The Assessment of Social Justice in Lithuanian Education in the Context of Welfare State Conception

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Abstract: Researchers believe that social justice can be presented as a normative concept that characterizes the social situation as fair, consistent with human nature and rights. Though social justice is universal, but due to the inability to realize their rights and to meet the needs it is often linked by the people to the lack of social justice, and this is also true of education. Despite the fact that the national social models should ensure the social well-being, and, at the same time, social justice in education, however, the issue noted implicates the diversity of opinions and the lack of social justice assessment methodologies in education. That makes the basis for the relevance of the subject, and the main underlying question to the problem raised is how to evaluate social justice in education in Lithuania, in the context of welfare state conception? The aim of the article is to discuss the assessment methodologies of social justice in Lithuanian education in the context of welfare state conception. The objectives of the article are to discuss social justice in education in welfare states in theoretical terms and to give the analysis assessment methodologies of social justice in education (the case of Lithuania). The key findings of the research have been the following: the correct system of education can be achieved only in case of justice in various areas of society, and, thus, the assessment of social justice in education depends on contextual indicators (employability, poverty level, equal opportunities, and etc.). The theoretical analysis of the problem revealed its topicality, and the content analysis of assessment methodologies of social justice in education disclosed the functioning and limitations of these instruments. Thus, it can be said that for the future analysis of social justice in the field of education it would be appropriate to carry out a systematic monitoring of social justice in education by updating the key data and complementing it with the missing indicators, as well as the research findings of the public opinion on these issues as a component of social justice assessment.

Keywords: education, social justice in education, welfare state, assessment methodologies.

Introduction

Education is the area in which on a certain level most of the Lithuanian society is involved by a variety of formal and non-formal education programmes and other means. This fact can be illustrated by the 2011 Lithuanian census data. In comparison to the results of census in 2001, in 2011 the range of indicators characterizing the attained education of the population increased. E. g., the number of population 10 years and older with higher educationė per 1thousand rose by 1.7 in a decade, also a greater part of the population attained secondary education, and the population with primary education fell by one-third (Population by Educational..., 2011). However, social justice is not a given phenomenon, it is continuously supported by social policies. This is particularly associated with the welfare state facilities. Lithuanian and foreign scientists analyze in their works various aspects of welfare state conception, performance, opportunities and limitations (Guogis 2014; Jančaitytė, 2004; Smalskys, 2005; Skuodis, 2009, Sonda 2014). Social justice can be presented as a normative concept that characterizes the social situation as a fair, consistent with human nature and rights (Leonavičius, 1993, 230). Often this is related to the obligations of the state to its citizens, that preserve for them a certain minimum level of wealth, and this kind of the state is seen as a welfare state (Aidukaitė, Bogdanova, Guogis, 2012, 16). The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija, 2013, 8) legitimizes the state commitments to their citizens as regards the matters of training and education in various formal education institutions. Nevertheless, the reports in the public domain and the works of scientists reveal transformations in the education situation, which can be attributed to the lack of social justice. On purpose to justify the relevance of the topic, this article aims at discussing the principles of social justice system (Bieliauskaitė, 2009), the access to education and social justice in Lithuanian schools (Iljina, 2014; Lazutka, Navickas, 2010; Trakšelis, 2015), the

assessment of education justice and the reform of higher education and justice (Purvaneckienė, Čiužaitė, 2010).

Summing up the findings of the research into the subject, it can be assumed that, although the social models corresponding to the existing welfare state regimes should ensure the social welfare, and social justice in education at the same time, however, the diversity of opinions and a clear lack of social justice in education evaluation methodologies/techniques are noticeable. This is what the relevance of the topic is based on, and the main underlying question is as follows: how and what methodologies and instruments can be employed to assess social justice in Lithuanian education in the context of the concept of the welfare state?

The article aims at discussing the assessment methodologies of social justice in Lithuanian education in the context of the concept of a welfare state. The objectives of the article are as follows: to discuss social justice in education in welfare states in theoretical terms; to analyse the methodologies of assessment of social justice in education in Lithuania.

