

INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF A MULTICULTURAL AND DEMOCRATIC UNIVERSITY AND ITS VALUES

Antra Roskosa, Inese Kocote

Riga Technical University, Latvia

ABSTRACT

The increasing importance of multiculturalism in education has been caused by numerous challenges – social, economic as well as political that modern universities encounter. Therefore, the values of democracy – openness, freedom of thinking, tolerance, equality, and inclusion are crucial. The research conducted at Riga Technical University (RTU) scrutinizes the current situation regarding the existing students' attitudes. The research aimed to investigate students' perceptions of a multicultural and democratic university and its values. One hundred and five students of RTU both foreign and local ones participated in the research. There were ten statements included in the questionnaire. They can be split into three groups: 1) values of democracy at the university; 2) intercultural communication as a challenge; 3) the role of the university (students/ the teaching staff/ administration) to form values of democracy. The main conclusion of the research is as follows – the majority of students – both local and foreign ones consider the values of democracy as present ones at their university. However, rather many students are not certain or even deny that. Students' views on multiculturalism and democracy at university are quite sensitive and can be controversial. This fact is of high importance for universities to be taken into account to promote the democratic processes there.

Keywords: *a multicultural university, democratic values, intercultural communication, multiculturalism, colorblindness, inclusion*

Introduction

There is a lack of research investigating students' perception of a multicultural and democratic university and its its values. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to find out students' views on this issue. RTU consider the view of students very important, take into account their criticism and follow students' recommendations. There are a lot of foreign students at RTU. According to the data of the RTU International Cooperation and Foreign Students Department, the number of students has increased from

230 foreign students in 2011 to 4360 in 2022.¹ It is of high importance for the university to help its students feel included and accepted. Thus, this research aims to investigate how the students of RTU feel there. Do they have any problems with inclusion? Do they belong to our university? The authors of the research believe that the results and conclusions of this research may help to improve the inclusion process of foreign students not only at RTU but could be useful for other universities as well.

The character of this research is more anthropological. There were several aspects analyzed in this research. The most important dealt with the atmosphere at the university. The authors attempted to research if the atmosphere here was inclusive and if the teaching staff/ administration and students were tolerant. Apart from that, it was investigated if there was a freedom of thinking and acceptance of diversity of views. The aspect of intercultural communication was researched as well. Then it was dealt with the survey of teaching/ learning methodology which might help students include in the multicultural classroom as well as with a life-changing experience students could have gone through at university.

The main findings of this research reveal that most students feel included and accepted at university. However, the number of students who have problems with inclusion is still significant. The democratic processes at the university have to be developed. The novelty of this research could be the many-sided character of inclusion. Inclusion at the university may reveal through intercultural communication, atmosphere, and environment as well as teaching/ learning methodology. All these aspects could help the university provide its students with life-changing experiences and promote democratic processes on a larger scale – not only at the university but in the community, society, and country – here in Latvia as well as in other countries the students come from.

Discussion: multiculturalism and its controversial nature

Multiculturalism is a complex notion consisting of various aspects, such as language, human behavior, religion, rituals, norms, artifacts, and others. The complexity of multiculturalism makes an impact on society as well as on education. As a part of society, the University addresses the same questions and the students are in the same social environment.

A multicultural environment could be the success as well the cause of conflicts. The importance of multiculturalism cannot be underestimated, it is acknowledged by politicians, for example, in his inaugural speech in 2009, the president of the United States mentioned that multiculturalism “is a national strength” (Obama, 2009). A year later, German Chancellor Angela Merkel addressed young members of the Christian Democratic Union party and made an announcement, that multiculturalism in Germany “utterly failed” (The Guardian, 2010). These two approaches demonstrate how controversial the issue of multiculturalism is, and how complex it could be reflected.

¹ RTU International Cooperation and Foreign Students Department. *Foreign Student Dynamics*. 01.10.2021.-01.10.2022. , RTU, 2022.

