

ŠIAULIAI UNIVERSITY

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**MODELLING OF PRE-VOCATIONAL
(SELF-)EDUCATION OF PUPILS WITH MILD
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

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**MOKINIŲ, TURINČIŲ NEŽYMŲ
INTELEKTO SUTRIKIMĄ, IKIPROFESINIO
UGDYMO(SI) MODELIAVIMAS**

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INTRODUCTION

Research problem and relevance of the research. Rapid changes in political, economic, social and educational fields over the past twenty years affected changes in the organisation of education of persons with mild intellectual disabilities (MID). Anti-discriminatory movement initiated socio-political development, reduction of exclusion, creating preconditions for self-education of pupils with various abilities in conventional educational environments together with their peers, continuity of their learning and vocational education. In order to create wider employability possibilities, it was begun to look for new and more effective methods of (self-)education and vocational education as well as for models for development of employability (entrepreneurial) abilities, increasing social and economic independence of persons with MID.

Endeavours of social participation and empowerment of the disabled are grounded on maximal meeting of individual educational needs, recognizing personal strengths and special educational needs (Ruškus, 2002; Baranauskienė, Ruškus, 2004; Kochhar-Bryant, Greene, 2009). The concept of social participation and empowerment in the field of (self-)education and vocational rehabilitation is grounded on the emphasis on capacity, ability rather than on the disability (Baranauskienė, Juodraitis, 2008; MacEachen, Kosny, Ferrier, Lippel, Neilson, Franche, Pugliese, 2012). Pupils with MID were begun to be educated in the inclusive environment hoping that this will help them to achieve better self-education and socialisation results (Salend, 2006; Williams, Reisberg, 2003).

The analysis of models of inclusive education (Ališauskas, Gerulaitis, Miltenienė, 2011; Ališauskienė, 2005; Miltenienė, 2004) disclosed both positive points and certain problems, namely problems related to teachers' ambivalent, most often adverse attitudes towards inclusive education, and particularly towards mainstream education of pupils with MID (Gribačiauskas, Merkys, 2003; Gudonis, Valantinas, Strimaitienė, 2003; Kaffemanienė, 2001; etc.); insufficient preparation of mainstream school teachers to meet pupils' special educational needs (Ališauskas, 2004; etc.). Many parents were satisfied that their children were educated together with their peers who did not have a disability (Ališauskas, Kaffemanienė, Melienė, Miltenienė, 2011; Leach, Duffy, 2009); however, others wanted their children to attend special classes (Johnson, Duffett, 2002).

Social relevance of the research. Rapid globalization processes have raised additional challenges for the system of vocational education: how to help a young person to prepare for and adapt to the rapidly changing world of work. Young people in the whole world experience problems moving from the school to the world of work. Countries of the world experience a common problem: a high level of youth unemployment¹ (OECD, 2013). The phenomena of globalization have raised new threats for vocational integration of the disabled: 1) sophisticated technologies led to higher requirements for employees' education, resulting in less number of unskilled jobs and an increasing number of jobs requiring higher education; the global labour market has become favourable for the so-called professional elite; 2) global competition resulted in insecure employment contracts, prevailing in many countries, moving all responsibility for career development to the very person; 3) from the human career perspective, it becomes relevant to be able to use modern information and communication technologies; however, that part of humanity which for various reasons is unable to use technologies becomes less competitive.

Persons with disabilities find it particularly difficult to adapt in today's labour market due to the need to have high qualification, distinguish oneself by personal features,

¹ Youth unemployment rate (2013). *Employment and Labour Markets: Key Tables from OECD*, No. 2. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/unemp-yth-table-2013-1-en>.

general and other abilities that are valued in a competitive labour market (Mališauskaitė, 2007). (Self-)employment of the disabled is among the most relevant problems to be solved, as mentioned in reports and discussions on disability issues at the level of the highest European authorities. It is noted that disability has a negative impact on participation in the labour market; people with disabilities are the poorest, least educated and least employed part of people (King, 1993). Researches (Daugėla, 2004; Gailienė, 2006; Baranauskienė, Ruškus, 2004; Baranauskienė, Juodraitis, 2008) show that only a small share of the disabled participate in work activities; usually these are persons with mild intellectual disabilities. There is a particularly negative attitude towards persons with intellectual disabilities and mental illnesses (Colella, 1996); persons with mobility impairments or other physical disabilities receive less negative evaluations (Daugėla, 2006; Kaffemanienė, 2001). Young persons with MID two times more often than other employees are made redundant and belong to the only group of the disabled, which does not receive a salary that is significantly higher than the minimum (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, Shaver, 2010); they have lower expectations and more often than other employees need assistance in employment and work; besides, they are little inclined to learn a profession after graduation from school or to finish a vocational school on the whole (Newman et al., 2005); on the other hand, compared to other persons with disabilities, they are more inclined to take part in vocational guidance activities at school, try out professions practically, etc. (Newman et al., 2010), disclosing professional skills still at school.

Employment of the disabled most often is the result of individual initiatives of the very disabled or other persons (Mališauskaitė, 2007; Baranauskienė, Juodraitis, 2008; Kochhar-Bryant, Greene, 2009). Thus, people with MID belong to a particularly high-risk group, and even having acquired vocational preparation nevertheless they are in danger to experience social exclusion, become long-term unemployed persons and fall below the poverty line.

Failures in the labour market and social exclusion risks might be determined by both their own socially unacceptable behaviour, negative image; lack of professional preparation and qualification, insufficient preparation for independent living and competition in the labour market; insufficiently thought-out governmental policy with regard to employment of the disabled and poor motivation of employers and potential co-workers (Baranauskienė, Ruškus, 2004). According to employers, limited activities are the biggest drawback of the disabled (Ozawa, Yaeda, 2006). Professional activities of persons with MID requiring more supervision and monitoring, can also pose a greater strain with regard to quality of work performance for the employer. Employers, who have a possibility to choose employees, almost always prioritise persons without disabilities and do not trust the disabled due to lack of information about their professional abilities and personal features (Mališauskaitė, 2007); employers' distrust in the disabled is determined by various myths and stereotypes existing in our society (Baranauskienė, Radzevičienė, Valaikiene, 2012). Emphasis on possibilities of persons with MID has not solved employment problems as well because in practice their possibilities are still identified as the border between the "ability" and "inability" (MacEachen et al., 2012); the problem arises when employers, fully not realizing abilities and needs of the person with MID, raise too high work requirements.

And still employment difficulties of persons with MID cannot be attributed only to factors of the labour market such as internal policy of the labour market or drawbacks of the vocational education system (Shavit, Muller, 2003). Baranauskienė's, Juodraitis' (2008) study disclosed that during the years of economic boom in Lithuania (2008),

weakening of competition in the labour market, reduction of the unemployment rate created better possibilities for participation of persons with MID in the labour market but disabled persons' employment problems did not disappear by themselves. Thus, favourable situation in the labour market is insufficient to make their professional careers more successful (Baranauskienė, Juodraitis, 2008).

European policy documents and results of educational researches point out problems of vocational education (Guile, Young, 2003). Young people are characterised by development of professional awareness; therefore, there should be a certain focus on preparation for professional life in the school education stage (Havighurst, 1972). However, school-based vocational guidance is insufficient, although significance of these services at school is theoretically actualized (Indrašienė, Rimkevičienė, Gaigalienė et al., 2006). Employers expect more knowledge, skills and intrinsic motivation from employees, but vocational guidance does not justify these expectations (Kuijpers, Meijers, Gundy, 2011), and this leads to an increasing number of pupils who refuse vocational guidance (Boersma, Dam, Volman, Wardekker, 2010). In many countries, vocational guidance, usually based on the trait-and-factor approach, "informed choice" and "decision-making" (Sultana, 2004; Irving, Malik, 2005), was replaced by a new concept "career guidance", described as a constant, lifelong process of career competency development that begins at school² (Stanišauskienė, Naseckaitė, 2012).

In the past decade, general education school reforms provided for optimisation of vocational guidance by introducing pre-vocational education, approaching theory to professional practice and better meeting young people's career guidance needs (Boersma et al., 2010). The authors believe that vocational guidance at school is ineffective if learners do not have a direct contact with all aspects of professional practice and if reflection on participation in professional practice is not applied (Boersma et al., 2010). It is believed that creation of the learning environment that is related to pre-vocational education will make learning more meaningful for learners and that vocational guidance will enable to achieve better results (Guile, Young, 2003; Boersma et al., 2010).

In the second half of last century, the system of vocational guidance, vocational informing, vocational counselling was scientifically grounded in Lithuania (Jovaiša, 1978, 1981, 1999; Kregždė, 1988; Lapė, 1980; etc.), "preparing youth for aware and motivated choice of the profession, as assistance to use peculiarities of their individuality" (Jovaiša, 2009, p.244). Vocational guidance was more associated with psychological-self-awareness goals.

After reestablishment of independence of Lithuania, a significant contribution to modernization of Lithuanian vocational education system was made by R. Laužackas (1950-2010), who scientifically grounded the methodology of vocational education, corresponding to trends and conditions of free market economy (Laužackas, 1998, 2005a). The researcher actively participated in the preparation of *Law on Vocational Education of Lithuania*, developed terminology of vocational education (Laužackas, 2005b). Relevance of education of career designing and career counselling specialists was analysed by Pukelis (2003); Pukelis, Navickienė (2011).

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania approved the programme *Career Guidance* for general education and vocational education schools, which highlighted four key areas of learners' career competencies: self-awareness, knowledge of career possibilities, career planning and career implementation. However, it should be noted that "<...> career guidance services at schools are provided by non-

² Analysing the person's career in the modern world of work, more often the concept "profession" is replaced by the concept "activity", which is much broader and better expresses changes.

professionals, who very often combine vocational guidance with other roles: subject teacher's; personal counsellor's, etc.”³

Besides, the current career guidance model is still not applied for pupils with MID, teachers lack methodological guidelines and experience how to apply career guidance programme so that it matches the needs of pupils with MID related to self-education for professional activities.

Vocational counselling and vocational guidance of persons with special educational needs were described by Elijošius, Karvelis (2000). These were the first attempts to systematise pedagogical experience preparing young people with intellectual disabilities for professions.

One of the factors enabling professional integration could be pre-vocational education of pupils with MID. The need for pre-vocational education of the disabled was grounded by Baranauskienė, Ruškus (2004), Baranauskienė, Juodraitis (2008). Analyzing the peculiarities of vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, researchers disclosed the importance of self-development of motivation and responsibility for participation of persons with MID in the labour market. These authors disclosed a broader need for educational objectives than the existing vocational education system could offer. According to authors, organisation of pre-vocational education of pupils with MID should be carried out in two directions: development of general abilities and of special ones, relatively “professional” abilities.

However, studies (Navickienė, Tandzegolskienė, 2011; Pukelis, Navickienė, 2011; etc.) demonstrate that organisation of career guidance, thus, organisation of pre-vocational education services too, require certain preparation and qualification of school staff⁴, methodical materials for pre-vocational education of pupils with special educational needs. Education of such specialists is also hindered by indefiniteness of pre-vocational education of pupils with MID; it is still discussed, what should be the curriculum of pre-vocational education of the disabled, how it should be implemented, what methods would be effective (Forbes et al., 2001; Peraino, 1992).

