



**ADULTS AS NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN THE TERTIARY  
EDUCATION OF DENMARK AND UKRAINE: COMPARATIVE  
DISCOURSE OF STRUCTURAL, PSYCHOLOGIC AND PEDAGOGIC  
PECULIARITIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

Today with the demand of a knowledge-based society to adapt workforce to modern flexible and innovative production, sustainable and coherent adult education becomes an integral part of the European education system. The article offers a comparative analysis of the structural models, principles and new political initiatives of adults training in tertiary education systems of Ukraine and Denmark. The Danish context is the most important for the development of adult education policy in Ukraine as Denmark has gained a unique experience in creating of democratic adult training system existing as a component of lifelong learning. Multiple sources in Ukrainian, European and Danish educational environments at various time points from 2000 till 2020 have been used in data collection for this study. Adult education in Ukraine requires a substantial adjustment at the legislative, structural and technological levels.



Based on a comparative analysis of the adult education systems characteristic features of Denmark and Ukraine, the author has substantiated suggestions for the construction of efficient adult training models in higher educational institutions of Ukraine.

**Keywords:** Adult education; Lifelong learning; Danish dimension; Implementation; Tertiary institutions; Comparative analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

All the knowledge-based countries in the contemporary world pay great attention to the formation of suitable conditions for their nations' lifelong education at the present stage of social development (BOHLINGER, et al. 2015). European lifelong learning policy promotes education for all citizens of different ages, empowering them to participate equally in the strengthening of democracy (PUKHOVSKA, 2018). A significant role in this process is given to adults. They are considered to be carriers of a developed society humanistic values and without their active participation, progressive changes are impossible.

Moreover, the economy of an information-oriented society can be improved and the employment difficulties in the international labor market can be overcome, due to adults' flexibility, strong professional competences, and abilities to make reasonable decisions. That is why, in order to meet present challenges of innovative production, it is so important to inspire and turn adults into the education environment of the present-day society (EAEA, 2011).

The subject matter of our study is adults as non-traditional students in the tertiary education system of Denmark. We consider this focus to be essential since Denmark has gained long-standing positive experience in creating its own practice of adult learning (HOLM; NORDENTOFT; KNUDSEN, 2013). Moreover, this experience is based on the widespread political will to develop and encourage high education of adult citizens, engaging them into new sustainable and coherent ways of life (EAEA, 2014).

As for the second, Ukrainian, dimension of our research, it should be emphasized that from the point of view of adult education there are quite serious contradictions (KREMEN, 2017). On the one hand, on a country-wide basis, there is a clear tendency to reform the entire system of adult education. On the other hand, limited access to information sources, lack of coordination, internal resistance to innovations at local levels



prevent educational institutions from meeting their strategic goal to make high education equal, open, and accessible for all (ROLIAK, 2020).

Therefore many Ukrainian adult employees have no opportunities to renew their knowledge or change their professional trajectories and finally find it difficult to compete in the international labor market (OGIENKO; LYTOVCHENKO, 2010).

In order to overcome such contradictions, it is necessary to make a substantial upgrade of the entire education system in the country including formal and non-formal systems of adult learning. We consider that a comparative study will contribute to a better understanding of the educational situation with adults in advanced European countries and will help to justify new approaches to the training of adult citizens in Ukraine.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In order to judge adult education in a contemporary environment, we should examine the main concepts, ideas, and principles our study is based on.

In this context the research encloses the following:

- humanistic principles of education in a democratic society, researched by the following scholars as DEWEY (1916), BRUNER (1959), FREIRE (1970), LOVETT (1988), JARVIS (1995), KNOWLES (2015), etc.

The Ukrainian comparativists: KREMEN (2017), CHUGAI (2017), TERENCE and PUKHOVSKA (2018), substantiated the general trends in the development of humanistic adult education in democratic states;

- theory of free personality development in the Danish education system, at first formulated by NIKOLAJ FREDERIK SEVERIN GRUNDTVIG in the middle of the XIX-th century.

Grundtvig's ideas have had an everlasting impact on many areas of Danish culture, such as education, social life, and politics. He developed the Folk High School movement promoting principles of "education for all", including adults (GRUNDTVIG, 1968). Grundtvig's philosophy was inherited by Hal Koch and Alf Ross in the theory of "Democratization of Education and Society", and the concept of "Folkeoplysning" as a specific Nordic tradition of non-formal adult education (ROSS, 1949).

- conceptual provisions of the methodology of comparative pedagogy, grounded by



KANDEL (1955), HOLMES (1981), MEYER (1977), ECKSTEIN and NOAH (1969), etc.