As Dreamson noted, in some Western societies multicultural policies have been politically abolished due to increasing civil and international extremist violence/terrorism and an influx of asylum seekers/refugees that develop tensions and conflicts between ethnicities, religions, and classes (Dreamson, 2022).

Thus, multiculturalism has a controversial nature. It can be associated with feelings of pride, uniqueness, and a rich sense of community and history, while also bringing to mind identity confusion, dual expectations, and value clashes (Crisp, 2010). In other words, an individual who has been exposed to, and has learned more than one culture, is a multicultural person, but only when this individual expresses an attachment to and loyalty to these cultures, can we say that the individual has a multicultural identity (Crisp, 2010). This aspect is especially important for universities because the loyalty of students both foreign and local ones as well as the teaching staff and administration promotes democratic processes there. When a foreign student enters a university there are several questions to be raised: Who are you? How do you fit in society? What is your role in society? Are you accepted in the existing norms? This is closely related to a cultural mismatch between students and their teachers, as well as among group mates. It can be explained by the fact that the average age of tutors in Latvia is 50+, and most of them have not experienced diverse classrooms, mostly those were mono or bilingual, white.

Therefore, according to McGee Banks C. A. & Banks J. A. democratic processes in education should be viewed within the broader concept of equity pedagogy: “We define equity pedagogy as teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups attain the knowledge and skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within and help create perpetuate a just, humane, and democratic society. This definition suggests that it is not sufficient to help students learn to read, write, and compute within the dominant canon without learning also to question its assumptions, paradigms, and hegemonic characteristics. Helping students become reflective and active citizens of a democratic society is the essence of our conception of equity pedagogy” (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995).

To follow democratic processes at universities educators must acquire the skills to work in a multicultural environment and recognize and accept differences as such. There are some main common goals for multicultural education set by Jewell Cooper:

- demonstrate an awareness of competencies related to educating students from culturally diverse backgrounds based on ethnicity (race, language, national origin, and religion), socioeconomic class, gender, age, and the like,
- analyze the “isms” (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, linguicism, ethnocentrism, ageism, and ableism) and their effect on the practice and the institutionalization of schooling,
- describe the legal, historic, and philosophical basis for educating culturally diverse students,
- assess through analysis of readings, videos, case studies, class discussions, and the like educators’ dispositions related to teaching diverse learners and working with their families,

- identify several teaching and learning strategies to accommodate the needs of culturally diverse students,
- analyze and evaluate various culturally responsive teaching practices and environments,
- identify national, state, and local resources available to assist educators in planning and implementing instruction for culturally diverse students (Cooper, 2011).

To use multiculturalism as an opportunity, Dreamson suggests: “In the culturally diverse and interactive world, educators’ and researchers’ role should be to examine and re-examine their assumptions, values, and beliefs informing their perspectives on cultural diversity rather than grapple with the selection of ‘-isms’. In essence, increasing segregation and division within education research develops unnecessary tensions-- which ‘ism’ should be selected, while culturally diverse societies give a semantic account of the concepts--do the ‘-isms’ make our community more harmonized, unified, and equitable?” (Dreamson, 2022).

These goals could be described as long-term goals whereas short-term goals could be – creating an inclusive environment in the classroom and encouraging the students to participate in the group work. To overcome false judgments, Dreamson encourages tutors to apply different techniques, such as cooperative learning and role-playing to engage students in the exchange of ideas, as well as share cultural backgrounds (Dreamson, 2022) Also, teachers and tutors must introduce the concept (or the rules) of a classroom during the first lecture, as abusive or racial comments, and derogatory comments about a student’s political views will not be tolerated. Tutors should not be viewed as abstract entities, as if their only responsibility would be only the subject matter and not the classroom environment (Cooper, 2011).

