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AUSTRIA'S EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Abstract. *The article analyzes the concept of «continuing education» determining its priorities and specifics as compared to other forms of learning. It is established that the subject of continuing professional training is an adult who has acquired a certain life and professional experience. It is identified that the need for lifelong learning arises from the fact that to some extent an adult has knowledge and skills not sufficient to carry out their professional or other tasks. Self-motivation for new knowledge appears when facing complex problems, and when the past experience does not allow solving them successfully. The specifics of lifelong education are connected with the psychological characteristics of an adult, namely: self-awareness of oneself as an independent personality with a critical view on any control attempts even if it not expressed verbally; the accumulation of a considerable life, social and professional experience that shapes the outlook, and in this respect creates a background for the evaluation of any incoming information; motivation for learning lies in a pragmatic approach – an adult seeks to solve their life problems with the help of learning (career, communication, leisure, etc). In contrast with a student or a pupil, an adult tries to apply the acquired knowledge as soon as possible or to obtain satisfaction from the learning process itself; their perception is invariably accompanied by an emotional evaluation of information when the brain attempts to «block» any information provoking negative emotions (even if it is just hunger, an uncomfortable sitting or stuffiness). Austria is pursuing the policy on continuing education, including several ministries and the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs. However, this kind of education is not free from shortcomings: for some adults, it is a way of organizing leisure: spending time usefully, having a rest from work, or the lack of learning goal awareness.*

Key words: *adult education system of Austria, continuing education, educational policy, personality socialization in the conditions of continuing education, gender equality.*

ОСВІТНЯ ПОЛІТИКА АВСТРІЇ В КОНТЕКСТІ НАВЧАННЯ ДОРОСЛИХ

Анотація. *У статті проаналізовано сутність поняття освіта впродовж життя, визначено її пріоритети та специфіку з поміж інших форм навчання. Встановлено, що суб'єктом неперервного професійної навчання є доросла людина, яка досягла певного життєвого й професійного досвіду. Встановлено, що потребою в навчанні впродовж життя є те, що до певної міри дорослій людині для вирішення її професійних або іншого роду завдань недостатній наявний у неї запас знань і умінь. Поява самомотивації до нових знань з'являється тоді, коли перед нею виникають складні проблеми, а минулий досвід, не дозволяє їй вирішувати їх успішно. Специфіка освіти впродовж життя також обумовлена й психологічними особливостями дорослої людини, а саме: усвідомлення себе самостійною, самокерованою особистістю, яка критично ставиться до будь-яких спроб управління, навіть якщо вголос цього не висловлює; накопичення чималого запасу життєвого, соціального і професійного досвіду, який формує її світогляд, і з огляду на це оцінює будь-яку інформацію, що поступає; мотивація до навчання полягає в прагматичному підході – прагне за допомогою навчання вирішити свої життєві проблеми (кар'єра, спілкування, дозвілля тощо); на відміну від учня/ студента прагне до невідкладного застосування здобутих знань або до отримання задоволення від самого процесу навчання; його сприйняття незмінно супроводжується емоційним оцінюванням інформації, коли мозок прагне «заблокувати» будь-яку інформацію, що супроводжується негативною емоцією (навіть якщо це просто відчуття голоду, незручне сидіння або нестача свіжого повітря). Австрія проводить політичну стратегію щодо навчання впродовж життя, включаючи декілька міністерств й Міністерство освіти і жіночих справ. Водночас, такий вид освіти не обличений і недоліками: для окремих суб'єктів такий вид освіти є способом організації дозвілля: провести час з користю, відпочити від роботи, або немає усвідомлення мети навчання.*

Ключові слова: *освітня система дорослих в Австрії, неперервна освіта, освітня політика, соціалізація особистості в умовах неперервної освіти, гендерна рівність.*

Introduction. Nowadays continuing education or lifelong education as a strategic idea does not draw any considerable objections. It has a significant number of proponents not

only in European countries but also in Ukraine. Despite being in demand, there is no specific content on lifelong education in pedagogical science and practice. However, the to-

day's model of continuing education in European countries provides an opportunity for everyone to realize their abilities by learning throughout their lives. The latter forms the backbone of the lifelong education strategy and prospects for its development.