Scientific relevance of the research. Pre-vocational education of pupils with MID so far has not had a scientifically grounded theoretical model, a unified concept and structure. Scientific literature offers an abundance of various new educational concepts related to pupils' preparation for the world of work, which by their objectives are close to pre-vocational education of pupils with MID. However, there is a lack of their adaptation for special needs of pupils with MID. It is relevant to scientifically ground the specificity and the system of applying pre-vocational education curriculum for pupils with considerable special needs. So far, pre-vocational education as a system has almost not been analyzed. Most often its separate structural parts, encompassing studies about young people's needs, case studies, quantitative studies and articles, dealing with intervention programmes and recommendations for transition to the world of work (King, Baldwin, Currie, Evans, 2005), analysing the relation between the educational environment and career (Kuijpers, Meijers, Gundy, 2011), are investigated.

Scientific literature describes various shortcomings of vocational education of the disabled: too little attention is paid to individualisation of vocational education, self-development of *self-image*. Baer et al. (2011) identified the need of the holistic model of young people with intellectual disabilities, encompassing programmes of career guidance, technical education and work education. Condon, Callahan (2008), Al-Saaideh (2011), etc., who investigated career designing of pupils with special educational needs,

³ Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers (2004). © OECD/ European Communities.

⁴ Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers (2004). © OECD/ European Communities.

grounded the importance of inter-institutional teamwork in the pre-vocational education process; drawing up of pre-vocational education programmes was analysed by Miller, Thompson (2005).

The analysis of scientific literature highlighted two most important axial parts of pre-vocational education of pupils with MID: vocational guidance and the need for pre-vocational education grounded on practical experience.

Seeking results of successful integration of persons with MID into the labour market, pre-vocational education, encompassing all areas that are necessary for pupils' professional integration, becomes relevant. However, the need to investigate links of pre-vocational education with transition from school to working life is actualised by few studies conducted in Lithuania. There is a lack of scientifically grounded data, explaining how the structure of professional life of pupils with MID upon graduation from school is formed; what challenges they have to cope with when they start an independent life. This type of research would enable to determine what structural elements of pre-vocational education are important for their successful participation in the labour market.

The scientific problem in the dissertation research is concretized by **problem questions**: *What are experiences of participation of persons with MID in the labour market? How do persons with MID subjectively perceive reasons of their successful or unsuccessful participation in the labour market? What should be the guidelines of pre-vocational curriculum (structural elements) of pupils with MID?*

Defended Statements:

1. Pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities is grounded on the principles of pragmatism (practicality and utility) and on (self-) development of personal qualities and abilities necessary for social participation and professional integration. Pre-vocational (self-)education and professional integration acquires an existential sense for them and directly determines success of personal life.
2. The holistic concept of pre-vocational (self-)education is disclosed by the system of educational interactions of the pupil, his/her family, teachers and career guidance specialists and by applied strategies. The most important educational interaction strategies are: 1) self-education directed to the person's goals, bearing practical value and existential meaning; 2) individualization of self-education (strengths perspective) and long-term (continuous) multidisciplinary socio-educational assistance to the person.

The research object: preconditions for modelling pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with MID.

The research aim: to ground the theoretical hypothetical model of pre-vocational (self-)education of persons with mild intellectual disabilities, disclosing the conception of pre-vocational (self-)education and its essential structural elements.

The following **objectives** are raised to reach the research aim:

1. Based on the data of theoretical analysis of scientific sources, to review the historical development of vocational and pre-vocational education and systematise essential theoretical approaches; to analyse relevant issues of professional integration and pre-vocational self-education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities.
2. Employing the phenomenological research, to disclose experiences of professional preparation of persons with mild intellectual disabilities and their participation in the labour market, to highlight factors of their successful and unsuccessful participation in the labour market.

3. Applying the *Delphi* group research method, to analyze educators' opinion about barriers and success factors of professional integration of pupils with MID; aims, curriculum and organisation of pre-vocational education of these pupils.
4. Based on the theoretical and empirical data analysis, to disclose preconditions for professional integration and specificity of pre-vocational (self-)education of persons with mild intellectual disabilities; the conception of pre-vocational (self-)education, strategies and structural elements of pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities.

Theoretical Framework of the Dissertation Research

Existentialism (M. Heidegger, L. Binswanger, V. Frankl). Heidegger (qtd. in Ozmon, Craver, 1996) stated that human existence is historical; the individual has the past and is future-orientated; the historical context colours every situation of human existence. Therefore, conducting the in-depth interview in the dissertation research, experiences of life and participation in the labour market of adults with mild intellectual disabilities were retrospectively analysed. Based on that, professional integration of persons with MID in the dissertation research is understood as a result determined by previous experience – pre-vocational education.

According to Frankl (1997), human existence is disappearing if he/she does not seek anything higher, does not give a sense to his/her life; a mature man is the one who discovers his/her mission and gives a sense to his/her life (Frankl, 1997). The thesis presents an elaborate description and interpretation of self-realization ways of persons with MID, analyzing their subjectively perceived life experiences, feelings, experiences related to professional integration; the dissertation generalises the structure of their professional integration experience and factors that could have affected the formation of their chosen way of life.

Founders of the *humanistic psychology* A. H. Maslow, C. Rogers stated that the most important feature of a personality is its striving to the future, the endeavour to freely realize one's powers (qtd. in Bitinas, 2000). In the hierarchy of needs Maslow (2006) distinguishes basic (physiological and safety) needs and meta-needs (belongingness, respect, self-actualisation, etc.). The dissertation research is looking for an answer what meta-needs are most important for pupils with MID during the period of their preparation of professional integration and professional adaptation, how presence or absence of possibilities of meeting those needs determine success of their professional integration.

Self-determination and individual liberty theory (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, Wechmeyer, 1998). Field et al. (1998) define self-determination as a system of skills, knowledge, beliefs, enabling the person to act in a purposeful, reasonable and independent way (p. 2). Theoretical framework of self-determination and individual liberty are closely related to the principles of humanistic education, social inclusion and defence of personal rights. As stated by Rogers (qtd. in Kerevičienė, 2014), learning must correspond to the child's needs, wishes, dreams and satisfy his/her curiosity. School education should not only convey knowledge but also seek to make the pupil perceive the meaning of acquired knowledge. Planning (self-)education and establishing after-school aims, the pupil is viewed as an active participant (Kochhar-Bryant, Greene, 2009), who has the freedom of choice and can control life as much as it is possible, cognising oneself, one's strengths and weaknesses, needs, interests and values. According to Field et al. (1998), perception of strengths and weaknesses and belief in oneself as able and capable is the basis of self-determination, while activities based on the skills and attitudes enable individuals to better control their lives, taking over adults' roles.

The strengths perspective (D. Saleebey, T. J. Early, L. F. Glen Maye, U. Brofenbrenner): people have many talents, abilities that characterize quality of the person's social functioning; the key strength is the ability to grow and change. When pupils' strengths are emphasised, they feel more empowered and motivated, social and emotional well-being is improved and their families tend to get more involved in the provision of assistance (Brofenbrenner, 1979, qtd. in Cox, 2006).

Identification and evaluation of strengths of the pupil with mild intellectual disabilities enable more purposeful organisation of pre-vocational (self-)education. Construction the theoretical model of pre-vocational education in the dissertation research is based on the concept that pre-vocational education is the system of means and methods, which is based on the strengths perspective, preparing the individual for active participation in social life, realisation of his/her abilities, helping to get rid of the beneficiary's role, developing personal self-determination regarding the career.

Theoretical framework of pragmatism (J. Dewey, W. James, Ch. S. Peirce). According to Dewey (qtd. in Duoblienė, 2006), the essence of life is the activity that gives results. In the opinion of pragmatism representatives, the means and the aim cannot be separated, the means always slightly determine the results (Ozmon, Craver 1996). As James (1995) states, practical benefit of any decision or action is important.

The aim of education is self-awareness and development of personal freedom (Jovaiša, 2007). Pragmatism orients towards wide-scale education since disintegration of knowledge into individual elements leads to a risk of losing the perspective. In this respect provision of as broad as possible choice of practical activities for the pupil with MID so that he/she could discover his/her actual powers and self-develop abilities in order to make significant decisions becomes an important strategy of pre-vocational education. According to Dewey (1938), problems are the basis of life, that is why the pupil must learn to independently solve problems raised by life. Forming pre-vocational education of pupils with MID, it is important to focus on the learner's experience, conveying the curriculum in as clear form as possible and at the level of his/her consciousness. From the standpoint of pragmatism, pre-vocational curriculum must go beyond school limits, provide pupils with a possibility to self-develop in a natural work environment, acquire practical experience and basic professional skills, improve personal features and help the pupil with MID to understand whether this coheres with his/her wishes and possibilities.

Pre-vocational education of pupils with MID in the dissertation research is treated not only as acquisition of knowledge but also as gaining experience to solve tasks and problems arising from activities, opening up possibilities for the pupil's deeper self-awareness and reflection, creating preconditions for continuation of acquired experience. During practical experience the pupil with MID should both acquire general abilities and improve his/her personal features that are necessary for successful integration.

According to Dewey (qtd. in Duoblienė, 2006), experience is the key outcome of subjectivity (individuality) and objectivity (social environment); the school must be that institution which would foster individuality and prepare pupils for social life. Actual development of individuality is impossible without humane, democratic social conditions that are favourable for (self-)education.

General systems theory (L. von Bertalanffy, J.-L. Le Moigne). According to Von Bertalanffy (1969) and Sutherland (1973) (qtd. in Kochhar-Bryant, Greene, 2009), the principle of the systematic analysis is based on the following principles: the whole is more than the sum of its elements; all elements affect each other; there is a feedback, which enables regulation of the system; the whole of fundamental principles is suitable to all systems, regardless of its elements and their interrelations. This leads to a general

tendency to integrate various branches of science, explain complex phenomena, seek unity of science (Ruškus, 1998-1999). General systems theory reveals the holistic approach to the individual as a whole, which is more important than the sum of its parts. Kochhar-Bryant, Greene (2009) describe the systems theory as the structure of complex relations between organizations and other social systems.

The essence of the general systems theory in the dissertation research is reflected constructing the theoretical model of pre-vocational education, one of the structural elements of which is cooperation of the pupil, his/her family and interdisciplinary cooperation of specialists representing different areas, seeking aims of pre-vocational education, meeting pre-vocational (self-)education needs of individual pupils with mild intellectual disabilities.

The general systems theory views human advancement, development or behaviour as a dynamic whole of the system, which interacts with unique environment. In this respect, pre-vocational education is interpreted as a system of meeting educational and individual needs, the elements of which interact with each other and cannot be isolated. The pre-vocational education process must encompass both vocational education and enhancement of the learner's motivation for pre-vocational education and of family participation. Individuals, the family and other social groups are open systems, they constantly interact with the physical and cultural environment. Therefore, pre-vocational education is inseparable from the family and the environment of the community and enhancement of their interaction.