Cooper and Jewell also introduce foundational understandings about diversity, based on Milner’s five concepts for the development of critical cultural competencies. One of them is colorblindness (Cooper, 2011). Monnica T. Williams published an article in *Psychology Today* (2011), where she describes colorblindness as “ the racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity.” Colorblindness as a notion is a way how to treat all races in an equal way, however, the author highlights the idea that colorblindness does not take into consideration negative racial experiences and ignores people of color, which makes them invisible. As a resolution to this controversy, the author considers using the idea of multiculturalism that includes all the differences among different nations; equity and inclusion are something every nation should strive for.

The aspect of colorblindness is especially important to be taken into account at universities of Latvia, such as RTU, many students from India and Sri Lanka could be sensitive to the issue of race. Colorblindness attitude may disregard the culture and needs of students of color, thus observing reality only from our perception of culture and life experience. In white culture, it is a norm that students are not judged or compared, but it is different in mixed classrooms. To not see color is tantamount to not seeing who students are and the uniqueness of the cultures they bring to school. At a minimum,

readings, discussions, and activities to address the concept of color blindness should be included in any diversity curriculum (Cooper, 2011).

Another aspect is that color blindness and cultural mismatch may lead to unconscious bias. Such biases occur when we unknowingly make judgments or express preferences about a person's talent, capability, etc. based on characteristics that may be irrelevant to such judgment or preferences (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability status). Over time, such biases can make a workplace more homogenous and, for some, unwelcoming (Leydens, Lucena, 2017).

As Ladson-Billings, G. (1995) states, culturally relevant teaching must be present in the education process, the author defines culturally relevant teaching as such: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. In other words, students should be able to support each other collectively and collaborate as much as possible.

Moreover, as an important value, Jewel Cooper points out that educators should understand the difference between empathy and sympathy (Cooper, 2011). As the definition says, empathy is the ability to imagine oneself in another's place and understand the other's feelings, desires, ideas, and actions (Encyclopedia Britannica) and tutors should not feel sympathy or pity toward international students from India or the Ukraine.

Thus, it is vital to build a university environment that is safe, inclusive, and unbiased. Therefore, the university (students/ teaching staff/administration) should raise its competence to operate in a tolerant way and cope with the conflicts caused by multiculturalism.

Methodology

The research aimed to analyze and characterize the inclusion process of RTU students. The students' view on democratic processes at the university was investigated.

For collecting primary data, an original questionnaire based on RTU students' essays was developed. Initially, the students wrote an essay: "*The Values of a Multicultural and Democratic University*". The essay was written in January 2022. The students were informed that their essays will be used to develop the questionnaire for the research. The essays were written by the students who belonged to the student group taught by the authors of this particular research. It was important to recruit a group of students the researchers had cooperated and communicated with during the autumn semester, starting from 1st September 2021 till the end of the semester, January 2022. The main criterion was the trust of students and openness to share their feelings. The researchers believe the students were honest in their opinion.

The next step of the research – questionnaire was developed in February–June 2022. The researchers used content analysis to develop a questionnaire. They chose the most significant and most popular aspects students mentioned in their essays. Thus, there were ten statements on multicultural and democratic universities and their values included in

the questionnaire. They can be split into three groups: 1) values of democracy at the university; 2) intercultural communication as a challenge; 3) the role of the university (students/ the teaching staff/ administration) to form values of democracy.

One hundred and five students of RTU participated in the research. The students were informed that they participated in the research. The population of the research included 47 local students and 58 foreign ones. There were students from the Master's as well as the Bachelor's study programs belonging to different faculties of RTU – Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of E-Learning Technologies and Humanities, Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.

The students filled in the questionnaire at the end of the spring semester, in June 2022. Again the researchers recruited a group of students who had been communicating and cooperating during the spring semester. They believed in the trust and openness of their students. The students were also asked to comment on the questionnaire and share their views. There were not many comments, but the most significant had been included in the article.

The response format was a three-point Licker scale – “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree” and “disagree”. The data were processed using an Excel worksheet.