The Aim of the Study is to substantiate and reveal the strategic directions of education development in Austria.

Theoretical Basis and Methods of Research. The theoretical basis of the study is comprised of the provisions of comparative pedagogy methodology (N. Abashkina, B. Wolfson, V. Klarin, M. Leshchenko, Z. Malkova, V. Pylypovskyi, L. Pukhovska, etc.); education, upbringing, and training conceptions (V. Andrushchenko, I. Bekh, S. Goncharenko, I. Ziaziun, V. Kremin, O. Savchenko); conceptual provisions of lifelong learning organization and development (L. Lukianova, N. Nychkalo); theories of personal and professional-pedagogical development (V. Lugovyi, S. Maksymenko, V. Moliako, O. Pekhota, V. Semychenko, S. Sysoeva).

The research methods used are analysis and synthesis, abstraction and concretization, the classification and systematization of theoretical and empirical data, and the comparative analysis of «adult learning» phenomena and facts as well as their organizational and educational support in Austria.

Results. Adult education occupies an independent position in the Austrian system both quantitatively and qualitatively, including various forms: teaching, group supervision, counselling, guidance, education management, and library services.

«Adult education» or «Continuing vocational training» is determined from the point of view of age and educational background. If any initial (vocational) education or training has been completed and is followed by another educational stage, then it is described as adult education, continuing vocational training, or further education.

The subject of continuing vocational training is an adult who has acquired a certain life and professional experience. The specifics of life-long education are connected with adults' psychological characteristics. In this sense, psychologists distinguish five main features characterizing the adult motivation to study throughout their lives:

1. Awareness of oneself as an independent personality with a critical view on any control attempts even if it not expressed verbally;

2. The accumulation of a considerable life, social and professional experience that shapes the outlook, and in this respect creates a background for the evaluation of any incoming information;

3. The motivation for learning lies in a pragmatic approach – an adult seeks to solve their life problems with the help of learning (career, communication, leisure, etc.);

4. In contrast with a student or a pupil, an adult tries to apply the acquired knowledge as soon as possible or to obtain satisfaction from the learning process itself;

5. Their perception is invariably accompanied by an emotional evaluation of information when the brain attempts to «block» any information provoking negative emotions (even if it is just hunger, an uncomfortable sitting or stuffiness) (Agapova, 2003).

Thus, life-long education differs from the rising generation education in its values and motives, goals and objectives, content and forms of organization, methods of control and evaluation, and obtained results. S. Vershlovskyi, analyzing the motives of adult education, notes that «first of all, an adult learns guided by pragmatic motives. If they already have the necessary knowledge sufficient for solving problems, then there is no need to go beyond the acquired life and professional experience» (Vershlovskyi, 2002).

In UNESCO's terms, lifelong learning is aimed at the need to restore cultural and national identity and meet material needs, especially in development-oriented countries.

Lifelong learning is aimed at Francophone education capable of developing science and art in the population's daily life as defined by the European Council (1970). The main problem with lifelong learning realization, despite the fact that this idea has already become an integral part of educational policy rhetoric, is probably that the existing public and private infrastructure of further education offers is not prepared for such expanding demand for education and educational opportunities» (Wiesner, & Wolter, 2005).

Lifelong learning requirements:

- economic (technical changes, new qualifications, and retraining);
- political (changes in democratic life, the ability to work with data media and psychological readiness for a fresh start in the context of digitalization);
- social (overcoming crises – unemployment, the establishment of gender equality);
- pedagogical and anthropological (lifelong learning – accumulation of knowledge and its refreshment through further education).

Adult education objectives and goals:

- studying up on lost knowledge, skills, and abilities (the first stage of training);
- ensuring social advancement;
- adaptation to changed professional and social requirements;
- professional specialization;
- political and social education;
- information and counseling on the possibilities of resolving conflicts at work and in the family;
- knowledge expansion in certain areas of interest (for example, foreign countries);
- development of competencies (environment, art, sports, etc.);
- «pause of thinking» – in order to cope with life crises, or to consciously comprehend what is happening in everyday life (search for purpose, religious motives, options for overcoming life difficulties).