Methodological Framework of the Dissertation Research

Methodology of the phenomenological research. The study employs the methodology of *phenomenological* research. The phenomenological analysis method is a descriptive empirical method. The phenomenological research aims to describe, understand how different individuals experience a certain event (phenomenon), what meanings they give to the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2008), the researcher focuses not on individuals (like, for example in the narrative study) but on the phenomenon and how the phenomenon is experienced by different individuals. The researcher is looking for what is common in different experiences of individuals, what individuals experience having encountered the phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). That common experience rather than the researcher's preconceived knowledge of the phenomenon as a part of reality actually is the essence of the phenomenon. The researcher collects information from individuals who have experienced that phenomenon and analyzes what and how they experienced. It is important in the phenomenological research to penetrate deep beyond the directly lived experience in order to make the invisible visible (Kvale, 1996). According to Merleau-Ponty (qtd. in Kvale, 1996), it is important to describe the phenomenon as fully and accurately as possible.

The dissertation research is based on Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, the essence of which is the research oriented to the interpretative analysis of individuals' lived experience. One of the peculiarities of phenomenology is phenomenological reduction – advance refusal of considerations on whether the content of experience exists or not. Phenomenological reduction in the in-depth interview means absence of advance theoretical and particularly of personal critical assumptions (Kvale, 1996).

Hermeneutic phenomenological approach in the dissertation research is used in order to cognise experiences of the social world of persons with MID from their subjective perspective; i.e., how they perceive and experience the surrounding social reality, the part of which they are. The research aims to disclose what, in the opinion of

research participants, helps to achieve successful professional integration and how it is influenced by pre-vocational education.

Scientific modelling (Lave, March, 1993; Williams, 2001; Han, 2005). In social sciences, the model is the most general type sketch, in which the most important features of a social phenomenon are noted. The model shows the systemic structure of the social phenomenon and relations of structural parts in an abstract way.

In this dissertation the method of scientific modelling is applied constructing the theoretical hypothetical model of pre-vocational education of persons with mild intellectual disabilities. Systematising essential theoretical approaches and results of the empirical research, the scientific modelling method enabled to highlight the multidimensional concept of pre-vocational (self-) education; to disclose relevant issues and factors of pre-vocational education of persons with mild intellectual disabilities in the context of professional integration of these persons.

Research Methods

The method of theoretical analysis. Applying methods of theoretical analysis (analysis, systematisation and modelling of pedagogical, psychological, methodological literature), essential theoretical elements of pre-vocational curriculum are systematised, the multiplicity of the concept of pre-vocational education is disclosed, the structure of the pre-vocational (self-)education model of the pupil with MID is theoretically grounded; research methodology and corresponding research methods are grounded.

The in-depth interview is a non-structured long interview in order to collect as exhaustive (deep) as possible empirical materials about the individual's *attitudes, feelings, experiences or expectations* from that world in which they live (Kvale, 1996). The in-depth interview last longer than typical personal interviews, encompass a comprehensive in-depth talk on investigated issues. The researcher prepares only guidelines for the in-depth interview and notes future topics of the interview. The in-depth interview is a talk with the aim and structure. According to Kvale (1996), the aim of the in-depth interview is the understand research participants' attitudes and problems arising in everyday life.

The dissertation research employed purposeful (also known as semi-structured) interview (Bitinas, Rupšienė, Žydzūnaitė, 2008), projecting topics in advance but not following the order of questions (or words planned to say), freely changing their places, giving additional questions. The in-depth interview is not a talk between equal participants because the researcher must control the situation and seek answers to the given questions.

The research was carried out in accordance with the framework of hermeneutical phenomenology (Boyce, Neale, 2006; Kvale, 1996; Creswell, 2008; Silverman, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). The dissertation research sought to disclose subjective experience of young people with special educational needs in the transition from school to adult life, subjectively perceived meaning of pre-vocational education factors for successful transition and professional integration.

In order to disclose the structure of informants' professional integration experiences and its impact on pre-vocational education, in this stage of the research it was most important to question how the phenomenon formed, how it was lived; i.e., to invite the participant to share his/her lived experienced openly and leisurely. The interview method was employed to obtain knowledge about successful and unsuccessful professional integration experiences of persons with MID, disclose how their life structure was formed and what factors in the past affected professional integration.

To disclose structure of successful and unsuccessful professional integration, *the descriptive phenomenological analysis method* was applied (Creswell, 2008; Kvale

1996; Giorgi, 1997). Processing of interview data was based on qualitative data analysis steps recommended by Creswell (2008), Kvale (1996): first the most interesting interview was reviewed, the main meaning was reflected and written in two-three words in the margin, then the coding process was started, encompassing identification of text segments; merging analysed data and combining distinguished meaningful units, the structure of the content of the interview was created – the category tree, as an instrument for further interpretive analysis of data.

Research participants. The in-depth interview was attended by persons between 18 and 33 years old with mild intellectual disabilities, 6 females and 13 males, in total 19 informants. Targeted sampling principle was applied; the fundamental selection criterion of the sample – persons with mild intellectual disabilities, who graduated from school. The unstructured in-depth interview was conducted in 2012-2013 in Lithuania (11 participants of the research) and Italy (8 participants of the research).

Group discussion, applying elements of *Delphi* method. The dissertation research is based on approaches of *Delphi group* research methodology, described by Linstone, Turoff (2002); Schniederjans, Hamaker, Schniederjans (2010); Buddenbaum, Novak (2001); Okoli, Pawlowski (2004); Belanovski (Белановский, 2001) and in the works of other authors. According Schniederjans, Hamaker, Schniederjans (2010), *Delphi* method is a discussion controlled by a moderator enabling all experts to express their opinion and arrive at a consensus. *Delphi* method was chosen because, according to Vinstone, Turoff, Helmer (2002), it is ideal for creation and improvement of a new theory or model. The advantage of *Delphi group* method is that participants of the group can express individual experiences anonymously, which stimulates further and deeper discussions on the analysed subject. The essence of the method is by eliminating conformism possibilities, to get as many and as various opinions and statements from experts participating in the group as possible. Imparting the opinion, feedback is emphasized while the conversation is directed not only to the identification of the problem but also to its solution, concrete recommendations, proposals or ideas. Refusing preconceived theoretical hypotheses, the focus was on getting experts' practical experience about structural elements of pre-vocational education of pupils with MID, identification and evaluation of educational activities and influence of the environment.

During the research open-ended questions were given; *Delphi* group participants, experts expressed their views on the curriculum of pre-vocational education of pupils with MID: goals, forms, methods of education, activity areas, influence of traditions on successful pre-vocational education of pupils with MID, the importance of creating the interaction child-family-school-community.

Processing *Delphi* research data, qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (calculation of means and polarity) approaches of the social research (Vinstone, Turoff, Helmer, 2002; Linstone, Turoff, 2002; Hsu, Sandford, 2007) were applied. The spectrum of received opinions, reflecting experts' professional experience, was systematised in the very group. All statements received during discussions were distinguished and grouped according to similar meanings. This was followed by nomination of distinguished groups of statements. Seeking objectivity of the content of data, experts' assistance was used to conduct control of distinguishing meaningful units and of content of nomination. Seeking to better understand spread of experts' opinions, the research employed *descriptive statistics*, calculation of means and standard deviations of subcategories, distinguished using the *content analysis* method, disclosing experts' opinion about elements of pre-vocational curriculum of pupils with MID.

Participants (experts) of group discussion, applying elements of *Delphi* method.

The participants of *Delphi* group research were invited highly qualified professionals who have direct experience of education of pupils with special educational needs. The research sample of *Delphi* group consisted of 13 special educators, psychologists, vocational education teachers (2 males, 11 females, all with higher education), working in secondary schools, vocational schools, special education and psychology centres and with 5 to 25 years' experience of educating pupils with special educational needs. *Delphi* research took place in Šiauliai in 2013.

Stages of Research

The dissertation research was carried out in 4 stages. Stages of the dissertation research, applied methods and samples are summarized in the diagramme (see Fig. 1).

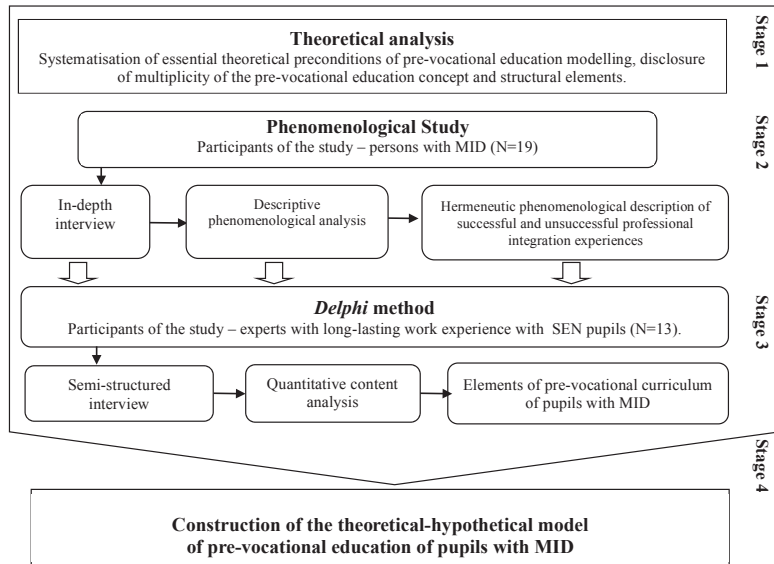


Fig. 1. Structure of the Dissertation Research on Modelling of Pre-Vocational Education of Pupils with MID

In the first stage, analysing theoretical sources, the historical development of vocational education and pre-vocational education was reviewed; relevant issues of professional integration and pre-vocational self-education of persons with mild intellectual disabilities were analysed; essential theoretical approaches that are important constructing the theoretical model of pre-vocational education were systematised.

In the second stage, seeking to know how persons with MID experience successful or unsuccessful professional integration, the phenomenological approach – the non-standardized in-depth interview method – was chosen. The research purposefully employed the non-standardized in-depth interview – the non-structured long interview, which aims to collect the most comprehensive (deep) empirical material about the individual's *attitudes, feelings, experiences and expectations* from the world in which they live (Kvale, 1996)

In the third stage, in order to disclose pre-vocational education trends, current status and possibilities of pupils with MID, *Delphi* research was conducted. Research data were collected and processed combining qualitative and quantitative (calculation of means and polarity) approaches of the social research. Results of *Delphi* group research were analyzed using qualitative method, employing content analysis method, sub-categories that were given for experts' evaluation were distinguished, ratings of experts' opinions were identified.

In the fourth stage, based on the distinguished structural parts of pre-vocational education, which were grounded on the analysis of theoretical sources and obtained empirical research results, the theoretical hypothetical pre-vocational education model of pupils with MID was constructed.

Scientific significance of the research. The dissertation research discloses 1) subjectively perceived positive and negative experiences of working life, 2) factors that have made impact on professional integration, and 3) specificity of structure of pre-vocational curriculum of persons with MID.