- concepts of modern philosophy and methodology of adult education, investigated in the works of such Ukrainian scholars as LOKSHYNA, LUKINA and LIASHENKO (2004), OGIENKO and LYTOVCHENKO (2010), LESHCHENKO (2014);
- different adult education practices in Ukraine during its transition into the European environment were substantiated by Bykov, Bibik, Avsheniuk, et al (KREMEN, 2017).

Our comparative study of modern European environment demonstrated that the number of studies on the subject of adult education has increased significantly. The results show that the subject matter of pedagogical practices with the training of adult students are investigated by American and European scholars.

Thus BERGEVIN, MILANA and MCBAIN (2015), JENKINS (2017) research the issues relating to the philosophy, theory, and practice of adult education. The role of adults in the context of social and economic development in European dimension are discussed in the works of ELSBORG and PEDERSEN (2010), ILLERIS (2013), TILLEY (2014), KNOWLES (2015), TREINIENE (2017).

Although comparative research in education of adults is growing, investigations into the subject of comparative analysis with an emphasis on the Ukrainian dimension are still, with a few exceptions, rare (ROLIAK, 2020). Nevertheless, the content analysis of the received data from pedagogical literature and dissertations has demonstrated that the problem of adults as non-traditional students in Danish and Ukrainian environments, was not the issue of a systematic study. So that is why we think it requires a special inquiry.

More specifically the following goals will be considered: to analyze why adults are considered to be non-traditional students; to examine the peculiarities in the structure of adult education in Denmark and Ukraine; to define and characterize the basic adult education strategies and initiatives through their influence on the adult learning process, and; to substantiate the innovative approaches, technologies and methods used to motivate

adult learners to receive tertiary education.

### **3. METHODOLOGY (DATA AND METHODOLOGY)**

#### **3.1. Participants**

Basic information for this study was gathered from multiple sources of Ukrainian, European, and Danish educational environments at various time points from 1997 to 2020.

Three social and cultural generations of scientific articles that researched the topic of adults as non-traditional students in education system were chosen in this study. The following sources were analyzed: materials and theses of scientific conferences conducted by national and international scientific organizations discussing the problems of lifelong teaching and adult learning, Eurydice reports and monitoring on lifelong education in Europe; documents of European Association for Education of Adults (EAEA); European pedagogical periodicals, in particular: Special Issue in European Journal of Education: Adult Learning, Adult Skills and Innovation, Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, European Educational Research Journal, Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, Pædagogik, Danish Statistical Yearbook.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

The systematic search of the European documents was conducted in three stages. The first stage was “material collection”. This stage included compilation of existing research data (in the Internet base) according to the object of the conducted study. The second stage was “selection and inclusion”. The information was selected for its inclusion into the current study within the publication context, dates limits, publication languages – English, Ukrainian and Danish. The third stage “synthesis” was conducted through both writing up and live-discussions of the research results and critical feedback from Danish and Ukrainian scholars.

#### **3.3. Qualitative analysis**

The general data collection took place through Internet resources, in a short-term research project within the funds of the Royal Library of Denmark in Copenhagen and during the author’s personal participation in European ECER Conferences, seminars and round tables, arranged in Denmark and Nordic countries.

A case study has been used to formulate structural characteristics of adult learning



in its functional connectivity with the Danish and Ukrainian educational systems (Hodge & Sharp 2016). Using a case study approach that includes qualitative methods and is based on analytical induction and generalization, a “contextualized comparison” has been carried out to identify characteristic features of adult training in institutions of higher learning of Denmark and Ukraine (NOAH and ECKSTEIN, 1969; HOLMES, 1981; STAKE, 2005).

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1. Adults as non-traditional students within the humanistic approach: psychological and pedagogic context**

Our study testifies that adult education in Denmark was developed as a system based primarily on democratic and humanistic principles. For centuries prominent Danish educators and philosophers have referred to the main purpose of education as the “disclosure of the potential of every human-being”, “human development in harmony with the universe”, “moving from darkness to light” (ROSS, 1949; GRUNDTVIG, 1968; ZØLLNER, 2000).

As our study is focused on adults in tertiary education, at first we want to consider the existing definitions of adults as non-traditional students in Danish and Ukrainian environments.

The concept of adults as non-standard students is a relatively new phenomenon in the contemporary Ukrainian dimension, as the adult education system was completely destroyed after the crash of the Soviet Union and unfortunately, until now the law on adult education does not exist in this country (KREMEN, 2017). Though its Danish origin goes back to the XIX-th century humanistic traditions of “folkeoplysning” and “bildung”. These terms are difficult to translate into English but most frequently they are used in the meaning of “free and equal adult training” for “enlightenment” (ZØLLNER, 2000).