When analyzing students' responses the main criterion was the identification of students' opinions. What do students think? When the students' view was clarified, the researchers attempted a problem-solving process. What could be the clues on how to solve the inclusion problems? What might be the recommendations for our university to improve the situation there?

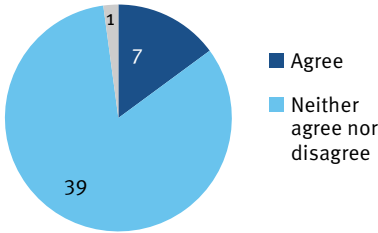
Results

Nowadays tutors and teachers must work in diverse classrooms, and Latvia is not an exception, society has always been divided between Western and Eastern ideals, ways of life, virtues, and values, especially, after the events of 24 February 2022. To help universities manage multicultural and democratic processes there, the research was conducted at RTU. The aim of it was to investigate RTU students' perception of a multicultural and democratic university and its values for mapping their attitudes to multiculturalism and identifying the main barriers to accepting it.

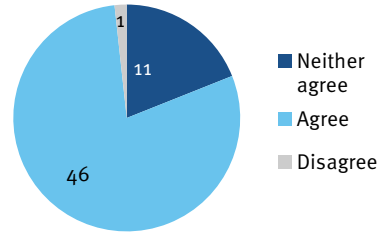
There were several statements in a questionnaire characterizing a multicultural university and its values. The first statement describing a multicultural university dealt with its policy of tolerance. Students had to assess if their university made students to be tolerant, *“Attitude creates attitude. It takes some knowledge and awareness to get rid of the stereotypes and accept differences, and once you try, you adapt”*. The data prove the diversity of views in the groups of local students and foreign students. Most foreigners evaluated the university to make their students tolerant – 46 students out of 58. However, most local students neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement – 39 students out

of 47. It means foreign students consider their university to have a tolerant environment. Whereas local students express more critical views and do not have so strong opinions.

Q1. Our University makes students be more tolerant. Local Students



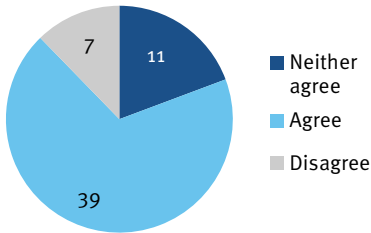
Q1. Our University makes students be more tolerant. Foreign Students



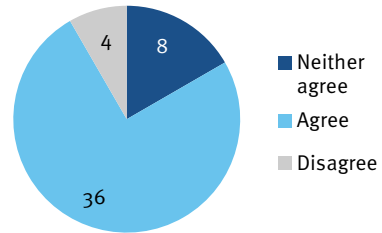
Another aspect describing a multicultural university dealt with its atmosphere. Students expressed their view on its inclusiveness, “*The environment is the beginning of all qualities. Our university includes everyone and has equal requirements and attitudes. So the students would not feel different*”. Both groups of students had quite similar views on the topic. 39 foreign students (out of 57) characterized its university atmosphere as inclusive. And 36 local students (out of 48) had the same view. It can be concluded that the majority of both student groups evaluate the university atmosphere as inclusive. However, there is still room for improvement. There were 11(out of 57) foreigners who neither agreed nor disagreed and 7 who disagreed with this statement. The number of local students who neither agreed nor disagreed with the issue was 8 (out of 48) students, as well as 4 students who disagreed with it.

