Factors Behind the Construction of Student'S Personal Learning Environments in the Museum

Palmira Jucevičienė, Jolita Savickė

Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania)

palmira.juceviciene@ktu.lt, celiesiute@hotmail.com

Abstract

The concept of lifelong learning and the institutions behind its implementation open up important opportunities for the learners. At the same time, making use of these opportunities represents a challenge to the individuals. It means they need to possess a sufficient degree of professionalism and motivation to learn „everywhere" and „every time". But is it really so?

What influence does, for example, the museum environment have on individuals? Although the education in the museums, the organization of their environments have been subject to analysis (Russell, 1994; Anderson, 1997; Lord, Lord, 1997; Falk, Dierking, 2000; Lucas, 2000; Hein, 1998, 2000, 2004; Allen, 2004; Eshach, 2007), there is a lack of research that would analyse how visitors react to the museum environment. What personal learning environments in the same museum are identified by various visitors? What factors determine the construction of such personal learning environments? Can certain types of visitors as learners be identified?

This paper seeks to find answers to the above mentioned questions. However, it is limited to one social group – the schoolchildren, because they are more susceptible to analysis from the specific perspective of museum educational factors – its educational programmes. So the aim of this paper is to reveal the factors underlying the formation of personal learning environments in the museum.

This paper is based on the constructivistic theory and concepts of lifelong learning as well as *edutainment.* The research methods include analysis of literature sources, interviews with the directors of the museum, survey of teachers and schoolchildren.

The first part of the paper presents the theoretical analysis of the following aspects: a) the concept of museum education; b) the essence of the museum potential learning and educational environments, c) factors behind the formation of students's personal learning environments out of potential learning and educational environments, thereby illustrating his/her relationship with the aforementioned museum environments.

The second part presents the vitality of the constructed theoretical model. The methods of the empirical research are presented, the findings of empirical study - interviews with museum educators, surveys of teachers and students - are presented and discussed. As a result, three differents types of learners in the museum environment are distinguished and substantiated. The empirical research data is discussed from the international perspective.