So the abovementioned Danish notions combine three important and interrelated components: adults, democracy, and education with an emphasis that every citizen is of great value for Danish society and has equal rights to get high education. Moreover, our study shows that in Danish democratic context adults can hardly experience a sense of being the ‘other’, so they can hardly be called untraditional (HOLM; NORDENTOFT; KNUDSEN, 2013). According to the Consolidation Act on adult education, passed by the Danish Parliament in 2017, they are equal with others, though they have some peculiarities (LBK nr.1038, 2017). In this part of our article, we discuss what features make adult



students differ from the rest.

Our investigation demonstrates that in Ukrainian and European environments the term ‘non-traditional’ is applied as a general expression for groups of adult students who have attained the age of maturity as specified by law (KREMEN, 2017; MILANA; NESBIT, 2015). We think that the existing psychological definition of an adult as “someone who is self-sufficient and responsible for her or his own decisions” may show such characteristic features thanks to which we can include adults to the non-standard cohort of tertiary education participants (TILLEY, 2014).

Most scholars recognize the fact that psychologically a mature student differs a lot from a young learner (KNOWLES, 2015; TREINIENE, 2017). Judging from humanistic theories what distinguishes adults from younger students are the following:

- responsibility for others. Adults live not for themselves alone, but for those who depend on them, these may be children, a partner, aging parents, friends, or co-workers (SADDLER; SUNDIN, 2020);
- awareness of their duties and obligations. We assume that such kind of perception makes their existence more stressful. But adults know how to change their emotional and external expectations. And it is these abilities that empower meaning and purpose for their further development and education (LOVELL, 1997);
- self-consciousness. Very often they know their goals which they are focused on, and have a self-target which they want to reach with the help of education, so they are usually very committed to learning (ELSBORG; PEDERSEN, 2010; GRIFFIN, 2019);
- independence. Adults can mobilize, organize and create their own learning environment, combining their intellectual capabilities with decision-making in a more general perspective, particularly in the professional context or future projects (CRAWFORD, 2004)
- experience of previous learning or professional activity. Previous practice makes adults more confident in choosing their own, usually non-standard, learning trajectories, choosing the best suited educational programs, creating the individual models of study (TREINIENE, 2017).

All these positive features make mature students more motivated and forceful,



assure their faster integration into the university environment, and contribute to much better achievements in the learning process.

But Danish and Ukrainian scholars point out that the experience of an adult may have both positive and negative influences on a lifelong perspective in education (THOMSEN et al., 2013; CHUGAI, TERENCE; OGIENKO, 2017; OGIENKO; TERENCE, 2018). Negative experiences such as: drop out from previous levels of education, unemployment, some problems with socialization, family troubles may throw adults away from continuing education in institutions of higher learning. In fact, the Danish higher education system is targeting this category of adults today. As for the Ukrainian environment, few studies recognize the importance of work with the problem groups of adults with negative experience. Since 2012 such Danish initiatives as 1) creation of Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACE); 2) formation of 13 ACE centers for high vocational education; 3) establishment of Danish qualification framework for lifelong learning (NQF) - have been launched with the aim of satisfying the needs in tertiary education of as many adults as possible (KOF, 2017).

The analysis offers evidence that today the system of Danish high education is working towards consolidating and expanding the structural changes in such ways as to focus on lifelong areas to give the opportunity to all non-standard citizens to receive tertiary education.

#### **4.2. Adults in Tertiary education: structural context**

For a detailed study of adults in the system of high education of Denmark and Ukraine, let us dwell on these countries' general structural characteristics. Our research reveals that Danish tertiary adult education consists of a broad non-formal component and formal constituent. The non-formal branch in Denmark plays a twofold role: 1) to enable self-fulfillment and empowerment of the participants, to provide education in democracy and to ensure equal opportunities and social cohesion; it is built on the traditions of the educationist Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, focusing on an individual choice and characterized by lack of grades and exams; 2) to support and prepare for formal education (EAEA, 2014; EACEA, 2019).

Moreover, non-formal education provision in the Danish dimension may create a basis for exams, if an adult learner chooses to finalize the education with a formal qualification and scientific degree (OECD, 2019). Higher Preparatory Exam (HF) in the





system of non-formal adult education helps mature students to assess their knowledge and to make the decision to enter the institution of high learning. In this aspect, we observe significant differences between Danish and Ukrainian dimensions. The matter is that admission to the Ukrainian universities is based on the results of the national evaluation tests. Many adults due to their age can hardly pass them. So the lack of a sector responsible for standardized preparation for the entrance tests (as HF in Denmark) makes it difficult for adults to continue their education at a higher level.

