondents with different cultural backgrounds and diverse educational approaches were chosen, the sample was multicultural. All the eight participants had received extensive teaching and training experience in non-formal adult education. Thus, the group (age, field of study and work, mother tongue, etc.) is heterogeneous. The sample of eight respondents involved

- Two teacher trainers from New Media School, Mol, Belgium,
- Two teacher trainers from Wisamar Educational Institute, Leipzig, Germany,
- Two teacher trainers from Centre for Education and Innovation Research, Riga, Latvia, and
- Two teacher trainers from the Non-Governmental Organisation of Trainers' Association, Warsaw, Poland.

In order to save the information of the present research confidential, the respondents' names and surnames were coded as follows:

- two teacher trainers from Belgium were given the code R1 (Respondent 1) and R2 (Respondent 2),
- two teacher trainers from Germany were pointed as R3 (Respondent 3) and R4 (Respondent 4),
- two teacher trainers from Latvia were coded as R5 (Respondent 5) and R6 (Respondent 6), and
- two teacher trainers from Poland were identified as R7 (Respondent 7) and R8 (Respondent 8).

The interpretive paradigm was used in the empirical study. The interpretive paradigm aims to understand other cultures, from the inside through the use of ethnographic methods such as informal interviewing and participant observation, etc. (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Interpretive research paradigm corresponds to the nature of humanistic pedagogy (Luka, 2008). The

interpretive paradigm allows creating an environment for the development of any individual and helps them to develop their potential (Luka, 2008). The core of this paradigm is human experience, people's mutual everyday interaction that tends to understand the subjectivity of human experience (Luka, 2008). The paradigm is aimed at understanding people's activity, how a certain activity is exposed in a certain environment, time, conditions, i.e., how it is exposed in a certain socio-cultural context (Luka, 2008). Thus, the interpretive paradigm is oriented towards one's conscious activity, and it is future-oriented (Luka, 2008). Interpretive paradigm is characterized by the researchers' practical interest in the research question (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003). The researcher is the interpreter.

Comparative study as a qualitative research design has been employed (Flick, 2004). The exploratory type of the comparative study has been applied (Phillips, 2006). The exploratory type of the comparative study aims to generate new hypotheses and questions (Phillips, 2006). The exploratory methodology proceeds as follows (Phillips, 2006):

- 'conceptualisation' in Phase 1,
- detailed description of educational phenomena in the countries to be investigated, with full attention paid to the local context in terms of its historical, geographical, cultural, political, religious, and linguistic (etc.) features in Phase 2,
- the data collection in Phase 3,
- explanation through the development of hypotheses in Phase 4,
- re-consideration of the initial questions and application of the findings to other situations in Phase 5.

The qualitatively oriented empirical study allows the construction of only few cases (Mayring, 2004). Moreover, the cases themselves are not of interest, only the conclusions and transfers we can draw from these respondents (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Selecting the cases for the case study comprises use of information-oriented sampling, as opposed to random sampling (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This is because an average case is often not the richest in information. In addition, it is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Random samples emphasizing representativeness will seldom be able to produce this kind of insight; it is more appropriate to select some few cases chosen for their validity.

Data were collected through a focus group interview. A focus group interview is 'a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being focused 'on a given topic' (Rabiee, 2004). Focus groups interviews examine how knowledge, and more importantly, ideas, develop and operate within a given cultural context as well as explore exactly how the opinions are constructed (Kitzinger, 1995). The focus group interview within the present empirical study proceeded in three phases:

- from a discussion via group work carried out by two teacher trainers from the same country in Phase 1
- through a presentation given by a member of each group in Phase 2
- to conclusions made by a member of each group in Phase 3.

Circle seating is usually used for a focus group interview (Krueger, 2002). A focus group usually includes from five to 10 participants (Krueger, 2002). Participants are selected on the criteria that they would have something to say on the topic, are within the age-range, have similar socio-characteristics and would be comfortable talking to the interviewer and each other (Richardson & Rabiee, 2001). It can also be advantageous to bring together a diverse group (for example, from a range of countries) to maximise exploration of different perspectives within a group setting (Kitzinger, 1995). Moreover, it is important to be aware of how hierarchy within the group may affect the data (a nursing auxiliary, for example, is likely to be inhibited by the presence of a consultant from the same hospital) (Kitzinger, 1995). Hence, the choice of participants for a focus group interview was based on three criteria as depicted in Figure 6:

participant's knowledge on a given topic, participant's cultural difference and non-formal adult education's diversity (occupation, training, etc) and participant's hierarchy in the group.