Students commented on the atmosphere and environment at the university both positively as well as critically: “*It is a great experience learning here, everyone is kind and welcoming, I like the process!*” and “*Hello, just to clarify, I do not disagree with the statements in quotes, I just do not feel that the university makes an effort to promote these values in students or promote socialization between students so that foreign students would feel included. While I have enjoyed most of my lectures and in particular the professors that gave them, the university itself in terms of staff, dormitory, and administration have made me feel utterly alone. If I weren’t for the friends I made here, I would have gone back home maybe three months in. I realize that some of these issues are due to cultural differences, but the attitudes I have encountered from staff members and the university’s complete disregard to take responsibility for their faults (i.e. dormitory, late schedules, and sometimes not having a teacher for a designated course until half of the semester has passed by) have made me feel miserable and alone here, and till now it has been the worst experience of my life. I will continue with my studies, graduate, and hope to never have this type of experience again. Of course, this is just my opinion so please take this with a grain of salt*”. Thus, the last comment stresses on inclusion problem.

Q2. Our university has an inclusive atmosphere
Foreign Students

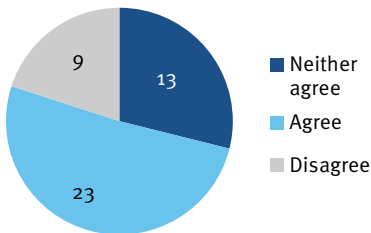


Q2. Our university has an inclusive atmosphere,
Local Students

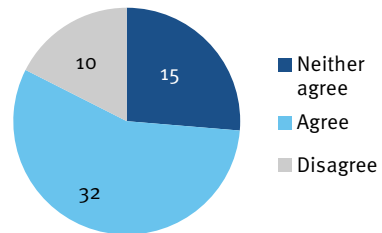


Students also had to evaluate if it was challenging to get used to the multicultural environment of their university, *“It takes a lot of courage to leave our usual home to study elsewhere. You leave your family and friends behind and learn to get to know new and different people”*. Both groups of students tended to agree with the statement – 32 foreign students (out of 57) and 23 local students (out of 45) replied positively. Therefore, the data prove that adaptation to a multicultural environment may cause difficulties and students have to make efforts to survive there.

Q3. Getting used to the multicultural environment of our university is challenging. Local Students

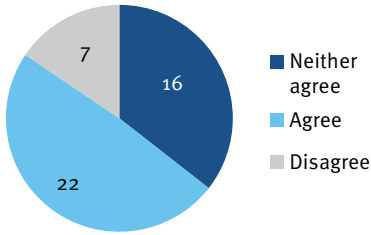


Q3. Getting used to the multicultural environment of our university is challenging. Foreign Students

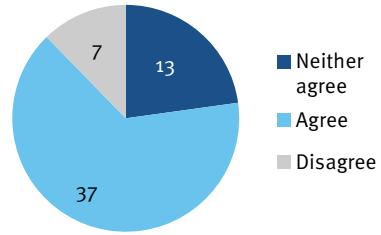


One more aspect assessed by students dealt with difficulties caused by intercultural communication. Students had to give their point if their university made students get out of their comfort zones caused by difficulties of intercultural communication, *“Communication with people from unfamiliar culture and different language may make feel tense, learn to understand and interact”*. Most foreign students agreed with this statement – 37 out of 57 students. There were some local students – 22 (out of 45) who answered positively. The number of students neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement was rather high in both groups, especially in the local student group – 16 students (out of 45) and 13 (out of 57) foreign students did not have a strong opinion. An equal number of students from both groups – 7 disagreed with the statement. The data prove that foreign students tend to agree more in comparison with local students that intercultural communication can cause difficulties and could be challenging. Students’ views are also proved by their comments: *“Being in different places with different people diversifies our way of thinking. Because in our comfort zone, there are almost always people who think the same – at least about our values. However, as we get the opportunity to be together with other people, we add more to ourselves intellectually”*.

