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Non-Formal Education as a Resource of Social Inclusion: Intergenerational Approach

Marina N. Kicherova,
Galina Z. Efimova,
Svetlana M. Gertsen
University of Tyumen, Russia

ABSTRACT

This article contributes to a better understanding of theoretical models and empirical evidence revealing the impact of social inclusion of non-formal education on professional and personal development in the context of five generations. Based on the typology of peculiar generations in the non-formal education market, including their interest and motivation, we have identified the differences between the benefits and the barriers to social inclusion in order to overcome social inequalities and digital inequities. Due to the fact that all generations use non-formal education, but its contribution to social inclusion differs from generation to generation, our research questions are as following: What is the impact of non-formal education on social inclusion? How do non-formal education practices differ across generations? The article critically engages with non-formal education as a resource of social inclusion highlighting the low level of inclusion of five generations. To show the specificity of five generations' social inclusion we develop a data collection method including a questionnaire survey of the population based on the typology of generations. As such, the research shows that today inclusion through non-formal education, mobility in the labor market due to retraining, as well as inclusion in new social ties, study groups, adaptation to new challenges do have generational characteristics.

KEYWORDS

intergenerational approach, lifelong learning, non-formal education, social inclusion, typology of generations

1. Introduction

UNESCO defines non-formal education as institutionalized, intentional, and planned by an education provider. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative, and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all. According to UNESCO's *4th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (UNESCO, 2019), in almost one-third of countries, fewer than 5% of adults aged 15 and above participate in education and learning programs. However, despite extensive research into non-formal education since the beginning of the 19th century (Dewey, 1897; Knowles, 1950), followed by research papers directly on informal education (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974), by the end of the 1990s, the infrastructure of non-formal education was created in the USA, which includes organizations that make successful business in these types of education. In Europe, this system is approached through the introduction of the paradigm of education throughout life. In 2000, after the Lisbon EU Summit, a *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* was adopted during the Lisbon Summit of European Council, which postulated, "the continuum of lifelong learning makes non-formal and informal education equal participants in the learning process." In the same place, a vector was proclaimed for the development of a high-quality system of "accreditation of previous and non-formal education" (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). In comparison with the plethora of publications that are available on analyzing social inclusion of different generations in non-formal education, the study presents factors that determine its degree and the peculiarities of non-formal education, identifying its features throughout different generations.

This article contributes to a better identification of factors that determine social inclusion, studying the barriers that cause difficulties in accessing non-formal education. The problem under consideration is undoubtedly international, but we nuance that for Russia it is of particular relevance. Different social groups have unequal access to education, which affects the overall level of social inclusion and integration into society. The research problem is to find the optimal resources for the social inclusion of different generations and to identify the role of non-formal education in the process of inclusion of different generations. The key research question is how non-formal education promotes social inclusion of different generations, what barriers and restrictions in this process exist, what skills are acquired as a result of non-formal education and how this helps the social inclusion of representatives of different generations in different spheres of life. In the study for the first time, theoretical models and empirical evidence reveal the social inclusion of non-formal education on professional and personal development in the context of five generations. A typological picture of peculiar generations in the non-formal education market is presented, including their interest and motivation. Our research questions are as following: What is the impact of non-formal education on social inclusion? How do non-formal education practices differ across generations?

The rest of the article is structured as follows: in section 2 we critically engage with non-formal education as a resource of social inclusion. We highlight the low

level of inclusion of five generations. In section 3 we develop a data collection method including a questionnaire survey of the population based on the typology of five generations. In section 4 we reflect on case studies from Russia throughout the intergenerational approach while making a contribution to the understanding and enhancement of social inclusion worldwide.

