

ADULT EDUCATION: BENEFITS, OBSTACLES, PRIORITIES

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Abstract. One of the challenges of the 21st century is changing the requirements for adult education. The system of adult education becomes especially relevant because the quality of human capital is on the agenda, development of personality, man as the center of development of society, which must constantly develop and improve. The aim of the article is to identify the advantages and prospects of adult education. Methods of research: scientific analysis and synthesis, semantic analysis in combination with the use of Google Trends and Ahrefs search tools, comparative analysis, expert method. Adult education is a phenomenon characteristic of the highly developed countries of the world. The expediency of its development is a well-known fact, as the vast majority of countries in some sense owe their technological, socio-cultural, and economic progress to adult education. Adult education is an important civilized (non-violent, humanistic, and democratic) factor in the harmonization of relations. The fundamental role of adult education in increasing economic capacity and strengthening democratic values must be recognized at all levels. From here there is a need to identify the advantages, obstacles, and prospects of adult education in Ukraine.

Keywords: adult education, benefits, obstacles, priorities, quality, criteria, Lifelong learning.

JEL Classification: A23, I 21.

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Introduction. One of the challenges of the 21st century is changing the requirements for adult education. All components of the process of continuing education are focused on the formation and enrichment of knowledge, skills, abilities, competence for further employment, ensuring its competitiveness in the labor market, productive employment, reducing unemployment, and overcoming poverty. At the same time, adult learning is integral, but at the same time a well-known problem of part of the lifelong learning process. The main task of adult education is to continuously improve the skills (retraining) of adult citizens to fully meet their educational needs and ensure their competitiveness in the labor market. The country's competitiveness depends significantly on human capital, in particular on training and education.

Continuing education in the modern cultural and educational context is the idea, the principle of learning, the quality of the educational process, the condition of human development. Today, the period of "half-life" of competence, ie its reduction by 50% due to new information, shows that in many professions this period occurs in less than 5 years, ie about our system of higher education before graduation. The solution is to move to lifelong learning, where basic education should be periodically supplemented by additional education programs and organized not as a final, completed, but only as a basis, a basis that is supplemented by other programs. This requires that the graduate, in addition to the knowledge gained in the narrow profession, must develop his ability to learn throughout his professional life, develop

communication skills, adaptability, self-improvement, organizational and group effectiveness and a number of other qualities.

Literature review. Deterrents are characteristics that explain why adults respond in negative manners to participate in education and learning. Deterrents faced by adults are multifaceted, including both external and internal factors. However, cost and time have been remained as the most frequently reported deterrents. Large sampled (nationwide and international) surveys on barriers to participation such as a study of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the US, IALS and Eurobarometer indicated that time and cost were the main deterrents for adults [12, 3, 9] Moreover, some empirical studies discovered time and cost as the most cited deterrents through studying various groups of adults [2].

Cost includes tuition fee of a programmer as well as extra expenditures for learning such as clothes, food, transportation and other school necessities (textbooks and stationaries) [1]. It is well known that adults less educated, low-skilled and unemployed are less likely to participate in education/learning. Adults tended to say that they were busy with their daily routines. Apart from cost and time deterrents, family and job commitments are other most commonly cited deterrents [11].

Adults feel they do not have time to learn because they are busy at work and home. Thus, the time barrier should be considered in line with family and job commitments. After above-mentioned deterrents, another mostly reported deterrent is irrelevant and inadequate supplies of trainings/activities. In other words, AE programs and courses do not always suit the needs of adult learners. It, therefore, is also important for educational planners to recognize that AE opportunities available may not always suit the learner's need. Moreover, perceived deterrents are differentiated into social groups. Johnston and Rivera found that older adults faced more dispositional barriers such as low self-confidence and too late for being learners. Also, younger adults and women were more experienced with situational barriers such as cost and child care arrangements. Among the less educated, one's low-confidence regarding the learning ability could be the main deterrent [4].

Aims. The aim of the article is to identify the advantages and prospects of adult education.

Methods. There are methods: scientific analysis and synthesis, semantic analysis in combination with the use of Google Trends and Ahrefs search tools, comparative analysis, expert method.

Some terms are used to define the concept of continuing education. In modern literature, you can find the following stable combinations: "adult education" (adult education); "Continuing education"; "Further education"; "Periodic education" as lifelong learning by alternating learning with other activities, mainly work; "Continuing education"; "Lifelong learning"; "Throughout life." Each of these terms emphasizes a certain side of the phenomenon, but the idea of lifelong incomplete adult education is general. The issue of continuing education can be divided into two main areas. The first is related to the construction of a system of continuing education as part of social practice (socio-educational aspect of continuing education), the second - to the process of learning a new life, social, professional experience. That is

why in the second half of the 90s of the twentieth century in the field of adult education was proclaimed a combination of the principle of continuity of education with the principle of lifelong learning and the formation of a knowledge society. Thus, an attempt was made to consolidate in the public consciousness and understanding the mutual responsibility of society, the state and the individual for the development of educational processes.