The phenomenological research, constructed from the retrospective standpoint (going deep not only to research participants' experiences "here and now" but also to the events of participation / non-participation in the labour market that were experienced in the past), allows to know in-depth professional integration problems of persons with MID, related to their existing pre-vocational self-education experiences, and to understand factors of these person's successful and unsuccessful professional integration.

Having systemized data collected employing theoretical and empirical methods, the *pre-vocational education model of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities* was created. This model 1) is based on the *holistic conception* about *pre-vocational education as a stage of early career guidance*; and 2) *discloses the specificity of pre-vocational (self-) education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities*, based on knowledge of these persons' strengths (possibilities) and meeting special educational needs.

From the philosophical positions of pragmatism and existentialism the pre-vocational education model defines specific *preconditions* for integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities into the labour market:

- *Pre-vocational (self-)education strategies* (strength perspective, orientation to the learner's special educational needs and self-realisation needs, promotion of social participation (empowerment), etc.).
- *Participants of the system of pre-vocational education interactions* (learner, teachers, educational support professionals, family, peers, etc.);
- *Objectives of pre-vocational education* (development of personality traits, values, abilities relevant for the labour market, motivation, etc.) and continuity perspectives.

Scientific novelty of the research. Professional integration of persons with MID into the labour market and problems of preconditions and factors of successful participation in the labour market are relevant in all countries; this is evidenced by the diversity of researches and studies in this field. Scientific novelty and practical significance of the research is characterized by the following:

- the phenomenological analysis of subjective *experiences* (attitudes, feelings) of participation / non-participation of persons with MID in the labour market and *expectations* related to successful/unsuccessful professional integration is conducted;
- the conception of pre-vocational education of pupils with MID is systematised, the specificity of their pre-vocational (self-)education is disclosed;

- The pre-vocational (self-)education model of persons with mild intellectual disabilities is hypothetically formed, systematically reflecting key strategies, components of educational interaction, specificity and complexity of educational objectives and multidisciplinarity of interactions.

The structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, four sections, generalization of research data, substantiation of the pre-vocational (self-)education model, conclusions, the list of references and appendices (electronic resources). The thesis contains 3 figures and 21 tables. The total volume of the research is 175 pages. 279 literature sources were used. Appendices (5 appendices) present interview materials, stages of the in-depth interview, transcription meanings, characteristics of the phenomenological research sample, examples of Delphi study questions, information about vocational education programmes of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities.

THE CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

Introduction

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- 4.1. Barriers and Preconditions for Professional Integration
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References

Appendix

REVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION CONTENT

The **Introduction** presents and substantiates key methodological parameters of the dissertation.

Section 1. CONCEPTUALISATION OF PRE-VOCATIONAL (SELF-)EDUCATION OF PUPILS WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

1.1. Historical Development of Vocational and Pre-Vocational Education

This section deals with the development of the concept of pre-vocational education in Lithuania and factors that determined its appearance: the development of vocational education; globalization processes, promoting the increase of job requirements and the person's ability to adapt in the changing world of work, impact of the rapid progress of science and education in Western European countries on the education system of Lithuania.

1.2. Attitudes towards the Disabled: Historical Review of Vocational Education of the Disabled

This section overviews public attitude towards persons with disabilities, the historical development from antiquity to the present day and its effect on education of persons with MID. The disability rights movement, raising new aims of (pre-)vocational education – to enhance and support all students' academic, social, emotional and career development in spite of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, medical and physical disabilities; to meet special educational needs of special pupils (Nichter, Edmonson, 2005) – led to appearance of inclusive education and new challenges integrating pre-vocational education programmes into inclusive environment. The section deals with pre-vocational (self-)education problems of persons with MID: specialists' education, readiness of schools to educate persons with MID, differences in curricula, etc.

1.3. Relevant issues of Professional Integration and Pre-Vocational Self-Education of Persons with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

The section deals with interaction of pre-vocational education and professional integration of persons with MID: preconditions and factors of successful professional integration, problems of participation in the labour market and transition to adult life. Professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities still remains a complicated problem and cannot be solved by traditional education alone. The diversity of pre-vocational education options described in scientific literature, however, does not guarantee successful professional integration of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities and no measures to ensure quality of pre-vocational education have been created.

Section 2. METHODOLOGY AND ETHICS OF THE RESEARCH

2.1. Methodological Approaches of the Research

The research was conducted employing the phenomenological research methodology, applying qualitative data collection methods (interview: individual in-depth interviews with persons with mild intellectual disabilities; group interview method applying Delphi-expert survey), qualitative content analysis methods (descriptive phenomenological analysis, A. Giorgi's methodology) and content analysis, encompassing quantitative and qualitative research data (Hsu, Brian, 2007).

2.2. Empirical Research Methods

Conducting the in-depth interview, analysing and describing data, the techniques of conducting the in-depth interview described by Boyce, Neale (2006), Kvale (1996), Creswell (2008), Silverman (2011), Maxwell (2005) were used.

Application of elements of Delphi group research methodology was based on group interview study approaches described in the works of Schniederjans, Hamaker, Schniederjans (2010), Hsu, Sandford (2007), Linstone, Turoff, (2002), Buddenbaum, Novak (2001), Okoli, Pawlowski (2004) and other authors. Employing elements of

Delphi group research methodology, the research was conducted in several stages. In the first stage, based on the analysis scientific literature sources, research questions about pre-vocational education of persons with MID as a precondition of their professional integration were formulated. In the second stage, experts' group was invited. The experts were given open-ended questions. Group members – experts – expressed opinions reflecting on their own professional experiences about MID pupils' pre-vocational curriculum, aims, forms and methods. At the end of group discussion, the experts were given the list of key statements distinguished during the discussion. In the third stage, research results were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis method. In the fourth stage, seeking objective interpretation of the content of data, together with experts notional units were distinguished and control of nomination content was conducted. The statements were divided into categories and subcategories and repeatedly sent out to experts by the Internet, asking them to assess and rank statements of subcategories by indicated meanings.

2.3. Principles of Ethics of the Research

The research followed *general principles of ethics*. The theoretical analysis is presented in accordance with citation requirements. The researcher's responsibility is reflected in correct presentation of research data. Ethics with regard to research participants is observed. The in-depth interview was conducted following research ethics with regard to the disabled as a vulnerable persons' group.

Section 3. EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION AND PRE-VOCATIONAL SELF-EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: RESULTS OF THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

This section presents professional integration experiences of persons with MID: the analysis of informants' successful and unsuccessful professional integration experiences, how they describe their situation and understand factors that in one way or another way determined the course of their life events, what is happening in their lives after they are employed or when they fail to entrench in the labour market.

3.1. Experiences of Successful Professional Integration

The structure of entrenchment in the labour market of informants in Lithuania and Italy is very similar. Italian informants, as well as Lithuanian, encounter the requirement to have practical work experience, challenges of adaptation in the workplace, lack of jobs. Informants who live in Italy receive more assistance finding a job. Preconditions for successful professional integration are: 1) the person's activeness and the ability to look for a job, 2) the ability to adapt to the requirements raised by the labour market (employers), 3) professional abilities, practical work experience acquired at the (vocational) school.

3.2. Structure of Experiences of Unsuccessful Participation of Persons with Mild Intellectual Disabilities in the Labour Market

Factors reducing professional adaptation in the workplace are unsuitably chosen profession, lack of qualification, informants' dissatisfaction with work. Both successfully employed persons and the ones who experienced setbacks miss mediation support at all stages of professional integration: looking for a job, adapting in workplaces.

3.3. Factors of (Non-)Entrenchment of Persons with Mild Intellectual Disabilities in the Labour Market

The analysis of interview data demonstrated that the acquired profession that is marketable and liked by the person with MID provided the informants with more employment opportunities; however, their entrenchment in the labour market will depend on the approach to work, on motivation to perform work assignments in a quality manner and on personal qualities and abilities.

3.4. Further Life of Successfully Employed Persons

Research results disclosed the impact of the environment on professional integration

and successful private life of persons with MID, but values that have been formed have equally significant influence on the resolve regarding the path of life.

3.5. Consequences of Unsuccessful Professional Integration

The results of the phenomenological research disclosed differences of the path of life of persons who were successfully employed and the ones who experienced failures of professional integration.

Paths of adult life of persons with MID differ: some are employed faster and start their independent lives, while others are employed later or are unemployed. As illustrated by the informants' stories, the sooner they are employed, the more successfully they participate in the labour market, while absence of work often leads to private life failures.

Persons with MID who have professions find jobs, successfully adapt in the workplace, create families that they are able to take care of, do not have bad habits. Private life of informants who failed to entrench in the labour market is unsuccessful: persons who have not acquired a profession do not have a permanent job, experience failures creating families, are unable to properly take care of their children, therefore, lose paternity/maternity rights, acquire bad habits, and, having taken over asocial life, can become homeless. Formation of asocial behaviour is influenced by inner human approaches, beliefs, which are dictated both by social environment and the informants' personal qualities.

Transition of persons with mild intellectual disabilities to adult life is a complicated process requiring a lot of support. In many cases, lack of knowledge and social skills encourage these persons to seek help from the environment, while persons who are closest to them turn into "teachers of life", from whom young people with mild intellectual disabilities take over both positive and negative experiences.

Section 4. PECULIARITIES OF PRE-VOCATIONAL (SELF-)EDUCATION OF PUPILS WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: RESULTS OF THE DELPHI STUDY

4.1. Barriers and Preconditions for Professional Integration

Delphi study was intended for disclosing experts' opinion about barriers and factors of vocational education and professional integration of pupils with MID.

4.2. Pre-Vocational Education Strategies of Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

Experts distinguished three key pre-vocational education strategies: socio-educational support for the pupil, school-family collaboration, informing and counselling of parents.

4.3. Components of Pre-Vocational Curriculum of Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

In experts' opinion, pre-vocational curriculum of pupils with MID should include key factors of career guidance: *self-development of personal qualities, social skills, general (transferable) skills and activity abilities*. Social skills consist of many kinds of abilities, but Delphi study participants prioritised social skills, which are most important for professional integration of pupils with MID: communication, participation, decision making, self-control and management of emotions.

Speaking about the development of general (transferable) skills, experts accentuated relevance of coherence between general literacy abilities and practical life abilities. Experts stressed self-development of MID pupils' work skills and practical abilities necessary for the profession and trying out acquired abilities practically.

4.4. Forms, Methods, Environment and Specialists of Pre-Vocational Education

According to experts, forms of pre-vocational education can be traditional frontal education during lessons, non-formal education, and organisation of individual counselling. As stated by experts of Delphi group, pre-vocational education has broad

aims that can hardly be achieved by the specialist of one area. Research participants repeatedly emphasized teamwork of all specialists providing educational support: vocational counsellors, social educators, special educators, psychologists, form tutors.

GENERALISATION OF RESEARCH DATA

The analysis of the structure of successful professional integration experiences of persons with MID disclosed that the *preconditions for success* of research participants' professional integration were vocational preparation, abilities of employment and entrenchment in the labour market, and efforts to independently work according to the acquired profession.