2. Towards a More Socially Inclusive Society

The concept of lifelong education has been developing in the world for a long time, non-formal education is a significant part of it. Therefore, a large number of works have been accumulated, which reveal both analytical reviews and cases from different countries, where projects of groups with special needs (emigrants, refugees) are implemented through non-formal education. Although there is a large body of research that has examined social inclusion in non-formal learning and digital inequities, those countries, communities, and individuals digitally left behind or disadvantaged. Whereas we agree with the authors that we know quite a lot about what is lacking and for whom, there is less focus on what works to alleviate these inequalities and divides in a variety of cultural contexts. Foreign authors, linking this concept with informal communication of people through communication, define it as communicative learning (Habermas, 1987). These can be clubs and libraries, cultural and leisure institutions, museums and entertainment centers, joint civic, religious, or sports activities (Mezirow, 1995, 2000). This theme was explored regarding being brought together scholarship on digital inclusion initiatives and research from over 20 countries and in the context of numerous aspects, including different types of initiatives as well as different types of target audiences for these initiatives (Reisdorf & Rhinesmith, 2020). One important finding can be taken from the issue that the breadth and depth of articles presented will be useful not just for academic audiences seeking to broaden their understanding of digital inclusion and "what can be done" rather than focusing on "what is amiss," but also for policymakers and digital inclusion initiatives who are eager to expand and advance their digital inclusion work within their communities. Accordingly, social inclusion based on non-formal education can be viewed as inclusion in various subsystems of society, namely socio-political (the ability to express one's citizenship, participate in elections, local initiatives), socio-economic (position on the labor market, paid work, the possibility of professional development), socio-cultural (self-development, leisure, broadening one's horizons), symbolic subsystem (identity, social status, self-esteem and self-respect, interests and motivation, opportunities and prospects).

Best Practices of Leading Countries

The persistence of inequality in education is a key issue for both research and policy in Russia. Why do unwanted patterns of social grading and disadvantage in education prove so enduring despite decades of research, debate and reform? This thematic issue of social inclusion aims to deepen our understanding of the factors and mechanisms that underlie this persistence by focusing on the multiple interweaving of politics, inequality and social research. One point of view explores various aspects of this interaction,

from the history and politics of statistical quantification of educational disparities to the political implementation of everyday pedagogical practice. Two strategic anchor points emerge from the collection of articles for studying and analyzing existing mechanisms of educational inequality: (a) political and pedagogical epistemological orders, and (b) educational mechanisms that structure educational processes and situations. The ongoing social and political transformations, including the digitization and transfer of data in education and changing forms of governance, highlight the urgent need for further research in this direction (Horvath & Leemann, 2021).

However, not less important is to determine how the level of social inclusion can be estimated. While Reisdorf & Rhinesmith investigation (2020) provides unique insights into what does and does not work in various communities, making recommendations on what could be done to improve the examined initiatives, Benkova & Mareva (2019) compared the average values of three generations. The level of Social Inclusion Index through age divisions was analyzed in the studies of Bulgaria, which is seen as a set of activities, based on the implementation of inclusive practices, the introduction of inclusive policies and the formation of inclusive values. Validation of non-formal and informal education has the potential to contribute to achieving the goals set by the Europe 2020 strategy, as it can contribute to matching skills supply and demand, supporting mobility across sectors and countries and fighting social exclusion (European Centre, 2019). Validation is a common practice when it contributes to the performance metrics of formal education institutions. The pervasiveness of validation practices in formal education suggests that validation in formal education is not so much characterised by rejection or disregard as it is by selectivity and instrumentality (Souto-Otero, 2021). The others observe that countries are increasingly providing opportunities for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe, addressing it as a tool to combat social exclusion and help those unemployed or at risk of unemployment (Villalba-García, 2021). Focusing on the Spanish case, the researchers (e.g., Caparros-Ruiz, 2019) are exerting a positive influence on workers' careers since doctorate holders have a privileged situation in the labor market. Moreover, contribution to adults' participation in different political activities when formal educational background and other socioeconomic factors are controlled is also discussed by Busse et al. (2019). The results underline the importance of differentiated analyses of political participation and non-formal and informal adult education. The benefits of adult learning on labor market effects are examined by Ruhose et al. (2019). Thus, a review of studies of non-formal education shows that it is the basis for active citizenship, it alleviates unemployment problems, and allows to update skills and competencies, promotes employment, which is actually a necessary condition and basis for full-fledged social activity and social inclusion.