Methodology

The research methodology is designed adequately to the research problem and research aim and objectives. The logic of its realization is presented in Figure 1:

1 • Theoretical research into the topic

2 • Research problem and objectives

3 • Research methods and tools
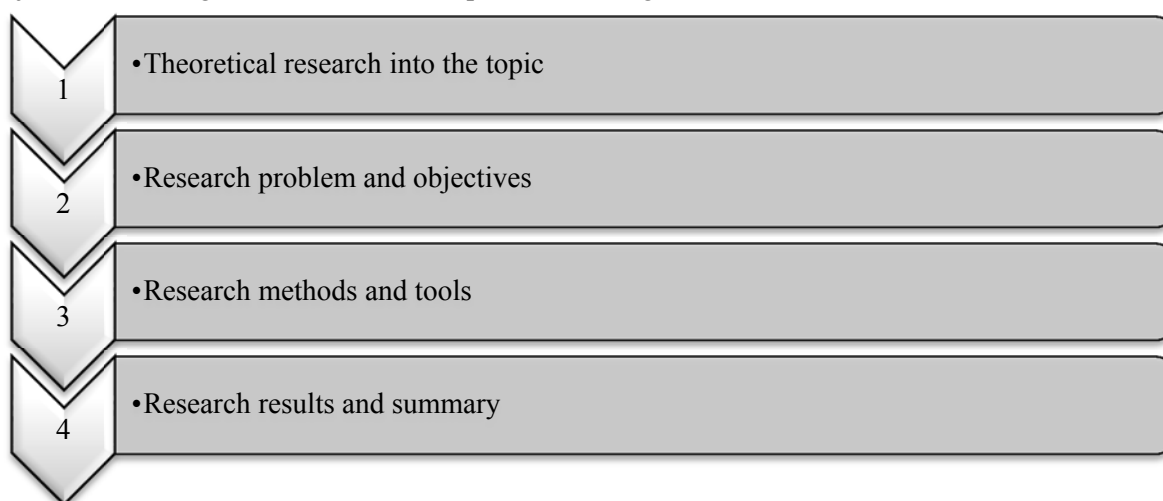
4 • Research results and summary

Figure 1. Research organization scheme.

The interpretation of the logic of the research organization allows arguing that the stages of the research have been chosen reasonably and are interrelated. In the stage of theoretical research, aimed at revealing the level of investigation of Lithuanian and foreign authors' scientific works (the method employed being the analysis of scientific literature), the concepts of social justice in education and their links to the mechanisms of welfare state implementation (e. g. the tools of social policy, the specifics of education systems in countries, and etc.) was highlighted. As scientists in their works based their theoretical insights on empirical findings, it helped to reveal a variety of approaches in assessing what social justice and its manifestations in education are. This is what the need to go deep into the methodologies of social justice in education assessment has been justified by, which is especially applicable in the case of education in Lithuania. Therefore, the research methods employed in the analytical stage of the research were the analysis of scientific literature and content analysis of social justice in education assessment methodologies.

Therefore, the method of research employed in the analytical stage has been content analysis of the assessment methodologies of social justice in education. The conclusions formulated on the basis of research findings may be related to subsequent research in the similar field studies when performing a comparative analysis in several countries.

Results and discussion

In order to find a solution to the main problem question how and what methodologies and instruments can be employed to assess social justice in Lithuanian education in the context of the concept of the welfare state, the scientific works, that are based not only on the theoretical insight, but also on empirical studies, were chosen.