No doubt, professional abilities acquired at the vocational school and practical work experience are very important. However, modern life also requires activeness, efforts and abilities of the very person to look for a job and to adapt to labour market requirements. This is also evidenced by the data, analysing experiences of persons with mild intellectual disabilities who successfully found jobs and participated in the labour market.

On the other hand, factors reducing professional adaptation in the workplace came out too. These are unsuitably chosen profession, lack of qualification, informants' dissatisfaction with work. Failures were also determined by personal qualities: lack of dutifulness, persistence, endurance, avoidance of difficulties, spontaneity.

The in-depth interview data were verified by the content analysis of *Delphi* discussions. Experts as well as the participants of the in-depth interview emphasized the importance of personal qualities and preparation for work, seeking successful employment.

Besides, both successfully employed persons with mild intellectual disabilities and the ones who experienced employment setbacks, missed mediation support in the professional integration process: looking for a job, adapting in workplaces. These experiences of theirs were also verified by *Delphi* group discussion data.

Generalisation of content analysis data of in-depth interviews and *Delphi* discussions resulted in identification of improvement areas and favourable factors of career guidance and professional integration of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities.

The key factors and barriers of informants' successful and unsuccessful professional integration are related to personal qualities and peculiarities of personality purposefulness, to versatile abilities or lack of them.

Factors of professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities.

Successfully employed persons emphasized relevance of *personal qualities important for professional adaptation: the person's professional purposefulness* (positive attitude to work), responsibility, dutifulness, work discipline, honesty, persistence, patience. *Internal human attitudes, beliefs, the value system, the person's activeness*, looking for a job, acquired *professional abilities* and efforts to work well, follow work discipline requirements, adapt in the workplace, according to the very informants, were factors of their successful adaptation of the labour market. It is important to note that persons with mild intellectual disabilities also perceived the importance of lifelong learning: according to the informants who successfully integrated into the labour market, it is necessary to constantly improve in one's work, acquire new knowledge and experiences.

Professional integration barriers of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities:

1) *The attitude of the state, society and employers towards professional integration of persons with intellectual disabilities.*

Professional integration of these persons is influenced by public attitudes and employers' beliefs about possibilities of the disabled and specifically of persons with mild intellectual disabilities to be employed in general and to be valuable participants of the labour market. The position of the state with regard to the disabled and their employment is related to employers' attitude to possibilities of the disabled to work; their reluctance to

employ disabled employees is related to insufficient promotion of enterprises to employ such persons and to the lack of knowledge about these persons' abilities. Integration of the disabled in the labour market may also be adversely affected by unfavourable socio-economic situation in the country.

2) *Non-preparation of educational institutions for pre-vocational self-education and vocational education of pupils with MID.*

Pupils with intellectual disabilities distinguish themselves by severe and profound special educational needs. Their self-education in general education schools is still academic; even providing special educational support, the focus is on the subject-oriented curriculum, adapting general education programmes. General education schools lack learning and human resources necessary for pre-vocational self-education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities. There is a lack of teachers' preparation to provide qualified vocational guidance and counselling services for these pupils; the pre-vocational self-education process lacks teachers' collaboration with career guidance and vocational education specialists and pupils' parents. In terms of learning resources, general education schools lack both teachers' jobs for specialized pre-vocational education activities and technologies suitable for trying out professional activities practically. Pre-vocational self-education resources of special schools intended for pupils with intellectual disabilities are somewhat better. Vocational schools offer more possibilities for pupils to practically prepare for a profession, but they offer limited supply of vocational training programmes suitable for young people who have mild intellectual disabilities.

During the transition period from school to the world of work pupils with mild intellectual disabilities in general education schools and specialised schools need mediation support.

These professional integration barriers also point out **improvement trends**. The dissertation research disclosed problematicity of pre-vocational self-education of persons with MID and their participation in the labour market. Areas to be improved can be defined at the levels of the state, employers and schools, which are closely interrelated, and only accordant systematic activities in these areas could create favourable preconditions for improvement of the professional integration situation of persons with mild intellectual disabilities.

State policy promoting professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities would be a precondition for the formation of positive attitudes of the society, employers and school community towards persons with MID and *of the identity of the person with MID as a future participant of the labour market. This requires state-level measures aimed at professional integration of persons with disabilities: the change in employers' attitudes, providing state support and promoting employers to create jobs more actively and employ these persons.*

However, in order to achieve positive outcomes of state policy, promoting professional integration of the disabled, with regard to professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities it is necessary to ensure efficient pre-vocational self-education at school as well as provide special socio-educational support for pupils in their pre-vocational (self-)education process.

Changes in pre-vocational (self-)education are necessary both at school and beyond it. Readiness of schools to educate pupils with MID includes both preparation of pre-vocational curriculum, educational process and education of pre-vocational education specialists or teachers' in-service training, providing them with competencies of education of pupils with intellectual disabilities. A prerequisite is activeness of the person and his/her family, development of collaboration networks between teachers, professionals (career guidance specialists and vocational school teachers) and parents of children with intellectual disabilities as well as assurance of continuity of socio-educational support

(the system of mediation and vocational rehabilitation services). In the opinion of the very pupils, society and employers, publicising of vocational integration success cases of persons with mild intellectual disabilities would have a positive impact on the increase of their professional value.

MODEL OF PRE-VOCATIONAL (SELF-)EDUCATION OF PUPILS WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Research results of the dissertation enable to construct a theoretical-hypothetical systematic model of pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities, revealing strategies, trends, objectives of pre-vocational self-education, subjects of educational interaction and their relations, as well as continuity of self-educational activities upon school graduation (see Fig. 2.).

The pre-vocational self-education model of pupils with MID is based on *the holistic concept of the personality's self-education, on multidisciplinary socio-educational support strategies, oriented to the person's individuality and possessed strengths, and on the system of complex self-educational objectives.*

The holistic model of pre-vocational self-education is grounded on cognition of individuality (strengths, possibilities) of the pupil with MID and purposeful individual multidisciplinary socio-educational career guidance support (of self-development of personality traits, social, general, life and activity abilities) during school period, maintaining continuity of special assistance upon graduation from school.

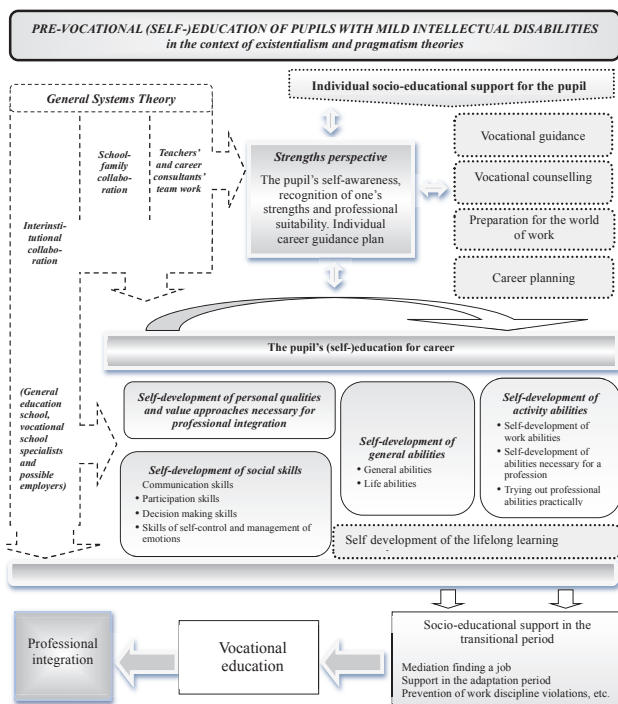


Fig. 2. Model of Pre-Vocational (Self-)Education of Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

CONCLUSIONS

1. Based on the data of theoretical analysis of scientific sources, historical development of vocational and pre-vocational education was reviewed and fundamental theoretical approaches were systematized; relevant issues of professional integration and pre-vocational self-education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities were analysed. The diversity of conceptions and variants of vocational education and career guidance (vocational guidance, vocational counselling, career management, etc.) described in scientific literature shows that a clear career guidance strategy is still missing. Professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities still remains a complicated problem and career guidance measures applied only in general education practice in order to solve it are insufficient.
2. Based on experiences of professional preparation of persons with mild intellectual disabilities and their participation in the labour market, the phenomenological research highlighted factors of their successful and unsuccessful participation in the labour market.
 - 2.1. Factors of successful professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities are personality traits and internal human attitudes, the system of values and acquired professional skills. Persons' professional purposefulness and efforts to work well, follow work discipline requirements helped them to successfully adapt to the labour market. Data of the in-depth research disclosed that persons with mild intellectual disabilities had potential possibilities (strengths) to acquire qualities and competencies that are important for professional integration; were able both to successfully work and perceive the importance of lifelong learning.
 - 2.2. Factors reducing professional adaptation in the workplace are unsuitably chosen profession, lack of qualification, job dissatisfaction; failures were also determined by personal qualities: lack of persistence, endurance, dutifulness, avoidance of difficulties, spontaneity.
 - 2.3. Results of the phenomenological research disclosed differences of the path of life of those who were successfully employed and who experienced professional integration failures. Persons who lacked qualities necessary for the labour market, strong internal attitudes, values and work skills both failed to entrench in the labour market and their life developed unsuccessfully (unemployment, homelessness, asocial behaviour).
3. The results of *Delphi* group discussion demonstrate that professional integration barriers of pupils mild intellectual disabilities are: 1) *the attitude of the state, society and employers to professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities*; 2) *non-preparation of educational institutions for pre-vocational and vocational education of pupils mild intellectual disabilities*.
 - 3.1. Professional integration of these persons is influenced by public attitudes and employers' beliefs about possibilities of the disabled and specifically of persons with mild intellectual disabilities to be employed in general and to be valuable participants of the labour market. State policy promoting professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities would be a precondition for the formation of positive attitudes of the society, employers and school community towards persons with MID.
 - 3.2. Positive outcomes of state policy of professional integration of persons with mild intellectual disabilities, promoting employability of the disabled, can be

achieved ensuring efficient pre-vocational self-education at school as well as special socio-educational assistance for pupils in their pre-vocational self-education process. However, *Delphi* research data show unreadiness of schools for pre-vocational education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities. Schools lack qualified educators and career guidance specialists who are able to provide professional pre-vocational education services for pupils with mild intellectual disabilities. So far there is no clear vision of what pre-vocational (self-)education strategies of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities should be like.