A Critical Overview of Modern Classifications of Generations

The specificity of age typology is revealed in terms of different generations demonstrating involvement in non-formal education. They are based on three life stages such as 18–30 years old, 31–50 years old, 51–70 years old (Asmar et al., 2020). The studies of Zhang & Acs (2019) focus on four U.S. generations: Traditionalists,

Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials. There are views (Au, 2020) that articulate how digital media and social networking sites (SNS) shape social life through cultural transformations in the generation. Therefore, we contend how non-formal education is implemented in Russia where this system is still being established. At the stage of formation, it is underfunded and not valid. In foreign analytical reports, age cohorts are considered from different points—some authors analyze them through social, cultural, and economic factors. Obviously, the theory of generations has a number of critical assessments (Dimock, 2019; Parry & Urwin, 2011), where it is noted that within the same generation people demonstrate different personal strategies. Theories relating generations to history and change are few in number (Lambert, 1972). Despite the in-depth American and European researches of the past century (Eisenstadt, 1956; Feuer, 1969; Jencks & Reisman, 1968; Mannheim, 1952; Ortega y Gasset, 1960), a few works of modern authors (Karashchuk et al., 2020; Strauss & Howe, 1997;) follow the tradition. The Malaysian scientists Ting et al. (2018) identify five generations for their country in the 20th century, including Battling-Lifers, Idealistic-Strugglers, Social-Strivers, Prospective-Pursuers, and Neoteric-Inheritors. Thus, there is experience in studying non-formal education for representatives of different social groups and generations, but the trends of learning, the inclusion of five generations in non-formal education and the potential for social inclusion due to non-formal education are not sufficiently disclosed. Considering non-formal education as a part of social inclusion our study focuses on generational inclusion, the peculiarities of non-formal learning of different generations and their differences. The methodological framework of our study reveals through the intergenerational approach. This approach identifies the factors of inclusion in non-formal education, barriers and limitations that are associated with the characteristics of different generations. This time frame allows us to see the possibilities of inclusion of five generations as levels of social inclusion (see Table 1).

Generational change occurs approximately once every 25 years. Generations differ in their values, features of socialization, attitude to work and education. In accordance with the objectives of the study, we relied on the typology of American researchers W. Strauss & N. Howe, while analyzing the data, we used the age limits and generation names proposed by them.

Table 1

The Key Theories of the Generations' Typology

W. Strauss & N. Howe	M. Prensky	V. V. Radaev
Generation Z/Centennials (2005 and until now)	Digital Natives	Generation Z/Centennials (2001 and until now)
Generation Y or Millennial Generation (1982–2004)	Digital Immigrants	Millennials (1982–2000)
Generation X (1961–1981)		Reform Generation (1968–1981)
Baby Boomers (1943–1960)		Generation of Stagnation (1947–1967)
Silent Generation (1925–1942)	Digital Outsiders	Mobilization Generation (1938 and earlier)

Note. Source: Developed by the authors based on source analysis (Prensky, 2001; Radaev, 2018; Strauss & Howe, 1997).

3. Methodology

The research allows us to generate new insights regarding a typological picture of peculiar generations in the non-formal education market, including their interest and motivation. Throughout the research, we apply data collection method—questionnaire survey of the population of the Tyumen region of Russia aged 18 to 82 years. The data analysis methodology was based on identifying the specifics, key features of the educational practices of the population of the indicated age cohorts/generations. A quota sample was used, with representation by gender and age. The sample reflects the structure of the population. Theories of generations, in particular, presented in the works by Prensky (2001), Strauss & Howe (1997), and Radaev (2018), were used as a methodological framework for the study. Based on the analysis of generational typologies, we propose the author's gradation of generations, which was used in the empirical study when constructing the sample. When conducting an empirical study, we relied on the theory of generations, so a quota sample was 150–200 people from each generation, a total of 944 people took part in the survey. When constructing the sample, we relied on the age structure of the population, interviewing 150–200 people for each generation in order to identify the characteristics of non-formal education practices in each age cohort. Interviews were conducted in Russia in May 2020. The case of the Tyumen region was selected as a region of Russia, which is characterized by a high quality of life, the population structure reflects Russian specifics (the south of the Tyumen region is represented by rural areas dominated by elderly citizens). Key characteristics captured by the data include gender, family structure, race/ethnicity, parental education, parental occupation and previous educational attainment (see Table 2).