Table 1 illustrates some of the major relationship chains in the structure of Danish tertiary education.

Table 1: Structure of Tertiary Education in Denmark

Years of education	Mainstream high education system		High adult education	Non-formal adult education
13 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup>	Master & Ph.D. (LVU)		Master Degree (LVU)	Universities Extension Service
13 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup>	Bachelor (MVU)	Professional Bachelor (KVU)	Diploma (KVU)& (MVU)	Higher Preparatory Exam (HF)
13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>			Further adult education (KVU)	

Source: Table is prepared by the author based on the source:  
[https://www.daea.dk/media/333725/education\\_stor.jpg](https://www.daea.dk/media/333725/education_stor.jpg)

Judging from Table 1, the Danish formal tertiary education for adults is parallel to the mainstream system. It means that multilevel high education is provided to adults at all educational degrees. So in the structure of Danish tertiary education adults can apply to such programs as:

- LVU (langsigtet videregående uddannelse) Universities' research-based long-cycle programs, with the duration of 3-5 years;
- MVU (mellemløbet videregående uddannelse) University Colleges' Bachelor's medium-cycle programs, usually continue for 3-4 years;
- KVU (kortvarig videregående uddannelse) Academies' and Professional Colleges' short-cycle programs, providing usually 1,5-3 years (THOMSEN et al., 2013; OECD, 2019).

Our research has tended to focus on the fact that approximately two-fourth of adults in Denmark complete medium-term Bachelor's programs (AGERSKOV, 2012). From the first of January 2008, Danish university colleges provide specialized professional medium-term training programs (MVU) for adult students that are equivalent to 240 European Credit Transfer System (KOF, 2017). VIA University College, University College of South Denmark, University College Absalon, University College Copenhagen are famous for their special, unique educational programs for mature participants.



It is essential to note that according to statistical data long-cycle Master's programs (LVU) in universities are not so accepted among adults in Denmark (in Ukraine they are twice as popular). The problem is that Danish employers do not attach much significance whether their graduates possess Bachelor or Master degrees and their employee pay is relatively equal. In these circumstances, it is not unexpected that mature students prefer the Bachelor's degree as the final stage in their career path and regard the Master's degree as an unreal goal (UNESCO, 2012).

But in 2014-2020 13.4 million euro (1 billion DKK) has been allocated for new education opportunities and increased activity in adult education with the aim of giving more skilled workers a chance to receive a higher education (EACEA, 2019). Furthermore, since 2014 with a growing tendency towards research-based training in a knowledge-based society, Denmark has launched the multifaceted strategies of flexibility for adults (OECD, 2019). According to which any mature student, having completed a medium-term program, can apply for a long-term one through the system of credit units enrollment. After the first three years of professional education at the university, a Bachelor's degree is awarded. In this way, a Bachelor's degree in an adult training program may be both the final point or the starting part in the educational trajectory change. Logically education of adults may continue to the Master's degree, as well as the Doctor of Philosophy (Filosofisk Doktor - PhD) or the Doctor of Sciences (læge i pædagogiske Videnskaber) (EACEA, 2019).

In a result of the nationwide postmodern reforms, eight universities in Denmark embrace both non-formal (through extramural departments) and formal branches of adult education, possessing a high degree of autonomy and self-governance (EACEA, 2019). The first place in the regional structure of the formal tertiary education for adults belongs to the University of Copenhagen (Københavns Universitet), the oldest university in the country with almost twenty-six thousand students. Aarhus University (Aarhus Universitet), established in 1928 as a private institution, after the recent transformation, is operating under the control of the Danish Ministry of Education; and is almost twice as small as the University of Copenhagen. Aalborg University (AAU, founded in 1974) offers a wide range of programs in formal continuing adult education, ranging from Master's programs to single courses within different academic fields. The programs are targeted towards adults who have already completed education and wish to follow the training at a higher level or in another field. The youngest university in which adults are trained is located in Odense (Odense Universitet/SDU). It trains 5,500 students, one-third of which are nontraditional (ROLIAK, 2020).