4. Based on the analysis of the in-depth interview and *Delphi* research results, the theoretical-hypothetical model of pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities was constructed, systematically disclosing pre-vocational (self-)education strategies, trends, objectives, and the system of educational interactions at school and of continuity of educational activities upon graduation from school. New knowledge about possibilities of and preconditions for professional integration of persons with MID in this model are grounded on the analysis of experiences of their own interaction with the environment (family, teachers, other specialists, employers, etc.) Existentialism and pragmatism approaches form the philosophical basis of the model of pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities. Pre-vocational (self-)education in this model is closely related to the perspective of strengths and statements of the systems theory.
 - 4.1. The model of pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities *is based on the holistic conception of personality self-development, on long-term multi-disciplinary socio-educational assistance strategies, oriented to the person's individuality and possessed strengths, and on the system of complex self-educational objectives.*
 - 4.2. The most important pre-vocational (self-)education strategies are: 1) self-education of the pupil with mild intellectual disabilities, grounded on the perspective of strengths, providing him/her with the role of an active participant of self-education; 2) individualized interaction, based on the multidisciplinary socio-educational support.
 - 4.3. *Specific pre-vocational (self-)education objectives* of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities are related to peculiarities of their learning and personality development and to special self-educational and socio-educational support needs. Pre-vocational (self-)education objectives are formulated on the basis of dissertation research results, proving that the person with MID can successfully integrate into the labour market if in school years he/she acquires personal qualities, social skills, general abilities, practical activity competencies that are necessary for professional activities. Pre-vocational (self-)education objectives are based on the philosophy of pragmatism. Practicality and utility are basic principles of pre-vocational education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities.
 - 4.4. Not denying that pupils with MID are a special group that requires assistance for preparation for adult life, at the same time the individual with the intellectual disability is treated as having strengths, resolve, personal responsibility abilities and being able to achieve his/her life goals and manage his/her life.
 - 4.5. The model of pre-vocational (self-)education of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities emphasizes the need for long-term and continuous multi-disciplinary socio-educational support and the system of socio-educational

interactions of participants of self-education. A particular place in this system of interactions is given to the pupil and his/her family. Application of methodological approaches of strengths and the systems theory in the pre-vocational (self-)education model helps both to perceive the pupil's possessed strengths and treat *participation of family members* in the educational process as an important *source* of preparation of the pupil with the mild intellectual disability for professional integration.

Approbation of Dissertation Research Results

- Publications on the dissertation topic announced **in the peer reviewed database with a citation index Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge:**

Baranauskienė, I., Valaikiienė, A. (2013). Modelling of Prevocational Education of Students with Special Educational Needs: Situation and Opportunities. *Society, Integration, Education: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, May 24th-25th, 2013. Vol. II (p. 150–163). Rēzekne: Rēzeknes Augstskola.

Baranauskienė, I., Valaikiienė, A. (2012). Preconditions for Success of Vocational Counselling of Pupils Having Special Educational Needs. *Society, Integration, Education: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference* May 25th-26th, 2012. Vol. II: Social and Special Pedagogy Health and Sports Overviews. Rēzekne (p. 46–58). Rēzeknes Augstskola.

- **Publications** on the dissertation topic announced **in peer reviewed publications:**

Baranauskienė, I., Valaikiienė, A. (2012). Employers' Approach to Participation of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in the Pre-Vocational Education Process. *Pedagogika*, 106, 91–99.

Valaikiienė, A. (2015). Significance of Development with regard to Takeover of Life Roles among Persons with Mild Intellectual Disability. *Social Welfare: Interdisciplinary Approach*, 1(5), 102–112.

- **Papers** on the dissertation topic read at **scientific conferences:**

Valaikiienė, A. (2011). Pre-Vocational Education and Vocational Counselling as an Object of Social Educator's Work. International Conference *Social Welfare from the Interdisciplinary Approach*, Šiauliai: Šiauliai University, 20 May 2011.

Valaikiienė, A. (2012). Aspects of Active Participation of Pupils with Special Needs in the Pre-Vocational Education Process. International Conference *Social Welfare from the Interdisciplinary Approach*, 26 April 2012. Šiauliai: Šiauliai University.

Baranauskienė, I., Valaikiienė, A. (2012). Preconditions for Success of Vocational Counselling of Pupils with Special Educational Needs. International Scientific Conference *Society, Integration, Education*, 25-26 May 2012. Rēzekne Higher Education Institution, Latvia.

Valaikiienė, A. (2012). Vocational Counselling of SEN Pupils in Lithuania. International Conference *Vocational Counselling of Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN): Experience of the European Countries*, 31 May 2012. Šiauliai: Šiauliai University.

Valaikienė, A. (2013). Development, Aims and Structure of Pre-Vocational Education of Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. International Conference *Social Welfare from the Interdisciplinary Approach*, 25 April 2013. Šiauliai: Šiauliai University

- **Conducted seminar** on the dissertation topic:
Valaikienė, A. (2013). *Evaluation of and Counselling on Personality Professional Purposefulness*. Šiauliai University, 2013-03-01. Registration number SGNSIP-256.
- **Lectures** on the dissertation topic **read** according to the Erasmus programme at Anadolu University (Turkey): Confirmation of Anadolu University, 2014-05-27.
- **Participation in projects** related to the topic of the dissertation:
Recommendations for Inclusive Vocational and Higher Education for Persons with Disabilities (Let's study!), Leonardo da Vinci partnership project, code LLP-Ldv-PRT-2010-LT 0203.
Creation of the Ideal Model of Vocational Counselling for Children and Youth with Special Educational Needs, Leonardo da Vinci partnership project, code LLP-LDV-PA-10-IT-403.

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MOKINIŲ, TURINČIŲ NEŽYMŲ INTELEKTO SUTRIKIMĄ, IKIPROFESINIO UGDYMO(SI) MODELIAVIMAS

Reziumė

Mokslinė problema ir tyrimo aktualumas. Spartūs globalizacijos procesai išskėlė papildomus iššūkius profesinio rengimo sistemai – kaip padėti jaunam žmogui pasiręsti ir prisitaikyti prie greitai kintančio darbo pasaulio. Neįgalumas neigiamai atsiliepia dalyvavimui darbo rinkoje; žmonės, turintys negalę, yra skurdžiausia, mažiausiai išsilavinusi ir mažiausiai dirbanti žmonių dalis (King, 1993). Tyrimai (Daugėla, 2004; Gailienė, 2006; Baranauskienė, Ruškus, 2004; Baranauskienė, Juodraitis, 2008) rodo, kad tik maža dalis neįgaliųjų dalyvauja darbinėje veikloje; dažniausiai tai asmenys, turintys nežymią negalę. Itin neigiamai vertinami sutrikusio intelekto ir sutrikusios psichikos žmonės (Collella, 1996); judėjimo ar kitų fizinių negalių turintys asmenys sulaukia ne tokių neįgiamų vertinimų (Daugėla, 2006; Kaffemanienė, 2001). Taigi, asmenys, turintys nežymų intelekto sutrikimą (NIS), priklauso ypač didelės rizikos grupei, kuriai, net ir įgijus profesinį pasirengimą, vis dėlto gresia patirti socialinę atskirtį, tapti ilgalaikiais bedarbiais, atsidurti žemiau skurdo ribos.

Nesėkmes darbo rinkoje ir socialinės atskirties riziką lemia tiek jų pačių socialiai nepriimtinas elgesys, neigiamas įvaizdis, profesinio pasirengimo ir kvalifikacijos trūkumas, nepakankamas pasirengimas savarankiškam gyvenimui, tiek ir konkurencija darbo rinkoje, nepakankamai apmąstyta Vyriausybės politika neįgaliųjų užimtumo atžvilgiu bei menkas darbdavių ir potencialių bendradarbių suinteresuotumas (Baranauskienė, Ruškus, 2004). Mokyklose vykdomas profesinis orientavimas nepakankamas, nors šių paslaugų mokykloje reikšmingumas teoriškai aktualizuotas (Indrašienė, Rimkevičienė, Gaigalienė ir kt., 2006). Darbdaviai tikisi iš darbuotojų daugiau žinių, įgūdžių ir vidinės motyvacijos, tačiau profesinis orientavimas šių lūkesčių nepateisina (Kuijpers, Meijers, Gundy, 2011).

2014 m. Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministerija patvirtino *Ugdymo karjerai programą*⁵ bendrojo ugdymo ir profesinio mokymo mokykloms, kurioje išryškina keturias pagrindines ugdytinų karjeros kompetencijų sritis: savęs pažinimo, karjeros galimybių pažinimo, karjeros planavimo ir karjeros įgyvendinimo. Tačiau pažymėtina, kad „...> ugdymo karjerai paslaugos mokyklose teikiamos ne specialistų, kurie labai dažnai derina profesinį orientavimą su kitais vaidmenimis: dalykų mokytojo; asmeninių problemų konsultanto ir kt.“⁶ Be to, dabartinis ugdymo karjerai modelis vis dar netaikomas mokiniais, turintiems NIS, pedagogams trūksta metodinių gairių, patirties, kaip pritaikyti ugdymo karjerai programą, kad atitiktų mokinių, turinčių NIS, ugdymosi profesinei veiklai poreikius.

Analizuojant mokslinę literatūrą, išryškėjo dvi svarbiausios mokinių, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesinio ugdymo ašinės dalys: profesinis orientavimas ir praktiniu patyrimu grindžiamo ikiprofesinio ugdymo poreikis. Praeitame dešimtmetyje bendrojo ugdymo mokyklų švietimo reformose buvo numatyta optimizuoti profesinį orientavimą įvedant ikiprofesinį ugdymą, priartinti teoriją prie profesinės praktikos ir geriau tenkinti jaunuolių ugdymosi karjerai poreikius (Boersma, Dam, Volman, Wardekker, 2010). Autorių nuomone, profesinis orientavimas mokykloje neefektyvus, jeigu ugdytiniai neturi tiesioginio kontakto su visais profesinės praktikos aspektais ir netaikoma dalyvavimo profesinėje

⁵ *Ugdymo karjerai programa* (2014). Teisės aktų registras, 2014-04-29, Nr. 2014-04888.

⁶ *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers* (2004). © OECD/ European Communities.

praktikoje refleksija. Baer, Daviso, Flexer, Queen, Meindl (2011) aktualizavo jaunuolių, turinčių intelekto sutrikimą, holistinio modelio, apimančio ugdymo karjerai, techninio lavinimo ir darbo mokymo programų poreikį. Mokinių, turinčių specialiųjų poreikių, karjeros projektavimą tyrė Condon, Callahan (2008), Al-Saaideh (2011) ir kt. pagrindė tarpinstitucinio komandinio darbo svarbą ikiprofesinio ugdymo procese.

Siekiant asmenų, turinčių NIS, sėkmingos integracijos į darbo rinką, aktualus tampa ikiprofesinis ugdymas, apimantis visas sritis, reikalingas mokinių profesinei integracijai. Tačiau poreikį tirti asmenų, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesinio ugdymo sąsajas su perėjimu iš mokyklos į profesinį gyvenimą aktualizuoja mažas skaičius Lietuvoje atliktų tyrimų. Trūksta mokslškai pagrįstų duomenų, kurie paaiškintų, kaip formuojasi mokinių, turinčių NIS, profesinio gyvenimo struktūra po mokyklos baigimo, kokius iššūkius jiems tenka įveikti išėjus į savarankišką gyvenimą. Tokio pobūdžio tyrimas leistų nustatyti, kokie ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) struktūriniai elementai yra svarbūs jų sėkmingam dalyvavimui darbo rinkoje.