Table 2

Characteristics of the Empirical Study Sample

Age Group	Sample Number (people)	Sample Characteristics
Generation Z (Centennials)	220	men—45%; women—55% secondary vocational and below—80%
Generation Y (Millennials)	200	men—45%; women—55% secondary professional and below—32%; higher education, academic degree—68%
Generation X	192	men—43%; women—57% secondary professional and below—35%; higher education, academic degree—65%
Baby Boomers	180	men—42%; women—58% secondary professional and below—45%
Silent generation	152	men—40%; women—60% secondary professional and below—62%; higher education, academic degree—38%

Note. Source: Developed by the authors.

The indicators of social inclusion can be the subsystems of society, in which individuals can be included. Various vital parameters that characterize each of the subsystems can be identified as specific ones. The indicators of the political subsystem are political literacy, knowledge of laws, rights and obligations, social and political activity (Astoiants et al., 2009). Therefore, the codebook was developed in order to reveal the reasons for turning to non-formal education, the intensity of educational practices, thematic needs and interests in the field of non-formal education, the willingness to pay for one's own education (financial investment in non-formal education). It was also aimed at the characteristics of the skills acquired in non-formal education, the choice of providers of non-formal education, features of training in the workplace, advantages and barriers to obtaining non-formal education. The socio-demographic block of questions included the characteristics of gender, age, level of education, field of activity, professional status, financial situation. To survey older respondents, especially the Silent Generation, a combined data collection method was used—with the help of interviewers who, according to respondents, entered data into a Google form, which was caused by physical difficulties associated with age-related changes, vision, as well as an insufficient level of digital data obtained made it possible to analyze the involvement of the Silent Generation, focusing on the features of this generation. For the concept of digital skills, we distinguish between the areas people plan to expand their skills and knowledge in the next year. It is important to understand whether non-formal education was taken into account in employment, how the results of non-formal education are demonstrated, how the employer reacted to the presence of non-formal education, how non-formal practices have changed during the period of self-isolation caused by the pandemic.

Non-formal education provides social inclusion for those who are faced with social risks—age transition associated with job loss, status change, retirement. In this case, education at the place of residence, training in peer-to-peer groups becomes for them the dominant resource of social inclusion. For younger generations, non-formal education facilitates entry into the labor market, integration into the social and professional sphere, for older generations, non-formal education contributes to maximum involvement and full adaptation in modern society. The peculiarity of social inclusion is noted in the fact that modern forms of education blur the lines between study and leisure pastime. The orientation of education to market demands leads to the casting of new forms of study and knowledge, including experimental and implicit everyday mundane knowledge in the private sphere of leisure. At the same time, goods and services of different quality may appear on the market, which their consumer should be aware of (Gorshkov & Kliucharev, 2017). That is the reason that majority of students are adults who have faced risks. As a rule, this is education at the place of residence, organized for that part of the marginalized and socially vulnerable low-resource population, which shares the generally accepted goals and objectives and is ready to take an active part in their joint solution. The change in educational practices due to the increased use of non-formal education can be traced across all generations.