Q4. Our university makes students get out of their comfort zones caused by difficulties of intercultural communication. Local Students

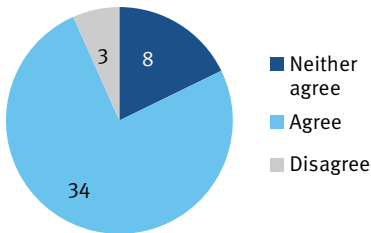


Q4. Our university makes students get out of their comfort zones caused by difficulties of intercultural communication. Foreign Students

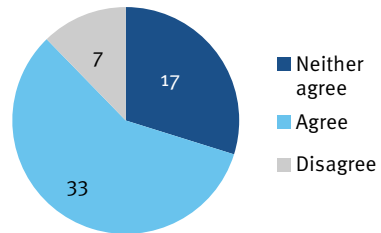


Students also had to value one more aspect of dealing with intercultural communication – if their university emphasized positive communication and cooperation among students, “*There is a highly developed intercultural communication and awareness of everyone there*”. Foreign students expressed a more critical view on this statement – 33 (out of 57) agreed with it, however, the number of the ones who neither agreed nor disagreed with it – 13 (out of 57) in this group was rather high. Local students tended to be more positive with their answers – 34 (out of 45) agreed with and 8 (out of 45) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. It means that foreign students are more concerned with the communication and cooperation process at universities facing difficulties there. Despite problems, students’ comments tend to be positive: “*It often leads us to push our limits and do most of the things we think we can’t do. However, even if we do not achieve anything as a result, we improve our problem-solving skills*”.

Q5. Our university puts emphasis on a positive communication and cooperation among students. Local Students

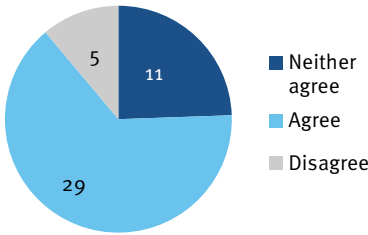


Q5. Our university puts emphasis on a positive communication and cooperation among students. Foreign Students

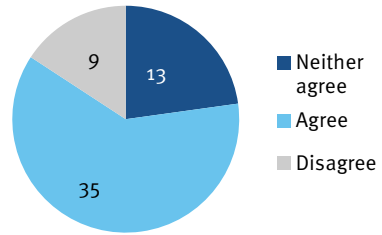


Another aspect assessed by the students dealt with the experience the university could provide their students with: “*Our University provides us with a life-changing experience, You can start thinking in completely different categories and dimensions*”. Foreign students were a bit skeptical about this statement – 35 (out of 57) of them agreed with the statement, 13 (out of 57) neither agreed nor disagreed with it and 9 (out of 57) disagreed. It proves that foreign students are not completely satisfied with the life-changing experience their university can provide to them, and the university has to think over its performance to adapt to the demanding needs of its students.

Q6. Our university provides us with a life-changing experience. Local Student

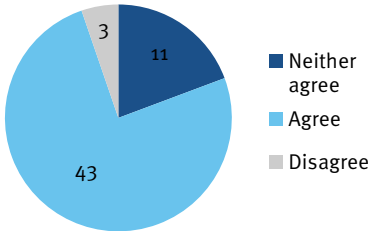


Q6. Our university provides us with a life-changing experience. Foreign Students

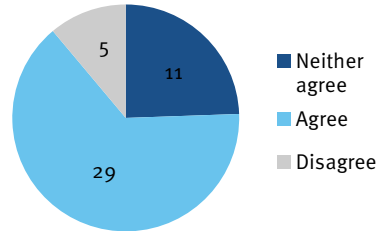


An important aspect of every multicultural university is connected with the democratic processes there. Students evaluated if their university helped students to follow democratic values, *“There is a freedom of thinking and diversity of views there. The teaching staff and students take that choice”*. The majority of both student groups agreed with the statement. There were 43 (out of 57) foreign students and 29 (out of 45) local students who gave a positive answer. Therefore, the data prove that the environment at students’ universities could be characterized as democratic. However, students also comment, *“I think it will vary according to the multicultural university we belong to. Because there are many multicultural universities in the world, but not all of them can adopt the same values. Especially on issues such as freedom of thought or democracy”*. Thus, democratic processes at different universities can also appear differently. It means multiculturalism can also result in success as well as failure.