Mokslinė problema disertaciniame tyrime konkretizuojama **probleminiais klausimais**: *kokios yra asmenų, turinčių NIS, dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje patirtys? Kaip asmenys, turintys NIS, subjektyviai suvokia savo sėkmingo ar nesėkmingo dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje priežastis? Kokios turėtų būti mokinių, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesinio ugdymo turinio gairės (struktūriniai elementai)?*

Ginamieji teiginiai:

1. Mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinis ugdymas(is) grindžiamas pragmatizmo (praktiškumo ir naudingumo) principais, socialiniam dalyvavimui ir profesinei integracijai būtinų asmens savybių ir gebėjimų ugdymu(si). Iki-profesinis ugdymas(is) ir profesinė integracija jiems įgyja egzistencinę prasmę ir tiesiogiai lemia asmeninio gyvenimo sėkmingumą.
2. Holistinę ikiprofesinio ugdymosi sampratą atskleidžia mokinio, jo šeimos, pedagogų ir ugdymo karjerai specialistų ugdomųjų sąveikų sistema ir taikomos strategijos. Svarbiausios ugdomųjų sąveikų strategijos – 1) į asmens tikslus orientuotas, praktinę vertę ir egzistencinę prasmę turintis ugdymasis; 2) ugdymosi individualizavimas (stiprybių perspektyva) ir ilgalaikė (tęstinė) multidisciplininė socioedukacinė pagalba asmeniui.

Tyrimo objektas – mokinių, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modeliavimo prielaidos.

Tyrimo tikslas – pagrįsti asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) teorinį-hipotetinį modelį, atskleidžiant ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) sampratą ir esminius struktūrinius elementus.

Tyrimo tikslui pasiekti keliami uždaviniai:

1. Remiantis mokslinių šaltinių teorinės analizės duomenimis, apžvelgti profesinio rengimo ir ikiprofesinio ugdymo istorinę raidą ir susisteminti esmines teorines nuostatas; išnagrinėti *mokinių, turinčių nežymių intelekto sutrikimų*, profesinės integracijos ir ikiprofesinio ugdymosi aktualijas.
2. Fenomenologiniu tyrimu atskleisti asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, profesinio pasirengimo ir dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje patirtis, išryškinti jų sėkmingo ir nesėkmingo dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje veiksnius.
3. Taikant *delfi* grupės tyrimo metodą, išanalizuoti pedagogų nuomonę apie mokinių, turinčių NIS, profesinės integracijos kliūtis ir sėkmės veiksnius; šių mokinių ikiprofesinio ugdymo tikslus, turinį ir organizavimą.
4. Remiantis teorine ir empirinių tyrimų duomenų analize, atskleisti asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, profesinės integracijos prielaidas ir ikiprofesinio

ugdymo(si) specifiškumą; ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) sampratą ir mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) strategijas ir struktūrinius elementus.

Teorinės disertacinio tyrimo nuostatos. Egzistencializmas (M. Heideggeris, L. Binswangeris, V. Franklis). Heideggeris (cit. Ozmon, Craver, 1996) teigė, kad žmogaus būtis yra istorinė; individas turi praeitį ir orientuojasi į ateitį; istorinis kontekstas nuspalvina kiekvieną žmogaus būties situaciją. Todėl disertaciniame tyrime, atliekant giluminį interviu, buvo retrospektyviai gilinamasi į suaugusių asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, gyvenimo ir dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje patirtis. *Humanistinės psichologijos* pradininkai A. H. Maslow ir C. Rogersas teigė, kad svarbiausias asmenybės bruožas – jos vėrimasis į ateitį, siekis laisvai realizuoti savo galias (cit. Bitinas, 2000). Maslow (2006) poreikių hierarchijoje išskiriami pagrindiniai (fiziologiniai ir saugumo) poreikiai ir metaporeikiai (priklausymo, pagarbos, savirealizacijos ir kt.). Disertaciniu tyrimu ieškoma atsakymo, kokie metaporeikiai svarbiausi mokiniams, turintiems NIS, jų pasirengimo profesinei integracijai ir profesinės adaptacijos laikotarpiu, kaip šių poreikių tenkinimo galimybių (ne)buvimas nulemia jų profesinę integracijos sėkmę. *Apsisprendimo ir asmeninės laisvės koncepcija* (angl. *self-determination and individual liberty theory*) (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, Wechmeyer, 1998). Apsisprendimo ir asmeninės laisvės teorinės nuostatos glaudžiai siejasi su humanistinio ugdymo, socialinės inkluzijos ir asmens teisių gynimo principais. Planuojant ugdymą(si) ir nustatant pomokyklinius tikslus, į mokinių žiūrima kaip į aktyvų dalyvį (Kochhar-Bryant, Greene, 2009), kuris turi pasirinkimo laisvę ir gali kontroliuoti gyvenimą tiek, kiek tai yra įmanoma, pažįstant save, savo stiprybes ir silpnybes, savo poreikius, pomėgius, vertybes. Pasak Field ir kt. (1998), stiprybių ir silpnybių suvokimas ir tikėjimas savimi kaip įgaliumi yra apsisprendimo pagrindas, o veikla, paremta įgūdžiais ir nuostatomis, įgalina individus labiau kontroliuoti savo gyvenimą, perimant suaugusiųjų vaidmenis. *Stiprybių perspektyva* (D. Saleebey, T. J. Early, L. F. Glen Maye, U. Brofenbrenneris). Žmonės turi daugybę gabumų, gebėjimų, kurie apibūdina asmens socialinio funkcionavimo kokybę; svarbiausia stiprybė – gebėjimas augti ir keistis. Kai akcentuojamos mokinių stipriosios pusės, jie labiau jaučiasi įgalinti ir motyvuoti, gerinama socialinė ir emocinė gerovė, o jų šeimos linkusios labiau įsitraukti į pagalbos teikimą (Brofenbrenner, 1979, cit. Cox, 2006). **Pragmatizmo teorinės nuostatos** (J. Dewey, W. Jamesas, Ch. S. Peirce'as). Pasak Dewey (cit. Duoblienė, 2006), gyvenimo esmė yra veikla, kuri teikia rezultatus. Pragmatizmo atstovų nuomone, priemonės ir tikslo negalima atskirti; priemonės visuomet šiek tiek nulemia rezultatus (Ozmon, Craver, 1996). Disertaciniame tyrime mokinių, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesinis ugdymas suprantamas ne tik kaip žinių, bet ir kaip patirties spręsti veiklos keliamus uždavinius ir problemas įgijimas, atveriant galimybes mokinio gilesniam savęs pažinimui ir refleksijai, sukuriant prielaidas įgytos patirties tęstinumui. Praktinio patyrimo metu mokinys, turintis NIS, turėtų ne tik įgyti bendrųjų gebėjimų, bet ir tobulinti savo asmenines savybes, reikalingas sėkmingai integracijai. **Bendroji sistemų teorija** (L. von Bertalanffy, J.-L. Le Moigne) atskleidžia holistinį požiūrį į individą kaip į visumą, kuri yra svarbesnė už dalių sumą. Kochhar-Bryant, Greene (2009) sistemų teoriją apibūdina kaip struktūrą kompleksinių ryšių tarp organizacijų ir kitų socialinių sistemų. Bendrosios sistemų teorijos esmė disertaciniame tyrime atsispindi konstruojant teorinį ikiprofesinį ugdymo(si) modelį, kurio vienas iš struktūrinių elementų – mokinio, jo šeimos ir tarpdisciplininis skirtingų sričių specialistų bendradarbiavimas, siekiant ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) tikslų, tenkinant individualius mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymosi poreikius.

Disertacinio tyrimo metodologinės nuostatos. Fenomenologinio tyrimo metodologija (Giorgi, 1997; Kvale, 2003; Creswell, 2008; Silverman, 2011; Maxwell, 2005). Tyrime taikoma *fenomenologijos* tyrimo metodologija. Fenomenologiniu tyrimu siekiama aprašyti, suprasti, kaip skirtingi individai patiria tam tikrą reiškinį (fenomeną), kokias prasmes suteikia tam reiškiniui. Hermeneutinė fenomenologinė prieiga disertaciniame tyrime taikoma siekiant pažinti asmenų, turinčių NIS, socialinio pasaulio patyrimus iš subjektyvios jų perspektyvos, t. y. kaip jie suvokia ir išgyvena juos supančią socialinę tikrovę, kurios dalis jie yra. Tyrimo metu siekiama atskleisti, kas, tyrimo dalyvių nuomone, padeda pasiekti profesinės integracijos sėkmę ir kokią jai įtaką turėjo ikiprofesinis ugdymas.

Mokslinis modeliavimas (Lave, March, 1993; Williams, 2001; Han, 2005). Mokslinio modeliavimo metodas taikomas konstruojant *mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą*, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) teorinį-hipotetinį modelį. Sisteminant esmines teorines nuostatas ir empirinio tyrimo rezultatus, mokslinio modeliavimo metodas leido išryškinti multidimensinį ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) konceptą; atskleisti asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) aktualijas ir veiksnius šių asmenų profesinės integracijos kontekste.

Tyrimo metodai: teorinės analizės metodas, giluminis interviu (nestruktūruotas ilgai trunkantis interviu), grupinė diskusija, taikant *delfi* metodo elementus.

Tyrimo dalyviai. Giluminiame interviu dalyvavo 18–33 metų asmenys, turintys nežymų intelekto sutrikimą: 6 moterys ir 13 vyrų, iš viso 19 informantų. Taikytas tikslinės tyrimo imties atrankos principas; esminis tyrimo imties atrankos kriterijus – asmenys, turintys nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, baigę mokyklą. Nestruktūruotas giluminis interviu atliktas 2012–2013 m. Lietuvoje (11 tyrimo dalyvių) ir Italijoje (8 tyrimo dalyviai).

Delfi grupės tyrimo imtį sudarė 13 specialiųjų pedagogų, psichologų, profesinio rengimo mokytojų (2 vyrai, 11 moterų, visų išsilavinimas aukštasis), dirbančių bendrojo ugdymo ir profesinėse mokyklose, specialiosios pedagogikos ir psichologijos centruose ir turinčių nuo 5 iki 25 metų specialiųjų poreikių mokinių ugdymo patirties. Grupinė diskusija, taikant *delfi* metodo elementus, vyko 2013 m. Šiauliuose.

Tyrimo mokslinis reikšmingumas. Disertacinis tyrimas atskleidžia asmenų, turinčių NIS, 1) subjektyviai suvokiamas teigiamas ir neigiamas profesinio gyvenimo patirtis, 2) veiksnius, turėjusius įtakos profesinei integracijai, ir 3) šių asmenų ikiprofesinio ugdymo turinio struktūros specifiškumą.

Fenomenologinis tyrimas, konstruojamas retrospektyviniu požiūriu (gilinantis ne tik į tyrimo dalyvių išgyvenimus „čia ir dabar“, bet ir į praeityje patirtus (ne)dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje įvykius), leidžia pažinti asmenų, turinčių NIS, profesinės integracijos giluminės problemas, susijusias su jų turimomis ikiprofesinio ugdymosi patirtimis, suprasti šių asmenų sėkmingos ir nesėkmingos profesinės integracijos veiksnius.