4. Case Studies from Russia Throughout Intergenerational Approach

When interpreting the results of the study, we relied on the characteristics of generations in Russia, which reflect the characteristics of growing up, values, including the attitude towards learning. Generation Z or Centennials were born since 2001. They actively use gadgets for leisure, work and education, purchase goods online and through mobile applications. Modern technologies allow them to supplement the educational process with electronic materials or completely transfer them to the digital plane. Generation Y or Millennials, were born at the end of the 20th century from 1982 to 2000, grew up during the formation of a new Russia, the formation of new social institutions. The generation is distinguished by mobility, the desire for hedonism, pleasure, follow trends and brands, communicate on social networks, are confident that they are able to achieve what they want, take care of their health. They are interested in technology, know several foreign languages, value freedom and the absence of restrictions in work and daily life. Generation X is from 1961 to 1981. The formation took place during the reform period preceding the collapse of the USSR with subsequent adaptation to social changes in the conditions of anomie. During their growing up and professional development, information technologies were just beginning to take shape in the country. They had to master digital competencies on their own, within the framework of state programs to improve computer literacy. The Baby Boomers generation were born after the Second World War, are distinguished by a team spirit, a desire to consolidate efforts to achieve goals. They try to stay active, prefer natural products, take care of their health, focus on quality and status. Silent generation were born shortly before or during the Second World War. People of this age are leaving the category of the economically active population, while their social activity remains quite high. A change in social status leads to a transformation in lifestyle. They possess a low level of digital skills.

The greatest inclusion in the practice of non-formal education was demonstrated by young people belonging to Generation Z (86%) and Millennials (86%). Among older generations, there are about three-quarters of Generation X (79%), Baby Boomers (70%) and the Silent Generation (71 %). The highest intensity of non-formal education turned out to be characteristic of generation Z (39%), in comparison with other generations, they use non-formal education to the maximum to find a job and demonstrate acquired skills to the employer. At the same time, the youngest Generation Z and the elderly Silent Generation are characterized by a high intensity of non-formal education usage with a frequency of weekly or more often. It is noteworthy that this trend was observed both before the period of forced self-isolation (49% and 62%, respectively), provoked by the coronavirus pandemic, and during it (81% and 80%), when the involvement of the population in the digital space increased throughout the world. The indicated generations are united by low involvement in labor practices. Generation Z is mainly on the way to entering the professional activity, and the Silent Generation has already completed its labor activity, being retired.

Acquired Skills and the Scope of Their Application

The specificity of our research shows that NFE allows adults to acquire a wide range of useful skills and valuable experience, thematic coverage of which is extensive: from the development of basic skills to the deepening of professional competencies. It is important to emphasize that Generation X and Baby Boomers, who are actively developing their careers, predominantly choose the skills necessary for the workplace. Non-formal education resources provide these generations with the maximum renewal of predominantly professional skills. For younger generations, on the contrary, personal skills are most important for self-development. Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents' answers to the question, "In your opinion, what skills have you developed to the greatest extent as a result of the non-formal training you have completed" depending on the generation in percentage of the number of respondents.

In the last few years, online educational practices have become very popular. As expected, young people are the most active in this area (Generation Z—48% and Millennials—42%), also due to the formed modern digital skills and the desire to permanently update them. Among the older generations, online educational practices are much less common (Millennials—42%, Generation X—23%, Baby Boomers—14%). Among the respondents belonging to the Silent Generation, there was an absolute lack of inclusion in online education, caused, in our opinion, by digital incompetence.

Table 3

Skills That Generations Have Developed to the Greatest Extent as a Result of the Non-Formal Training

Skills, competencies, and practical experience	Generation Z	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Silent Generation	Full sample
Personal skills (ability to set and achieve goals, negotiate, etc.)	50	33	24	17	82	38
Physical skills (driving a car, knitting, embroidery, etc.)	8	3	5	6	3	6
Social skills (video blogging)	6	6	3	2	2	5
Professional skills that are in demand at your workplace	16	32	46	57	0	28
Professional, which can be applied in another area	20	24	22	17	6	22
Other	0	2	1	1	0	1
Total	100	100	101	100	93	100