The works of individual as well as a group of scientitsts were chosen to disclose various aspects of welfare state and social justice in education. In order to define what a welfare state is and justify its types quite a number of authors rely on G. Esping-Andersen's insights. M. Sonda (2014) argues that G. Esping-Anderson classification of welfare states is based on the differences of the state, market and family institutions in certain countries. A. Guogis (2014) claims that the Western social world has the following models of a welfare state: the most generous universal, redistributive, socio-democratic typical to Northern European countries (in particular the Scandinavian countries), less generous is 'bismark', corporate, conservative to which Western European mainland countries can be attributed, and the most temperate, the least generous, marginal model - anglo-saxon liberal. The fundamental diference of these models is the dependence on market conditions. Since in the so-called liberal (marginal) regime countries the preconditions for social benefits and other services are the strictest, and in the corporate, conservative model countries social benefits and services are determined by the seniority and previous salary, the most attractive model for the welfare recipients becomes universal, redistributive (the socio-democratic), which is based on the social citizenship rights such as social support or assistance given to the poorest citizens of the country. Given the existing variety of extremely different from each other welfare models in Europe, it is difficult to expect that it is possible to create a single, standard welfare state model. All the more, it depends on the specific social content of the country, which is influenced by the political regimes and their social policy. This can be illustrated by E. Dunajev's (Dunajevas, 2009) insight into the interface between social service system and the development and transformations of the societies, which leads to the system of social services, and, simultaneously, to the changes in the structure of the welfare state, which was labelled by the author as 'welfare pluralism'. V. Smalskys (2005), discussing the social public policies in the context of the welfare state, presents them as a social policy in the broad sense, which includes the following sub-systems: labour employment and social welfare policy, pension policy, and family policy. According to the scientist, such a way of broader social policy analysis is typical to European continental tradition, assuming that the mission of the welfare state is based on the performance in specified directions. It is important in this context to take into account R. Jančaitytė's (2004) conclusion on the research about family policies in welfare states that the distribution of the countries into models in accordance with certain peculiarities helps to highlight the common features inside of the model and differences among the models, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, which, in in turn, allows searching for the most appropriate family policy system in Lithuania. M. Skuodis, citing M. Arcanjo (2006), argues that, in a broad sense, the model of social policy, or a general welfare state regime can be defined as the ways in which welfare creation is distributed among the state, market, and household (Skuodis, 2009). This concept includes the totality of the government's social policy and its impact on public welfare. M. Skuodis (2009) emphasizes that in addition to the so-called, identified by G. Esping-Andersen, three ideal welfare state regime typology (liberal, conservative-corporate, and socio-democratic), other authors also distinguish the fourth model, i.e. embryonic (southern), and present ideas for the fifth model, i.e. the ex-communist model. It is important to note in this context that the work group of Lithuanian researchers and experts developed a project in 2015 for a new social policy model that integrates various changes in the social life and activities of the Labour Code (Darbo santykių..., 2015). In summary it can be said that the institutional framework providing the welfare of society is directly linked to education, including its all levels. However, does it satisfy the needs of the members of the society and provide social justice in education

Social justice can be presented as a normative concept that characterizes the social situation as a fair, consistent with human nature and rights (Leonavičius, 1993, 230). Often this is related to the obligations of the state to its citizens, that provide them with a certain minimum level of welfare, and such states are seen as welfare states (Aidukaitė, Bogdanova, Guogis 2012, 16). The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija, 2013, 8) legitimizes the commitments of the state to