Susistemintus teorinius ir empirinius metodus surinktus duomenis, sukurtas *mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelis*. Šis modelis 1) grindžiamas *holistine samprata apie ikiprofesinį ugdymą kaip ankstyvojo ugdymo karjerai etapą* ir 2) *atskleidžia mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo strategijas ir specifiką*, remiantis šių asmenų stiprybių (galimybių) pažinimu ir specialiųjų ugdymosi poreikių tenkinimu.

Ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelis iš pragmatizmo ir egzistencializmo filosofinių pozicijų apibrėžia specifines asmenų, turinčių nežymiai sutrikusį intelektą, integracijos į darbo rinką *prielaidas*:

- *Ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) strategijas* (stiprybių perspektyva, orientacija į ugdytinio specialiuosius ugdymosi ir savirealizacijos poreikius; socialinio dalyvavimo (įgalinimo) skatinimą ir kt.);

- *Ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) sąveikų sistemos dalyviūs* (ugdytinis, pedagogai, švietimo pagalbos specialistai, šeima, bendraamžiai ir t. t.);
- *Ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) uždavinius* (asmenybės savybių, vertybių, darbo rinkai aktualių gebėjimų, motyvacijos ugdymą, kt.) ir tęstinumo perspektyvas.

Tyrimo mokslinis naujumas. Asmenų, turinčių NIS, profesinė integracija į darbo rinką ir sėkmingo dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje prielaidų ir veiksmių problematika aktuali visose šalyse. Jos aktualumą rodo šios srities tyrimų ir studijų įvairovė. Tyrimo mokslinį naujumą ir praktinį reikšmingumą apibūdina tai, kad:

- fenomenologiškai nagrinėjamos asmenų, turinčių NIS, (ne)dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje subjektyvios *patirtys* (požiūriai, jausmai) ir *lūkesčiai*;
- susisteminta mokinių, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) samprata, atskleistas jų ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) aktualumas;
- hipotetiškai suformuotas asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelis, sistemiškai atspindint esmines ugdomosios sąveikos strategijas, komponentus, ugdymo uždavinių specifiškumą, kompleksiškumą ir sąveikų multidiscipliniškumą.

Disertacijos struktūra ir apimtis. Darbą sudaro įvadas, keturi skyriai, tyrimo duomenų apibendrinimas, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelio pagrindimas, išvados, literatūros sąrašas ir priedai (elektroninis išteklius). Disertacijoje pateikti 3 paveikslai, 21 lentelė. Bendra darbo apimtis – 175 puslapiai. Panaudoti 279 literatūros šaltiniai. Prieduose (5 priedai) pateikiama interviu medžiaga, giluminio interviu etapai, transkripcijų simbolių reikšmės, fenomenologinio tyrimo imties charakteristika, *delfi* tyrimo klausimų pavyzdžiai, informacija apie mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, profesinio mokymo programas.

IŠVADOS

1. Remiantis mokslinių šaltinių teorinės analizės duomenimis, apžvelgta profesinio rengimo ir ikiprofesinio ugdymo istorinė raida ir susistemintos esminės teorinės nuostatos; išnagrinėtos *mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimų*, profesinės integracijos ir ikiprofesinio ugdymosi aktualijos. Mokslinėje literatūroje aprašoma profesinio rengimo ir ugdymo karjerai (profesinio orientavimo, profesinio konsultavimo, vadovavimo karjerai ir pan.) sampratų ir variantų įvairovė rodo, kad vis dar stokojama aiškios ugdymo karjerai strategijos. Asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, profesinė integracija tebėra sudėtinga problema, o jai spręsti vien bendrojo ugdymo praktikoje taikomų ugdymo karjerai priemonių nepakanka.
2. Fenomenologiniu tyrimu, remiantis asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, profesinio pasirengimo ir dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje patirtimis, išryškinti jų sėkmingo ir nesėkmingo dalyvavimo darbo rinkoje veiksniai.
 - 2.1. Asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, sėkmingos profesinės integracijos veiksniai – asmenybės savybės ir vidinės žmogaus nuostatos, vertybių sistema, įgyti profesiniai gebėjimai. Asmens profesinis kryptingumas ir pastangos gerai dirbti, laikytis darbo drausmės reikalavimų padėjo jiems sėkmingai adaptuotis darbo rinkoje. Giluminio tyrimo duomenys atskleidė, kad asmenys, turintys nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, turi potencialių galimybių (stiprybių) įgyti svarbių profesinei integracijai savybių ir kompetencijų; pajėgūs ne tik sėkmingai dirbti, bet ir suvokti mokymosi visą gyvenimą svarbą.

- 2.2. Profesinę adaptaciją darbo vietoje mažinantys veiksniai – netinkamai pasirinkta profesija, kvalifikacijos trūkumas, nepasitenkinimas darbu; nesėkmes lėmė ir asmens savybės: atkaklumo, ištvermės, pareigingumo stoka, sunkumų vengimas, spontaniškumas.
- 2.3. Fenomenologinio tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė asmenų, sėkmingai įsidarbinusių ir patyrusių profesinės integracijos nesėkmių, gyvenimo kelio skirtumus. Asmenims, kurie stokojo būtinų darbo rinkai savybių, tvirtų vidinių nuostatų ir vertybių bei darbo gebėjimų, ne tik nepavyko įsitvirtinti darbo rinkoje, bet ir jų gyvenimas susiklostė nesėkmingai (nedarbas, benamystė, asocialus elgesys).
3. *Delfi* grupinės diskusijos rezultatai rodo, kad mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, profesinės integracijos barjerai yra: 1) *esamas valstybės, visuomenės ir darbdavių požiūris į asmenų, turinčių intelekto sutrikimų, profesinę integraciją*; 2) *ugdymo institucijų nepasirengimas mokinių, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesiniam ugdymui ir profesiniam rengimui*.
 - 3.1. Šių asmenų profesinei integracijai turi reikšmės visuomenės nuostatos ir darbdavių įsitikinimai apie neįgaliųjų apskritai ir konkrečiai apie asmenų, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, galimybes įsidarbinti ir būti vertingais darbo rinkos dalyviais. Asmenų, turinčių nežymių intelekto sutrikimų, profesinę integraciją skatinanti valstybės politika būtų prielaida teigiamoms visuomenės, darbdavių ir mokyklos bendruomenės nuostatomis į asmenis, turinčius NIS, formuotis.
 - 3.2. Tam, kad neįgaliųjų į(si)darbinimą skatinanti valstybės politika turėtų teigiamas pasekmes asmenų, turinčių nežymių intelekto sutrikimų, profesinei integracijai, būtinas veiksmingo mokyklinio ikiprofesinio ugdymosi užtikrinimas ir specialioji socioedukacinė pagalba mokiniams jų ikiprofesinio ugdymosi procese. Tačiau *delfi* tyrimo duomenys rodo mokyklų nepasirengimą mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesiniam ugdymui. Jose trūksta kvalifikuotų pedagogų ir ugdymo karjerai specialistų, galinčių profesionaliai teikti ikiprofesinio ugdymo paslaugas nežymiai sutrikusio intelekto mokiniams. Iki šiol neturėta ir aiškios vizijos, kokios turėtų būti mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) strategijos.
4. Remiantis giluminio interviu ir *delfi tyrimo rezultatų analize, sukonstruotas teorinis-hipotetinis mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(-si) modelis, kuriame sistemiškai atskleidžiama ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) strategijos, kryptys, uždaviniai, ugdomųjų sąveikų mokykloje ir ugdymosi veiklų tęstinumo po mokyklos baigimo sistema*. Naujos žinios apie asmenų, turinčių NIS, profesinės integracijos galimybes ir prielaidas šiame modelyje grindžiamos jų pačių sąveikos su aplinka (šeimos, švietimo pagalbos ir kitų specialistų, darbdavių ir kt.) patirčių analize. Mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelio filosofinis pagrindas – egzistencializmo ir pragmatizmo nuostatos. Iki profesinis ugdymas(is) šiame modelyje glaudžiai siejamas su stiprybių perspektyva ir sistemų teorijos teiginiais.
 - 4.1. Mokinių, turinčių NIS, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelis grindžiamas *holistine asmenybės ugdymosi samprata, į asmens individualybę ir turimas stiprybes orientuotos ilgalaikės multidisciplininės socioedukacinės pagalbos strategijomis ir kompleksinių ugdymosi uždavinių sistema*.
 - 4.2. Svarbiausios ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) *strategijos* – 1) stiprybių perspektyva grindžiamas mokinio, turinčio nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ugdymasis, suteikiant jam aktyvaus ugdymosi dalyvio vaidmenį; 2) individualizuota sąveika paremta multidisciplininė socioedukacinė pagalba.

- 4.3. *Specifiniai* mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, *ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) uždaviniai* susiję su jų mokymosi ir asmenybės raidos ypatingumais ir specialiaisiais ugdymosi bei socioedukacinės pagalbos poreikiais. Iki profesinio ugdymo(si) uždaviniai suformuluoti remiantis disertacinio tyrimo rezultatais, įrodančiais, kad asmuo, turintis NIS, gali sėkmingai integruotis į darbo rinką tuo atveju, jeigu mokykliniais metais įgyja reikalingų profesinei veiklai asmeninių savybių, socialinių įgūdžių, bendrųjų gebėjimų, praktinės veiklos kompetencijų. Iki profesinio ugdymo(si) uždaviniai remiasi pragmatizmo filosofija. Praktiškumas ir naudingumas – esminiai mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo principai.
- 4.4. Neneigiant to, kad mokiniai, turintys NIS, yra ypatinga grupė, kuriai reikalinga pasirengimo suaugusiųjų gyvenimui pagalba, tuo pat metu individas, turintis intelekto sutrikimą, traktuojamas kaip turintis stiprybių, apsisprendimo, asmeninės atsakomybės gebėjimų ir galintis pasiekti savo gyvenimo tikslų, valdyti savo gyvenimą.
- 5.5. Mokinių, turinčių nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelyje akcentuojamas ilgalaikės ir tęstinės multidisciplininės socioedukacinės pagalbos poreikis ir ugdymosi dalyvių socioedukacinių sąveikų sistema. Ypačinga vieta šioje sąveikų sistemoje skiriama mokiniui ir jo šeimai. Stiprybių ir sistemų teorijos metodologinių nuostatų taikymas ikiprofesinio ugdymo(si) modelyje padeda suvokti ne tik mokinio turimas stiprybes, bet ir *šeimos narių dalyvavimą* ugdymosi procese vertinti kaip svarbų mokinio, turinčio nežymų intelekto sutrikimą, rengimosi profesinei integracijai išteklių.

Disertacinio tyrimo rezultatų aprobavimas

- Disertacijos tema paskelbtos publikacijos **referuojamoje ir turinčioje citavimo indeksą duomenų bazėje Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge:**
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Moksliniai interesai: mokinių, turinčių specialiųjų ugdymosi poreikių, ikiprofesinis ugdymas, neigaliųjų profesinė rehabilitacija.

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