Q7. Our university helps students to follow democratic values. Foreign Students



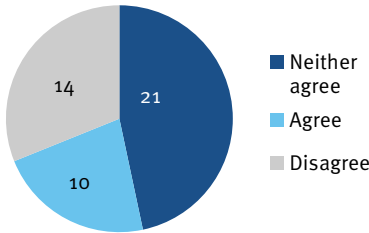
Q7. Our university helps students to follow democratic values. Local Students



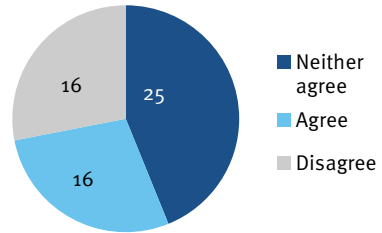
The research also investigated if students’ university made pressure on their views, *“But in Latvia, it seems that teachers often try to put students in a “small box” with only one right view. In a way, the system makes us perfect employees who do everything correctly and accurately. How good it is, it is up to everyone to evaluate it”*. Foreign and local students had quite similar views on this statement. The majority of them – 25 (out of 57) foreign students and 21 (out of 45) local students neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The ones who agreed with it had a rather similar number in both groups – 16 (out of 57) foreigners and 10 (out of 45) local students. However, there were quite many students in both groups who disagreed with that statement – 16 (out of 57) foreigners and 14 (out of 45) local ones. The data are also proved by students’ comments: *“I am grateful to those teachers that do not pressure students to have only one specific opinion (that is usually*

the opinion of that teacher) and allow us to expand our views to many things. But still, some teachers want us to work or make our work in a very modest and “small box” way. I truly wish that one day we will be able to have bigger freedom when it comes to that”. Thus, it can be concluded that the standardizing of views still exists. And it may not only reduce creativity and innovation but could promote intolerance at the university. Despite this, there are possibilities to make changes. Students agree on it: “Even though the system is bad, the teachers in the system have the power to change things”.

Q8. Our university makes pressure on students' view. Local Students

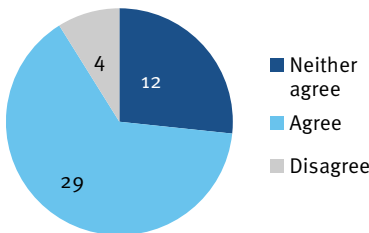


Q8. Our university makes pressure on students' view. Foreign Students

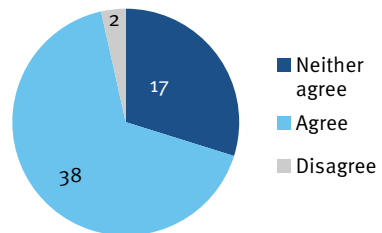


There were some other values and qualities investigated by the research. They dealt with students' independence, responsibility, and self-esteem. Students had to assess if their university raised students' self-esteem, “Most professors give their students independence in their work process. I believe that when training your independence, you can transform into becoming a more independent human being who takes responsibility for his/ her performance. Such persons usually have much higher self-esteem. I consider that independence should be taught from the cradle”. The majority of students answered positively – 38 (out of 57) foreigners and 29 local ones (out of 45) agreed with the statement. The number of students who did not have a strong opinion was quite similar in both groups – 17 (out of 57) foreigners and 12 (out of 45) local ones neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The data prove that in spite that the majority of both students' groups evaluated independence, responsibility, and self-esteem as present values and qualities at their university, there were also a considerable amount of students who were not certain about it. Such values and qualities as independence and responsibility may raise students' self-esteem to help them feel more included at university.