its citizens as regards their training and education in various formal education institutions. Nevertheless, the reports in the public domain and the research of scientists reveal the transformations of the education situation, which can be attributed to the lack of social justice. To validate the relevance of this topic, the article discusses the following: the principles of social justice system (Bieliauskaitė, 2009), the accessibility to education and social justice in Lithuanian schools (Iljina 2014; Lazutka, Navickas, 2010; Trakšelys, 2015), the measurement of educational justice, and the reform of higher education and justice (Purvaneckienė, Čiužaitė, 2010). As regards the principles of social justice in the context of different paradigms, J. Bieliauskaitė concludes: 'Every person shall have the same scheme of fundamental rights and freedom, which is consistent with the rights and freedom of other persons and which on the basis of equal political rights would guarantee their equal value' (Bieliauskaitė, 2009, 133). The scientist emphasizes that in the situation of initial equality when the society distributes the overall resources (in developing and implementing a variety of social assistance and welfare schemes), the person shall be entitled the right to a share of the stocks, which corresponds to a reasoned lifestyle choice (Bieliauskaitė, 2009). Applying these insights to education, it can be assumed that the state should provide support to those members of the society who are motivated to seek knowledge, professional competence or research skills relevant to education and academic institutions. With reference to B. Bitinas (2011), K. Trakšelys definēs the accessibility to education not solely as the existence of the establishment providing general education, but also as its ability to meet the needs of various education stakeholders and general public (Trakšelys, 2015). Therefore, the accessibility to education is generally understood as access to educational services provided by the state. According to G. Purvaneckienė and G. Čiužaitė (2010), there is no single definition of justice in education, the scholars representing various approaches define it differently, yet, a number of countries are trying to measure it. O. Iljina (2014), who researched the perception of social justice in Lithuanian schools, revealed a fairly subjective perception of social justice by the school community members (administration members, teachers, students, parents, and other). The latter stated that social justice is a sufficiently unclear concept that should be related to justice, equality, tolerance, equality of treatment of all the principles, but rather, it is in their feelings, interpretation of expectations, interpretation, rather than an actual experience. Considering the fact that in research the perception of social justice is formed through personal participant experience, it can be assumed, it is important to properly select research indicators in the research of social justice in education so that the individual perception does not distort the content and esence of the conception of social justice. The field of social justice in education is complemented by the research of R. Lazutka and J. Navickė (2010). According to the research data of the Department of Statistics under the Lithuanian Republic Government of household budget survey in 2008, the authors of the social justice research limited themselves to the research of two aspects: the accessibility to studies and the distribution of the benefits of studies between the sexes. In order to assess the availability of the studies, the index of the accessibility to higher education was estimated: the latter determines to what extent the participation in the system of higher education is determined by the belonging of a person to a particular social group. Summing up the results of the study, R. Lazutka ir J. Navickė claim that further research of social justice in higher education could be directed towards the diferences of benefit distribution among the people with higher education attainment from different social backgrounds. In the opinion of the researchers it is also important to assess the accessibility to the prestigious high schools and study programmes for the representatives from different social sectors (Lazutka, Navickė, 2010). Lithuanian and foreign scientists went deep into the experience of welfare states in the process of implementation and assessment of social justice in education. J. Aidukaitė (2010), regarding the experience of Sweden, Scotland and Germany, stressed that, despite the requirements of the EU to comply with the same requirements of the education system, the countries also raise specificē requirements for the system of education. That depends on the level of the development, the peculiarities of social policy, the political priorities of the countries, and the overall welfare of a country (employability, social inequality, poverty, and etc.) also determinēs the implementation of the objectives raised for the system of education and the existing gaps in the field. R. Dapkūnaitė (2014), discussing the concept of the state of poverty and welfare problems, in the case of Cambodia, presents the question - perhaps the welfare state not only influences, but also creates the poverty? According to her, poverty is one of the most important indicators that describe the person's lifestyle, his position and posture, and because they have the economic and cultural backgrounds, paves the way for the emergence of social classes (Dapkūnaitė, 2014). The transfer of these insights into the space of Lithuanian problematics and relating them to other other scientific

research leads to the assumption that this provides individuals with the inequalities in meeting their needs in education. Lithuania can benefit a lot from the experience of foreign countries in its pursue of social justice in education, search of links between social and education policy in the advanced industrialized societies (Arnesen, Lundahl, 2006; Hega, Hokenmaier, 2002*). In summary of the analysis of the research it could be claimed that the research conducted by the individual or groups of scientists highlight the manifestations of social justice in education and the assumptions of social injustice as regards the aspects under investigation in the context of the welfare state conception. The above mentioned research is based on the individual research methodology and individual sets of indicators, so that the latter social justice in education assessment methodology can be identified as individual.*