Barriers to Non-Formal Education

Obstacles to non-formal education are felt by every fifth respondent (22%). Let us consider the barriers to non-formal education most acutely felt by respondents from different generational cohorts. Generation Z: lack of time due to work activities (26%); high cost (23%); lack of training certificates, acquired skills are difficult to confirm to the employer (23%); there is no confidence in the quality and reliability of the provided information (19%); lack of a control procedure, assessment of acquired competencies (16%). Millennials: lack of time due to work activity (36%); high cost (24%); lack of training certificates, acquired skills are difficult to confirm (23%); such training is not recognized by the employer (17%), the price does not match the quality (16%). Generation X: lack of time due to work (48%); lack of time due to family obligations (27%), high cost (20%); such training is not recognized by the employer (15%), lack of training certificates, acquired skills are difficult to confirm (15%). Baby Boomers: lack of time due to work (44%); lack of time due to family obligations (16%), such training is not recognized by the employer (11%); high cost (10%); there is no confidence in the quality and reliability of the information provided (10%). Silent Generation: high cost (35%); lack of verification of learning outcomes which reduces the value of education (31%); inconvenient time/place for classes (28%); price does not match the quality, sometimes or often (15%); lack of time due to work (14%).

Analyzing in the context of employment, according to our study, young people have more opportunities to attend online courses; for them the main obstacles are lack of time, unlike the older generation, for whom the main limitation is the high cost of educational resources. From the point of view of social inclusion, it is important to note that the financial availability of educational resources still remains a significant obstacle, which allows us to conclude that educational resources are accessible. The high cost of courses as an obstacle was noted by almost a quarter of respondents from generation Z and X, and about a third from the Silent Generation with 35%. It is important at the policy and community level to recognize these barriers in which online learning can flourish: the government and learning communities support. It is possible that investments from the state, the introduction of tools for targeted financing of non-formal education. An educational account, a voucher, which are used in some countries could provide a solution to this problem.

Benefits of Non-Formal Education for Different Generations

The value that respondents see in non-formal education and the benefits it provides differ across generations. This is largely due to age, the level of formal education, personal characteristics, but generational characteristics also appear (see Table 4).

The analysis made it possible to identify the advantages of non-formal education from the point of view of different generations. Self-development is a priority for almost all generations, especially for the youngest of the considered in 75% of Generation Z and the oldest in 83% of the Silent Generation. Two-thirds of each generation highlighted the opportunity to gain up-to-date knowledge and

necessary competencies, learning at a convenient time and format of classes as advantages. Generation Z values the opportunity to study in a comfortable environment more (45%). For older generations, non-formal education allows them to master modern technologies. A significant advantage is the interest in professional activities, the possibility of deepening professional skills, for each generation this turned out to be a priority: 43% in the Silent Generation and up to 65% of Generation Z. The ability to quickly gain practical skills is observed by 35% of Generation X, other generations of 20–26%. Non-formal education allows to navigate in related areas of activity was noted by 7% of the Silent Generation and 30% of the Baby Boomers Generation. Considering the practice of using non-formal education by representatives of different generations, let us pay attention to the specifics inherent in each of them, comparing their answers with the average value for the sample. Young people representing Generation Z, as well as the Silent Generation, are not interested in using non-formal education in order to master new professional competencies: 45% against 56% on average in the sample. To this end, this age group prefers formal educational practices. However, for them, non-formal education becomes a priority as an opportunity to receive education remotely/via the Internet: 34%, with an average value of 27%. Also, it is the youngest generation that, when choosing non-formal education, is guided by the example and recommendation of friends and acquaintances, 14% with an average value of 6%, appreciates an individual approach 33% with an average value of 22%, independence from someone else's schedule and the opportunity to study in a comfortable environment is 47% and with an average value of 34%. At the same time, for Generation Z, it is significant in non-formal education to have the opportunity to work remotely and increase the amount of earnings (15% with an average value of 8%).

For Generation Z and Millennials, it is more important than for other generations to learn at a convenient time (67% and 64% with an average value of 57%) and the desire to master new technologies (21% and 29% with an average value of 35%). While for the older generations (Generation X and Baby Boomers) the development of technology is a higher priority (42% each, with an average value of 35%). Also, for the two named generations, an exciting learning format, an interesting and accessible presentation of material (24% each with an average value of 34%) has a low significance. Millennials' estimates do not differ significantly from the sample averages. For them, in the first place among the priorities of non-formal education are self-development (72%), the opportunity to receive education remotely (28%), the prospect of obtaining an additional source of income after graduation (20%). For Generation X, the key priority of non-formal education, in comparison with other age groups, is the interest in professional activities and the deepening of competencies (65% with 56% on average in the sample) and the opportunity to quickly gain practical skills (35% and 26% on average in the sample). Self-development becomes less significant (66% versus 73% on average for the sample). Such a distribution of priorities is quite logical, given that this generation is at the peak of its career.