Q9. Our university raises students' self-esteem. Local Students

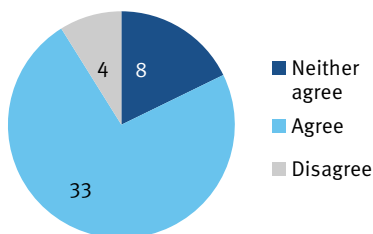


Q9. Our university raises students' self-esteem. Foreign Students

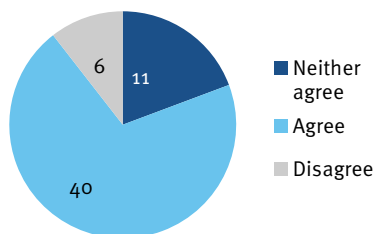


The last aspect investigated dealt with teaching/ learning methodology. Students had to express their views on changes and progress in methods, “*Our University brings changes in teaching/ learning methodology, “There might appear more differences related to students’ culture, background, and broader experiences in a multicultural classroom. Diversity teaches us life skills instead of being taught what to think; to analyze situations, be critical, to use our brains but not just the memory – it is like a set of the real world-surviving skills”.*

Q10. Our university brings changes in teaching/ learning methodology. Local Students



Q10. Our university brings changes in teaching/ learning methodology. Foreign Students



The majority of both student groups had a positive evaluation. There were 44 (out of 58) foreigners and 33 (out of 48) local students who agreed with the statement. It proves that the teachers try to adapt to the diversity in the classroom and keep pace with progressive methods. It also means that diversity can teach real-world-surviving skills and make teaching/ learning methodology more progressive.

Conclusions

1. Majority of both student groups evaluate the environment and atmosphere at the university as tolerant, inclusive, and democratic. However, there are rather many students in both groups who neither agree nor disagree with it. Apart from that, the standardizing of views still exists at universities. It may not only reduce creativity and innovation but could promote intolerance there.
2. Foreign students tend to agree more in comparison with local students that intercultural communication can cause difficulties and could be challenging.
3. Foreign students are not completely satisfied with the life-changing experience their university can provide to them. Thus, the university must think about its performance to adapt to the demanding needs of its students.
4. Most of both student groups evaluate independence, responsibility, and self-esteem as present values and qualities at their university. However, rather many students are not certain about it. Independence and responsibility may raise students’ self-esteem to help them feel more included at university.
5. Teachers try to manage a diverse classroom by progressively developing teaching/ learning methods.

Recommendations

The results of the research show positive tendencies, however, there is still a large room for improvement.

To have a sense of inclusion the educators for diverse classrooms must receive preparation, seminars, and courses within the framework of university or special programs. At RTU such classes and seminars are regularly offered, and tutors may select them according to their availability. As for the students, they should be encouraged to participate in Erasmus programs, to gain more confidence. Apart from that, students should be encouraged to raise their intercultural performance. There is a study course in sociology provided by RTU. The authors of the research recommended including in this course the themes dealing with politology, anthropology, equity, and inclusion.

The author of this article spent the spring semester of 2022 at the University of Buffalo (NY) and experienced an international learning environment where students from Asia, India, Pakistan, and other countries were studying. In community houses, students organized social events, for example, Asian food sampling, and introduced local students to their culture.

The tutors of the University at Buffalo also engaged students to work in groups that were selected by the computer, the final evaluation was based on students' feedback on how each member performed and what was his/ her contribution. Thus, to promote students' equality, they should be engaged in various hands-on activities, like group work of assembling structures so that they experience each, and every member of the group has a role to achieve the result. Such activities, such as building spaghetti bridges, which is an annual contest at RTU bring together students of every nation and contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment.

The University of Buffalo also offered a course DEE 502: Equity and Inclusion in Engineering Education, to address the problems and make a change. During the course, students discussed in seminars such aspects as equity and inclusion, reflect on students' role in eradicating systems of oppression and discuss blackness, intersexuality, meritocracy, and others.

Thus, successful examples of how international students could be included in university as well as in the local community/society/country are vital to follow. University policy is of high importance and can make an impact.

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