Among the functions of continuing education are: developing (meeting the spiritual needs of the individual, the needs of creative growth); compensatory (filling gaps in basic education); adaptive (operational training and retraining in a changing production and social situation); integration into an unfamiliar cultural context; resocialization function (resocialization).

In the content of continuing education, there are three main significant components related to adult learning: literacy training in a broad sense, including computer, functional, social, etc.; vocational training, which includes vocational training, retraining, advanced training (job qualification); general cultural additional education not related to employment (life qualification).

The American researcher Malcolm Sh. Knowles [10] gives, for example, the following main life tasks of adults of different ages (adults from 18 to 30 years, from 30 to 65 years, from 65 and older), which they tried to solve by studying in the adult education system according to the following criteria:

- profession and career,
- home and family,
- personal development,
- use of free time,
- health,
- collective life.

J. Johnston's research on the goals of adult education depending on gender and social status is interesting. According to him, organizational adult education should consist of five main blocks: consumer (educational needs of students); information and management; structural; content-methodical; personnel, and scientific support [8].

Lifelong learning is a concept that links the most fundamental aspects of learning to specific life contexts. It is founded on the notion that people learn in different ways. Universities are endowed with the human, technological and financial resources necessary to promote and sustain lifelong learning. Shirley Walters, a leading adult learning and lifelong learning scholar in Africa, noted that lifelong learning is a multi-dimensional concept that can be used to organize all education and training throughout life to nurture individuals' and societies' core skills and competencies. It includes learning behaviors, gaining knowledge, understanding of attitudes and values required for personal growth, spiritual, social, and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity, and employability. Thus, the only way that universities can remain relevant is by offering a holistic education for life and work [6].

Economic Benefits of Adult Education. Adult learning can improve employability and income, which is a key pathway to realizing a range of other benefits. For example, it enables people to some extent, to choose and shape the context in which they live and work and even increase their social status. The existing studies focus on the economic return to work-based training and to employer provided training, which indicates that this can have significant impact on earning and the employment situation of individuals, for example reduce the risk of unemployment.

In the UK (Feinstein et al., 2004) it was found that that work-related training gives a clear wage gain of 5-10 percent. A study in Austria (OEIB, 2008) among participants in vocational training found that those who attended a course earned 11 percent more than they did before attending the course.

Also, the German Expert Commission on the Financing of Lifelong Learning (Timmermann, 2010) referred to significant income returns for training participants aged 20 to 44 years in Germany.

In particular, individuals less likely to be in employment (migrants, women from ethnic minorities, etc.) may benefit economically from their participation in Adult Education.

In regard to employment opportunities it was found that adult and further learning significantly reduces the risk of unemployment (Sabates, 2007) Also Jerkins et al. (2003 in Ferrer and Riddel, 2010) analyzed the impact of education on employment and wages and their findings revealed that episodes of Adult Education, in particular vocational training, have positive effects on employment (but limited effects on wages) [6].

Results. The market of adult education services in Ukraine is in the process of formation and development. Traditional staff retraining is part of the broader concept of "continuous education". The list of types of education, based on the current legal framework, includes preschool; complete general average; professional achievements; higher; out of school; postgraduate. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine pays attention to such types of education first of all. But this list of types of education does not fully cover the full range of "continuing education", ignoring adult education, its non-formal, and informal forms, inclusive education, distance education, self-education.

Adult education is a practice of adult education and training that takes place after an adult enters the labor market, and can apply to both vocational training and public, cultural, etc. education.

Empirical data have shown that the mental demand for adult education in Ukraine has not yet been formed. In particular, this is evidenced by the fact that search queries for the phrase "advanced training" and "training" significantly exceed the frequency of queries for the phrase "adult education" in Ukraine, even during the last 5 years. Moreover, the demand band has significantly increased during the equipped half-year. Surprisingly, the demand for training lags behind training (Fig. 1).