Differences and features in comparison with school education:

- a variety of the forms of activities, events, and places;
- people with different educational background organize adult education;
- adult education is voluntary;
- financing is provided by participants themselves;
- training people of different age-groups.

Thus, continuing education or lifelong learning is a key concept of our times determining the individual trajectory of personal development.

An important advantage of adult education is the fact that to some extent an adult has some knowledge and skills sufficient to carry out their professional or other tasks. The need for new knowledge appears when facing com-

plex problems, and when the past experience does not allow solving them successfully. In such a way the need for new knowledge is formed. It is the new knowledge that introduces a person into another social reality the peculiarity of which lies in the search for a rational and innovative solution to problems

The value of adult education is determined not only by its practical significance, its ability to meet the needs of different fields of activity but also by an altruistic attitude towards it. It is widely believed that education presents value in itself since knowledge for the sake of knowledge is not stimulated by any factors. However, by engaging a person into educational activities it can be achieved their qualitative transformation. In this sense not only adults' practical experience but also the development of knowledge together with the learning process itself becomes meaningful. In this context, an adult seems to break from bonds of socially determined learning. Cognitive, creative processes are gradually becoming independent from adults' daily routine, therefore, getting replaced by «self-motivation». N. Myronchuk (2018) claims self-motivation to be a factor providing adults with the possibility to retain fitness for work, as there is an internal process of achieving or maintaining the status of the subject controlling an individual's life activities. The motivation for achievement and success inspires people to seek new ways of using their energy, abilities and efforts in professional activity. A positively motivated person shows readiness to successfully carry out professional duties, produce new, bright ideas, show initiative, be involved in a creative endeavor and enjoy finding solutions.

Since 2011, Austria has been pursuing the policy on lifelong learning (LLL: 2020). Several ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs file annual reports presenting the achieved results on adult education. They are:

1. Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs (Department of Adult Education): General adult education and schools for employed persons

2. Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy: University education, on-the-job training

3. Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection: further education related to the job market

4. Further ministries involved in further education: Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Federal Ministry of Finance, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Austrian Foreign Ministry.

Adult education in Austria is also regulated by the provinces and municipalities. The municipalities are responsible for community education or may participate in common-benefit institutions for further education. The provinces take care of the funding of adult education (mostly funding from participants' fees).

The social partners are also public bodies responsible for adult education. They have authority over institutions for further education and are involved in making collective agreements with providers of adult education (professionals/employees and institutions/employers).

Relevant umbrella associations and national (service) organizations

The ten associations of adult education providers in accordance with the Adult Education Promotion Act are combined into an umbrella association: KEBÖ (short for «Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs» – conference of adult education in Austria). KEBÖ was founded in 1972 and is a partner of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs in implementing focus points of adult education policy. KEBÖ is made up of the following ten organisations and associations:

Working group of Austrian educational centres (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Bildungshäuser Österreich – ARGE BHÖ)

– Austrian Vocational Training Institute (Berufsförderungsinstitut Österreich – BFI)

– Association of Public Libraries in Austria (Büchereiverband Österreichs – BVÖ)

– Forum for Catholic Adult Education in Austria (Forum Katholischer Erwachsenenbildung in Österreich – FORUM)

– Rural Continuing Education Institute (Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut – LFI)

– Network of Austrian adult education institutes (Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke – RÖBW)

– Austrian Economic Society (Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich – VG-Ö)

– Association of Adult Education for Austrian Trade Unionists (Verband Österreichischer Gewerkschaftlicher Bildung – VÖGB)

– Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres (Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen – VÖV)

– The Austrian Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Economic Promotion (Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut der Wirtschaftskammer Österreichs – WIFI)

– There are two more associations which are mentioned in the Promotion Act but are not members of KEBÖ:

– Austrian Federation of Europe Houses (Österreichische Föderation der Europahäuser – ÖFEH)

– Association of the Scientific Societies of Austria (Verband der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs – VWGÖ) (Portal on adult education and learning in Austria, nd).