The content analysis of the scientific study, prepared by a group of scientists, on the assessment of social justice in education. One of the principles in the system of Lithuanian education is the principle of equal opportunities that defines social justice in education in essence: *'The education system is socially fair, it ensures the realization of individual rights, it guarantees access to education for each person, the attainment of general education and a primary qualification level, and creates conditions for further development of the qualification or to acquire a new one.'* (Lietuvos Respublikos…, 2011). Yet, contemporary multicultural societies are confronted with various challenges of our time as regards the implementation of social justice in education. Despite the welfare state concept and the diversity of models and opinions on what social justice in education is significant efforts of countries to find the system of objective indicators to measure justice in education have been noticeable. Scientific works that best reflect the problems of the situation and its manifestations in Lithuania have been chosen for the assessment of social justice research methodologies in education. One of these works is a scientific study developed by a group of scientists that covers theoretical concept and practical assessment of social justice in education (Žalimienė, Lazutka, 2011). The discussion in the present article about the assessment methodology of social justice in education focuses on the following: the basis of assessment methodology design (the basic principles of a theoretical perspective have been applied); the content of assessment methodology (the groups of indicators have been chosen); the employment of assessment methodology (by describing the state of social justice in the Lithuanian education system in the selected period).

In the process of the construction of social justice in education assessment methodology, the authors were not limited by any one theoretical perspective, but combined the principals to ensure formal and distributive justice, and simultaneously related social justice to the implementation of the main principles in education. The authors chose the following periodically updated main data sources: the database of Household Budget Survey at the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, and other data of the Department; the data of ICT Education Management Information System at Lithuanian Ministry of Education; the data of periodic PISA and PIRLS international surveys of student achievement. The education system is diverse, thus, the assessment of social justice in education requires the system of indicators that reflects the complexity of this phenomenon. The groups of indicators and their contents are shown in Table 1.

The interpretation of the indicators in Table 1 is as follows: the indicators of the *education context*-social, cultural, political - may have an impact on the changes and interpretation of social justice indictors. The indicators of the *education process* reflect the conditions of this process. The indicators of the *education outcomes* describe the level of participation in education and its outcomes. The indicators of the *education effect* reflect the social and economic effects of educational inequalities. *Simple statistical indicators* are derived directly by using the statistical information presented in various sources or by carrying out the estimates on the basis of this statistical information. *Indices* are the indices of social justice of the individual educational levels as integrated micro-level indicators, which connect personal involvement in the education system with his/family social/economic characteristics. E. g., the Gini Index reflects the inequality in education. *Macro-level indicators* describe the situation on the level of the country, region, or local municipality. *Micro-level indicators* characterize the situation on the individual or household level. The discussed system of indicators of social justice in education and the methodology of their calculation were applied during the process of the social justice state analysis in 2007 - 2008 (Žalimienė, Lazutka, 2011, 66-78). *In summary it can be said that the assessment methodology of social justice in education integrates a variety of indicators reflecting the multiplicity*

of the phenomenon; thus, it can be identified as complex. The scientists doing research on the separate aspects of social justice in education usually develop the methods of individual research.

Table 1

The groups of social justice indictors in education (according to Žalimienė, Lazutka, 2011)

No.	The Group of Indicators	The Content of the Indicator Group/ Indicators
1.	The indicators for separate principles of social justice	Equal opportunities; affordability; variety of choice; compensation
2.	The indicators for separate levels of education	Pre-school education; general education; higher education; non-formal education (children education and adult education - separately)
3.	The indicators from the point of view of education system functioning	The indicators of the context of education, the process of education, the outcomes of education, the aftereffects of education
4.	The indicators according to the nature of information	Objective and subjective indicators
5.	The indicators according to the peculiarities of calculation	Simple statistical indicators and indices
6.	The indicators according to the content of information used	Macro-level and micro-level indicators