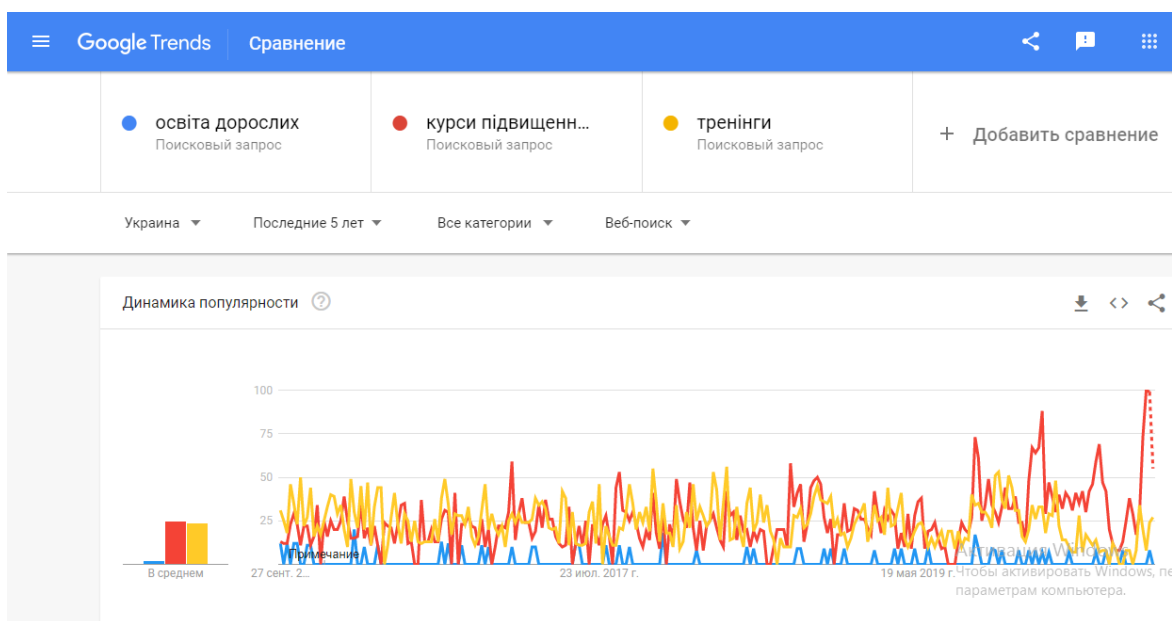


Figure 1. Frequency of search queries for the phrases "adult education", "training", "training" in Ukraine over the past 5 years

Source: created by the author

However, there is a problem with the increase in qualification - it is very specialized and mainly applies to school teachers. The training also concerns mainly with educators (Figs. 2 and 3).

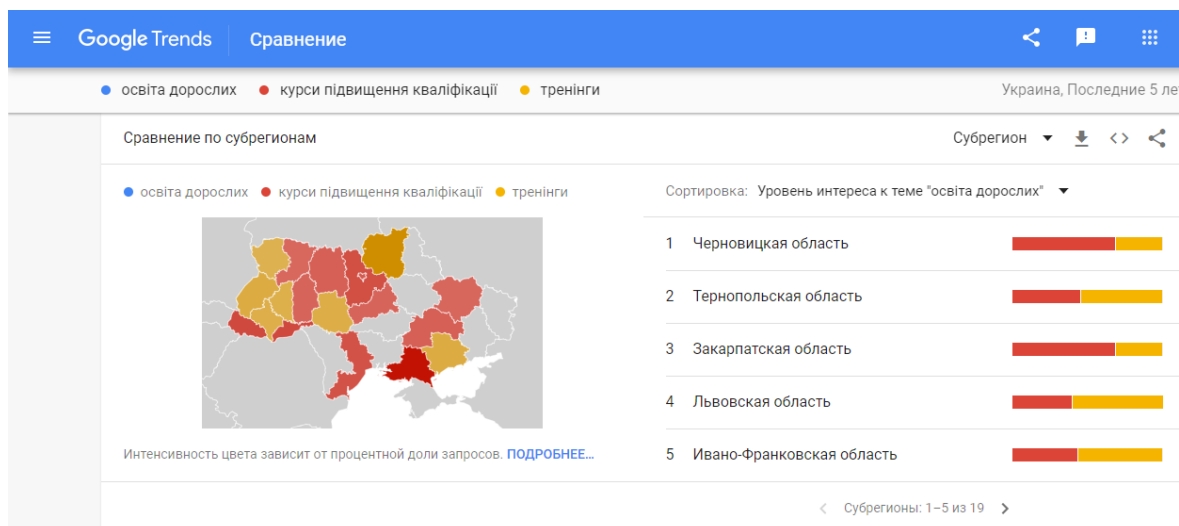


Figure 2. Comparison of the frequency of search queries for the phrases "adult education", "training", "training" in the regions of Ukraine over the past 5 years