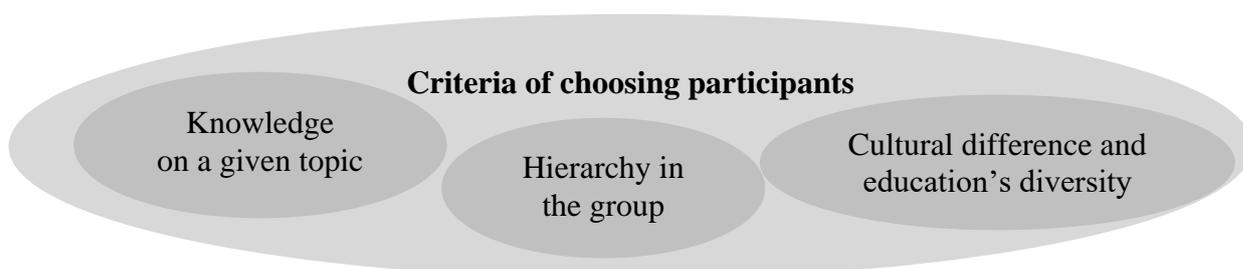


Figure 6: Criteria of choosing participants for a focus group interview

The number of participants depends on the heterogeneity of the focus group: the greater the heterogeneity of the group, the fewer the number of participants (Okoli & Pawlovski, 2004). Further on, smaller groups show greater potential (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Thus, eight is a good number of participants for the study (Lopez & Salmeron, 2011).

The focus group interview was identified as semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interview was used as the researchers had obtained the initial knowledge on the research field (Kroplijs & Rašćevka, 2004) and were analysing teacher trainer pen portrait via a focus group interview. The semi-structured interview included the following questions:

- What are the age, working location and conditions of teacher trainers in your country?
- In which three situations do teacher trainers in your country read a manual?

RESULTS

In order to compare the portraits of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education in Belgium, Germany, Latvia and Poland, a non-structured interview was carried out in the focus group of eight participants. Table 1 summarizes the results of the focus group interview.

Table 1: Summary of the focus group interview

Country	Teacher trainer age	Sex	Working location	Working conditions	3 situations to read a manual
Belgium	20-80 years old	Not shown	Belgium	School training, courses, organisations	New information after the event of project promotion and/or dissemination, Visiting a trainer box, Looking for materials via google, Another trainer's advice
Germany	27 years old	males	city	Part-time contract, freelancer	New target group lecture to be prepared (Special needs group, refugees, etc), Increase of participants' motivation, Search for new ways to present the existing content
Latvia	Young or old	females	Town, city	Extra job	Looking for a new method, A student at university, Search for a method detailed description

Poland	40+ years old	females	city	No experience in e-learning, Freelancer, Open courses, Trainer as a trainer for trainer on facebook	Special tool to be used, To entertain long course participants Special group (unemployed, immigrants, etc)
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DISCUSSION

The structuring content analysis (Mayring, 2004) of the data demonstrates that the portraits of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education of Belgium, Germany, Latvia and Poland have similarities in such dimensions as working location and conditions as well as three situations in which a teacher trainer reads a manual. Therefore, the respondents' views on the portrait of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education are homogeneous.

Summarizing content analysis (Mayring, 2004) of the data reveals a portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education that depicts a female of 40+ years old who works as a freelancer in urban areas and reads manuals and/or guidebooks

- while preparing a course with a specific group of participants such as unemployed, migrant, disabled, etc.,
- during a course without time pressure to introduce an innovation, and
- following a piece of advice given by other colleagues.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the theoretical analysis and empirical study allow shaping a pen-portrait of teacher trainer in non-formal adult education [in order to meet the needs of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education while providing them with a teacher training](#).

The following research question has been formulated: How should the content of the manual be organized in order to meet the needs of teacher trainers described in the portrait of teacher trainers in non-formal adult education?

Validity and reliability of the research results have been provided by involving other researchers into several stages of the conducted research. External validity has been revealed by international co-operation as following: the research preparation has included individual consultations given by other researchers, the present contribution has been worked out in co-operation with international colleagues and assessed by international colleagues, and the research has been presented at international conferences.

The present research has *limitations*. The inter-connections between *teacher trainer, portrait, pen portrait, biography, image and profile* have been set. Another limitation is the empirical study conducted by involving the focus group only.

A comparative analysis of teacher trainer pen-portrait and didactical-methodological profile of adult learning facilitators in non-formal adult education is proposed. Further research tends to focus on empirical studies to be carried out in other countries. And a comparative research of other countries could be carried out, too.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work has been carried out within the Erasmus+ programme *Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices* project « *E-process in E-learning* ».

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