Table 4

Benefits of Non-Formal Education for Different Generations
(in Percentage of the Number of Respondents)

Intensive courses (up to 16 hours)	Generation Z	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Silent Generation
Self-development	75	72	66	72	83
Training at a convenient time	67	64	51	48	55
The opportunity to acquire relevant knowledge and necessary competencies	51	51	54	64	62
Interest in professional activities, deepening competencies	45	58	65	69	43
To learn new technologies	22	29	42	42	38
There is an independence from your schedule and the opportunity to study in a comfortable environment	47	40	32	33	20
It is fun, interesting and accessible	38	31	24	24	52
Meaningful courses are really, there is nothing superfluous in them	24	26	26	21	43
Receiving education without leaving home (remotely/via the Internet)	34	28	33	17	23
I can quickly get practical skills	20	24	35	25	26
It will later provide an additional source of income	28	20	22	13	30
It allows you to navigate in related areas of activity	19	22	26	30	7
There is an opportunity to learn a new profession without leaving home	28	28	15	10	20
There is a lack of tight control	20	21	22	9	14
I plan to learn a related activity	15	16	13	18	3

Baby Boomers also indicated a high priority for improving competencies in their professional activities (69%, with an average value of 56%). Less significant for them (compared to other generations) were the opportunity to receive education remotely (17% against 27% on average in the sample) and receiving an additional source of income after completing the course of non-formal education (13% against 23% on average in the sample), learning in free time (48% with 57% on average for the sample) and the lack of strict control of the learning process and the knowledge gained (9% with 17% on average). For them, the possibility of non-formal education is important, allowing them to navigate in related fields of activity (30% with 21% on average for the sample). The interest of the representatives of the Silent Generation

in non-formal education is mainly due to the lack of formal courses/training programs in the chosen field of activity (25% compared to 10% on average in the sample), the opportunity for self-development provided by non-formal education (83% compared to 74% in sample average), as well as the lack of opportunities to get formal education due to lack of money or time (17% vs. 7% sample average). Respondents belonging to the Silent Generation appreciate the convenient format of classes in non-formal education more than other generations.

Since the paper is devoted to the case of Russia, we refer to sociological studies of Russian scale in the practice of continuing education as a background data for the regional study. The data shows that adults are willing to learn new skills. At the same time, people of mature age do not want to feel like students, they are more comfortable learning at the workplace, under the guidance of experienced mentors. It is desirable that non-formal learning takes place under the patronage of academic institutions, which greatly increases the value of the program for adult learners. Such training contributes to social inclusion as much as possible—inclusion in the educational group, team, labor activity and social activity. Subject to these conditions, up to 84% of mature employees are ready to participate in educational programs of continuous education with the continuation of labor activity (Korshunov et al., 2019).

5. Conclusions

As mentioned in section 4, in which we have generations' inclusion in non-formal education described, we have constantly reflected on and confronted our findings with existing academics. Finally, in this section we explore the broader theoretical implications of our work and point to the specifics of different generations, which manifests itself in the features of social inclusion based on non-formal education: what are the advantages and limitations of non-formal education for representatives of different generations, where and how they apply the acquired skills. However, we contend that regular features associated with biological age and life cycle stages contradict with generational specificity. Considering professional development through the prism of different ages, our research shows that today inclusion through non-formal education, mobility in the labor market due to retraining, inclusion in new social ties, study groups, adaptation to new challenges have generational characteristics. The limitation of the study is the consideration of the practices of non-formal education on the example of one area as a regional case. The use of only quantitative methods, however, the material obtained made it possible to answer the key research question, to identify the specifics of non-formal education of each generation which are as following.