Trends in adult education development in the Republic of Austria:

Global – the functioning of continuing education. It is identified that the higher the formal education level, the more effective the readiness to realize lifelong learning professional tasks.

Socio-economic and social – lifelong learning privatization and differentiation. The introduction of a lifelong learning model is seen as capital goods (participants as clients; education as intellectual investment capital).

Procedural – modular learning based on differentiated learning. Coaches' training working on students' requests is becoming especially popular. The result of such training is students' certification. Learning is taking on information and management focus – the transition from the institutional and academic forms of learning to online education

Intercultural and cross-cultural – taking into account the international approach due to migratory movements; paradigm shift in the international identity essence and taking into account human rights to lifelong learning (Lenz, 2005).

Gender differentiation. The issue of gender differentiation is of a special interest in adult education. Since 1993, the Committee on Equal Treatment has been operating in accordance with the law. There are two interministerial working groups at the government-

tal level: the first group on gender equality and the second one on gender mainstreaming. Within each ministry, one person is appointed as a commissioner to advise civil servants and monitor gender discrimination.

Updated in 2004, the Equal Treatment Act includes a number of programs for the education of women. Thus, since January 2004 the Federal Ministry of Health and Women has been running mentoring programs throughout Austria. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has been established in Austria since 2007 and is still in operation. The main achievements in addressing gender differentiation are the activities of the Austrian Society for Political Education (ÖGPB), one of the first coordinators of the annual distribution of gender equality and gender policy projects (Baumgartner, & Gürses, 2015).

As can be seen, among the members of governmental and non-governmental institutions of national umbrella organizations at the Conference of Adult Education Institutions of Austria, most of them are women (Official site of the Conference of Adult Education Institutions of Austria, nd).

33rd Conference on Adult Education in Austria (KEBÖ), statistics of work years 2017/18

Table 1

Conference on Adult Education in Austria (KEBÖ) (2017–2018 yrs.)

Gender ratio of participants

Networks	ARGE BHÖ	BFI	BVÖ	FORUM	LFI	RÖBW	VG-Ö	VÖGB	VÖV	WIFI
Women	57%	49%	*	73%	43%	64%	53%	41%	71%	45%
Men	43%	51%	*	27%	57%	36%	47%	59%	29%	55%

According to the data from ten institutions, almost identical gender equality was found in three of them – the Forum for Catholic Adult Education in Austria, the Network of Austrian Adult Education Institutes, and the Association of Austrian Adult Education Centers for Women's Domination. One institution did not provide any data. It shows that Austria is taking balanced steps towards equality (*Statistik Austria*, nd).

At the same time, many respondents revealed the need for education as a way of or-

ganizing leisure: spending time usefully, having a rest from work. Despite such goals being mentioned much less frequently as compared to professional growth, they should also be taken into account in designing the content of continuing education programs for adults. It is interesting to note that most respondents are not aware of the learning goals. Usually these are people who were encouraged to upgrade their skills by superiors. Therefore, the need for study is treated as a waste of time. It should be stressed that during their studies, the negative attitude is dramatically changed, and in the end some learners even manifest the desire to participate in some other educational programs. This fact allows for the conclusion that there exist some barriers that impede the formation of the adult's need for continuing education and training in general.

The category «psychological barrier» in this sense is interpreted in the following ways:

- mental state that manifests itself as inadequate passivity, which impedes the performance of some actions (Bodalev, 1998);
- motive that creates a barrier to certain activities, in particular, to communication with a particular person or a group of people (Kodjaspirova, 2005);
- «internal obstacle» which is the most frequent cause of internal conflicts (Kashapov, 2003).

Conclusions. Summarizing the above, we should note that the subject of continuing professional education is an adult who has a certain life and professional experience. The specificity of this type of training primarily lies in psychological features and the need for new knowledge, when a person faces complex problems, and the past experience does not allow solving them successfully.

It is established that lifelong learning differs from the education of the younger generation in its values and motives, goals and objectives, content and the forms of organization, monitoring and evaluation methods, and obtained outcomes.

Further publications will cover the structural components of adult education in Austria and their didactic and technological support.

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