The discussion of the research and assessment methodologies regarding the access to higher education. The systematized indicators of assessment of social justice in education (Table 1) allows choosing a certain range of indicators for further research or adapting the existing methodology to achieve the aims of the research by integrating a variety of indicators. The Lithuanian Science and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA), presenting key statistics and inquiry-based data on the studies in Lithuania, examines additionally the so-called social dimension of higher education, i.e. the access to higher education (Aleksandravičiūtė, Jakštys, 2014). The access to higher education for all groups is examined in the light of the possibilities of different social groups to access higher education, to study and to complete the chosen programme of study. Assessing the accessibility to higher education MOSTA took into account the fact whether the access to higher education is limited by sex, age, language, or where secondary education was acquired, parents' education, financial capacity, disability leading to special needs, and etc. Given this view, the assessment indicators of access to higher education (social dimension) can be related to the individual groups of indicators presented in Table 1: the indicators of equal opportunities, educational context and process statistical information and opinion based, and mostly the macro-level indicators. The MOSTA publication says that the purpose of social dimension in higher education is social justice, which aims at creating access to higher education for those seeking higher education, allow to study, to apply the results of the research not only to every member of the society, but also to marginalized social groups, to any member of the society in a socially sensitive position and corresponding to the requirements of the higher education system (Aleksandravičiūtė, Jakštys, 2014, 138). Therefore, the Lithuanian Science and Studies Monitoring Centre analysis the accessibility to higher education in the light of the fact whether there is a proportion in Lithuanian higher education of the representatives from the groups that have a decreased access to higher education has decreased due to the indicators (ethnic, racial, economic, social, and etc.), which distinguish the groups from the other: people of all ages; both men and women; people with disabilities; people who have completed secondary education in Russian or Polish; individuals with various socio-economic status and financial capacity. This makes the basis of the accessibility to to higher education (social dimension) investigated by the MOSTA. One more MOSTA research regarding the access to higher education focused on people with disabilities should be noted (Aukštojo mokslo...,2014). The peculiarities of the methodology of this research are the following: the qualitative nature of the research,

a semi-structured interview method, 33 people with disabilities as selected informants, and the sample integrates pupils, students and graduates. The research was carried out in 2014, in Lithuania. The interview questionnaire covered three main topics, i.e. the enrolment in higher education, the studies, and the studies completion and transition to the labour market. The questions specifying the topic covered the following: the provisions to studies; the motives for the selection of higher education institution / high school / study programme; the availability of high school; its environmental adaptation for the disabled; the acceptability of the study process organization; the relationship with the academic community; public attitudes towards people with disabilities who study; the possibilities of studies continuity; employment opportunities in accordance with the profession; the relationships with the employer; and etc. The situation of accessibility to education in Europe, including Lithuania, is also analysed by the foreign experts (Peer Learning ..., 2015; The European Higher ..., 2015). This is what Lithuanian researchers take into account while shaping the methodologies of the research of similar aspect and assessing the situation and manifestations of social justice / education accessibility ("social dimension") in Lithuania. *In summary it can be claimed that the research and assessment methodologies of social justice in education and access to education integrate the indicators employed by various Lithuanian and foreign researchers in analogous studies. Science and Education Monitoring Centre (MOSTA) carries out such investigations systematically simultaneously with the overview of the Lithuanian Studies on the basis of the experience in foreign countries, and examines the social dimension in education. This research is more of an applied nature.*

The classification of research methodologies, carried out by individual or group researchers, on welfare state and social justice in education is provided in Figure 2 (Figure 2).

Complex • The assessement methodology of social justice in education prepared by a group of Lithuanian researchers and presented in a scietific study (Žalimienė, Lazutka, 2011) that brings together a range of indicators.

Integrating • Following the experience of foreign researchers, Lithuania has also been funded for the research of education accessibility (social dimension) (Higher Education..., 2014; Lithuanian Study..., 2014).