Source: created by the author

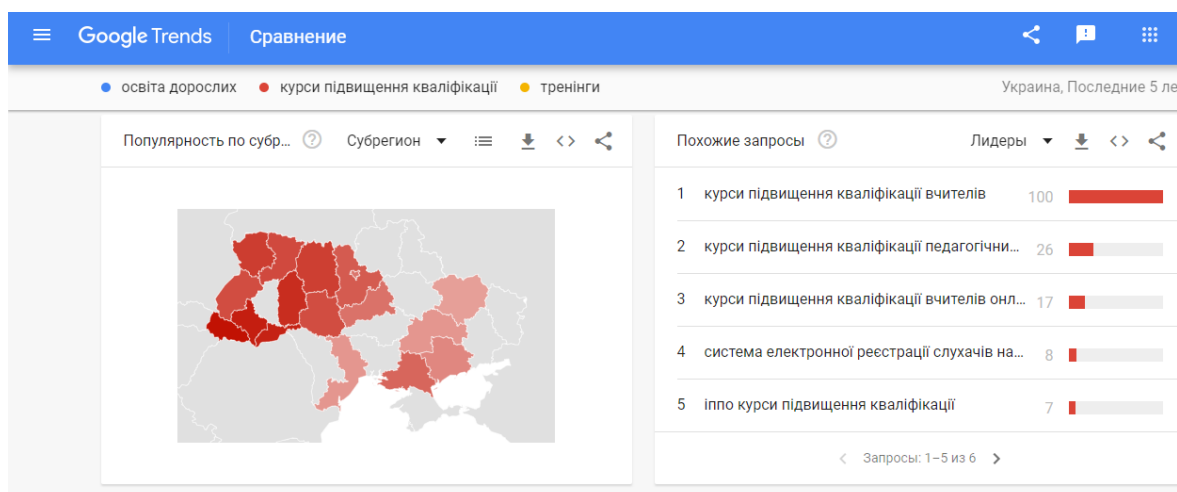


Figure 3. The content of the search query for the word "increase in qualifications" in Ukraine over the past 5 years

Source: created by the author

Google Trends (<http://trends.google.com>) is a powerful publically accessible website that allows individuals to examine longitudinal population-level variation in the relative frequency with which people use specific Google search terms. Data are updated in real-time and can be examined worldwide or by nation, state, metro region, or city. Google Trends analyses have been used to predict important societal outcomes.

Discussion. Currently, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is proposing a draft Law of Ukraine "On Adult Education" for public discussion. The main objectives of the draft law are:

- to create conditions for the development of adult education based on a comprehensive understanding of its social value and significance;
- to identify priority areas of adult education, which would, in particular, ensure the formation of key competencies in adults, recommended by the European Union for lifelong learning;
- streamline the adult education system;
- to determine the principles of cooperation between the state, local governments, and adult education providers;
- to lay the legal foundations for the activities of new institutions in the field of adult education.

There are the following main provisions of the draft Law of Ukraine "On Adult Education":

- directions, principles of adult education, principles of state policy in the field of adult education;
- main components of the adult education system;
- the term "adult education provider";
- requirements for quality assurance of adult education providers;
- the establishment of the National Council for Adult Education is envisaged - an advisory body that will have a significant impact on the formation of state policy in the field of adult education;

- legal basis for financial support of adult education, including the activities of the Adult Education Support Fund, the main purpose of which is to provide financial support to providers and applicants for adult education on a competitive basis;
- basic principles of public-private partnership and international activities in the field of adult education.

The draft law also defines the legal mechanisms of interaction between formal and non-formal adult education, aimed at expanding the access of adults to formal education and establishing convenient and flexible rules for adults to receive formal, non-formal, and informal education [5].

Conclusion. There are priority areas of adult education in Ukraine, which are aimed at forming:

- new and in-depth professional competencies that meet modern and future needs of the labor market;
- personal, communicative and social competencies, ability to carry out interpersonal and social interaction, resolve conflicts, communicate constructively with other people;
- learning competencies, ability to learn and self-improvement throughout life;
- civic competencies, the ability to responsibly and fully participate in public life, understanding of social, economic and political processes, patterns and trends;
- health and environmental competencies, the ability to plan activities and act in a way that is conducive to human health, the social environment and the environment;
- digital competencies, ability to use digital technologies for personal needs, professional activities and training;
- entrepreneurial competencies, skills of critical and creative thinking, the ability to be proactive and persistent, the ability to work with other people to solve common problems, project planning and management, use opportunities to implement ideas;
- cultural self-awareness and self-expression, understanding and perception of universal values, the ability to tolerant behavior in a multicultural world.

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