Generation Z. Its representatives actively use modern technologies for learning, which ensures the speed in mastering new skills including mobile learning, the main advantages for them are in the free choice of training programs, mentors, practical tasks, and real skills. For them, non-formal education fills the gaps in formal education when studying at colleges and universities, compensates for the lack of practical skills, helps to gain first work experience, and facilitates entry into the labor market.

Thanks to non-formal education, social inclusion in the professional sphere, economic relations is ensured, and entry into the labor market is facilitated.

Millennials. For them, non-formal education is a source of professional development, learning skills for a future profession and/or current job, career advancement, professional mobility. Social inclusion is ensured through involvement in labor relations. Among the reasons given is the opportunity to have additional income through non-formal education. The risk zone for them is that it is not always possible to confirm the acquired skills to the employer for certification or skills validation.

Generation X. The priority for them is the development of modern digital technologies, they have a wide range of interests in the field of non-formal learning from hobbies, raising their children, healthy eating to professional interests, among the barriers they name primarily are the lack of time and cost, and the ability to confirm skills, received in non-formal education.

Baby Boomers. Social inclusion meets their need to update professional competencies. Due to the possibility of advanced training and retraining is important, to navigate in related areas of professional activity, and psychology, their full social inclusion is guaranteed avoiding professional risks.

Silent Generation. Leaders in the priority for self-development, entertainment courses which should be interesting and exciting, the form of presentation and organization of classes is important: the desire to study in groups, involvement in new social connections, do not seek formal confirmation of skills. The key obstacle to obtaining non-formal education is considered to be the high cost and inconsistency between the price and quality of the courses. At the same time, informal training in digital skills with the help of children and grandchildren ensures social inclusion in the market of goods and services, and the purchase of goods on the Internet. The low level of digital literacy limits access to their social inclusion. It is non-formal education that will help them to be included in social processes, to feel important and significant. Thus, the training and education of older citizens contributes to their social inclusion and improves their well-being. A new model of educational trajectory is coming based on the principle of lifelong learning, when secondary, higher and additional vocational education together create opportunities for long-term competitiveness in the labor market (Korshunov et al., 2019).

It is clear by now that for all generations, an important barrier is the cost of courses, its affordability, recognition of the results of non-formal education, certification of skills, and qualifications. Representatives of Generation X and Baby Boomers who are at the stage of career advancement in their active professional growth are ready to invest in their education. Older generations prefer free courses and programs organized with the support of the state and organizations. Thus, in modern generations, there are differences in motivation to receive non-formal education, a difference in benefits and barriers. Concerning the specificity of age typology in terms of different generations demonstrating inclusion in non-formal education we agree with the previous researchers (Asmar et al., 2020; Maliszewski, 2003; Rogers, 2019; Zhang & Acs, 2019) hat non-formal education has seen a remarkable revival of interest across both developing countries and the more highly developed countries. Among the factors

causing this revival is the search for alternative educations to meet the needs of different groups in society. Moreover, our findings agree that the adult learning targets contained in every one of the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be met by formal learning programmes alone and require a much-expanded non-formal education program. Thus, current redefinitions are observed of non-formal education and at where such a system might fit into the governmental architecture of educational planning.

Intergenerational approach towards social inclusion is evident in two ways:

- A similar trend noted in studies based on data from other countries (Maliszewski, 2003; Rogers, 2019) shows the role of education as a factor of inclusion, improvement of communication skills, involvement in social networks. It requires a significant expansion of non-formal education programs, which will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.
- UNESCO-supported research illustrates that those countries where non-formal education resources are used to develop human capital demonstrate a higher rate of adaptation to technological changes, active citizenship, a rapid pace of socio-economic transformation and innovation (Maliszewski, 2003).

Further prospects for research in the field of non-formal education can be the study of its possibilities for competency management policy, the evaluation of the effectiveness of best practices and technologies, the development of national models for the integration of formal and non-formal education, the recognition of its results (skills certification), and the expansion of social partnership. As such, it is important at the government policy and community level to recognize the low level of social inclusion in non-formal learning; it can flourish wider as a whole.

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