Individual • Designed for individual research. The examples are the research related to social justice in education (the authors of scientific articles analysed in this article).
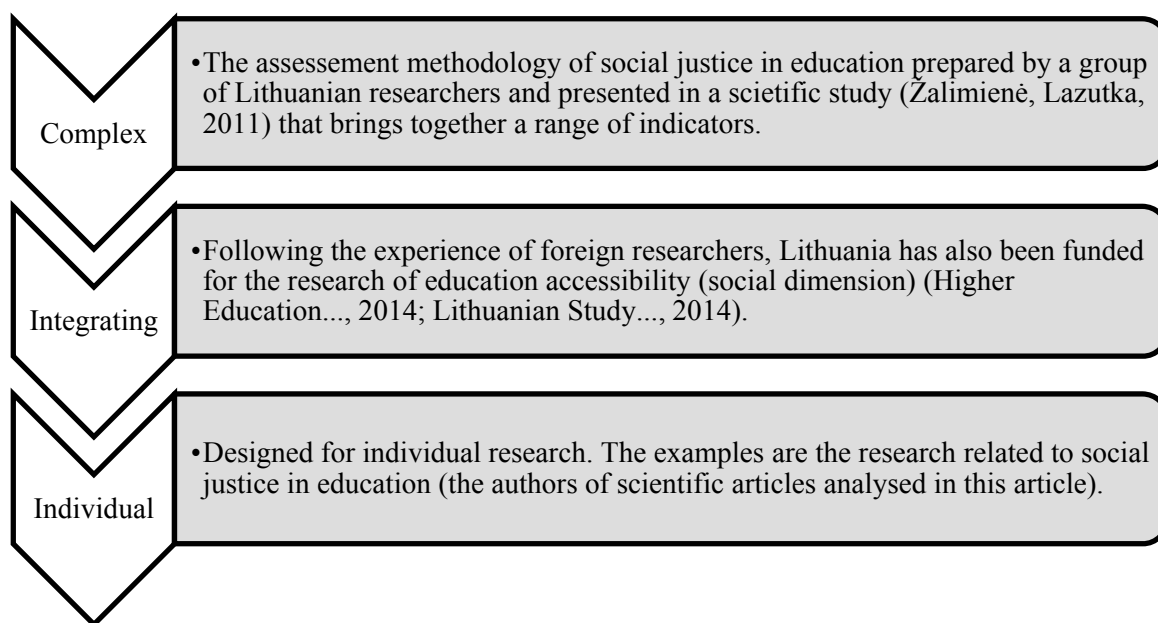
Figure 2. The peculiarities of research/assessment methodologies of social justice in education.

In summary it can be said that the research of social justice in education is an important trend for the analysis of the state of education in countries and Lithuania. Given their impact on not only the development of education, but also to the 'cohabitation' of the members of the society, their welfare and the perception of their own value, the research in this domain should proceed systematically, and improve the existing and develop new research/assessment methodologies of social justice in education.

Conclusions

Regardless of the fact that social justice in social life is declared as a norm, however, unequal possibilities for the members of the society or individual groups as regards access to education become apparent for various reasons. This is particularly relevant to the development of multicultural societies and the transformations in the structures of population. Therefore, social justice in education in the

context of welfare state conception and other related issues are the subjects relevant to the scientific research.

The theoretical analysis of the problem has revealed its topicality, has highlighted the diversity of the concept of social justice in education in the context of welfare state conception, and has based the need for continuous research and assessment of this phenomenon.

The content analysis of the assessment methodologies of social justice (social dimension) in education revealed the performance of these instruments and their limitations. Complex and integrating various indicators methodology can be applied for the holistic research of the phenomenon of social justice at national or regional level. Meanwhile individual surveys are based on a research methodology and a set of individual indicators prepared for a specific research. Social justice in education and access to education research and assessment methodologies, applied by the Science and Education Monitoring Centre (MOSTA), integrate various indicators employed in the analogous research by Lithuanian and foreign scientists.

It can be argued that further, more systematic, knowledge and assessment of social justice in education requires continuous monitoring of the phenomenon, based on a combination of contextual indicators and phenomenon characteristic objective and subjective indicators. The gathering of some additional information (indicators) that are not included in the current databases or sources, and the research of public opinion on these issues as a component of social justice assessment are also important.

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