Under the circumstances of contemporary transitional changes in Danish education, the short-cycle programs (KVU), dedicated especially for adults with previous professional experience, were launched as an alternative pathway of obtaining a higher qualification or degree. As our research shows, KVU programs in adult learning are dual, including the Diploma course, equivalent to 60 ECTS points, or Professional Bachelor's course, comprising 150 ECTS (ROLIAK, 2020). Short-cycle courses allow adult students to transfer credits from relevant educational or vocational experience into some other specialties. Therefore, more adults in a shorter period may join vocational teams satisfying labor market needs as well as the interests of every particular Danish enterprise (CEDEFOP, 2020).

If we now turn to the Ukrainian system of tertiary education for adults, we must point out that it is much more homogenous, and the network of similar educational institutions is much smaller, though just as in Denmark, it has both formal and non-formal constituents.

Non-formal adult education in Ukraine is to some extent compensatory. That is to say, it helps to compensate the deficiency in previous education. Our analysis points out that Ukraine has no mechanisms for the recognition and validation of non-formal results in the system of formal tertiary education (LOKSHYNA; LUKINA; LIASHENKO, 2004). That is why the term “non-formal adult learning” in Ukrainian environment is used only in the context of further training and professional development.

In general, mature students in Ukraine may be included in the following in-service programs both formal and non-formal: 1) postgraduate formal programs (broadening or changing the specialization, retraining, traineeship, internship); 2) vocational training of employees; 3) advanced training courses; 3) continuous professional development tied to needs of an industry or enterprise (OGIENKO; TERENCEK, 2018; LAZORENKO; KOLYSKO, 2019).

In order to obtain advanced degrees of a Bachelor, Master, and PhD in the structure of Ukrainian formal tertiary education adult students, among others, may join the medium-cycle (for Bachelor degree) and long-cycle (for Master degree) programs in the universities (KREMEN, 2017). The research signifies that there is no strong correlation between non-formal and formal adult education in the Ukrainian dimension (LAZORENKO; KOLYSKO, 2019). The disadvantage of the Ukrainian adult education system lies in the fact that the non-formal component of adult education in this country exists as a supplementary branch to the system of professional development and can hardly be of assistance to the mature students in their transition to a higher education degree.



The results in this part of the study indicate that adults are included in all the levels of tertiary education, both in Danish and Ukrainian environments. The next part of the article, therefore, moves on to discuss the innovative approaches and technologies used to motivate adult learners to receive tertiary education.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our research reveals that the Danish system of adult learning has such trends the use of which can lead to positive changes in the Ukrainian educational environment. In our opinion these tendencies that stimulate the mature students to apply to the institutions of high learning, include:

### **5.1. Creation of a flexible and permeable academic approach**

Our analysis shows that in the system of Ukrainian adult education, flexibility is to some extent restricted (KOHN, 2006). We see the reason for this in the historical fact, that being a part of the Soviet education system, Ukrainian adult learning, has been developing in the direction of centralization for a long time. And centralization processes slow down the possibility of quick transition into mobile and flexible technologies (DE WITT, 1961). We must consider, that even today it is difficult for mature people in modern Ukrainian high education to transform their learning trajectories in a short period. Very often if adult learners want to change their specialties or to increase their qualifications, they have to start a new program from the beginning, duplicating the content of the previous training. Repetition of learning is demotivating for adult people, leading to dropping out a lot of them from the system of high education (CEDOFOP, 2020).

In this aspect, the experience of Denmark may be instructive. Flexible education in the Danish context enables adult learners to be in motion within and across education and employment (TILLEY, 2014). Flexibility means that adults can adapt their learning pathways, to suit their interests and abilities, having relative control over where to study (in the university or college), when to attend classes (part-time, full-time, extramural), and, in many cases, how to take their exams (online or in a real-time) (LONG, 2018).

We have investigated that Denmark is the country that has created a democratic and efficient adult learning system in Europe due to the successful combination of flexibility and permeability in the education of adults. And this experience is particularly acute for Ukraine now.



In the Danish environment, permeability means that adult people can move to programs at a higher level, regardless of their previous pathways (EAEA, 2014). For example, permeable VET (Vocational Education and Training) routes in Danish tertiary education can be passed in a variety of ways. Moreover, VET should not be a closed path. As we have already mentioned in this study, Danish adult programs are broken down into modules, which enable movement across the system, offering opportunities for credit transfer or recognition of prior learning and professional experience (ROLIAK, 2020). Thus after the diploma course, an adult student may join the Bachelor's program in the university college or Master's in the university.

We think that for Ukrainian context new and innovative may be the Danish technology of identifying and recognizing adult learners' existing skills through the use of a portfolio or skills audit approaches and construction on them personal learning plans, including individualized teaching methods.

## **5.2. Humanistic ideas about an 'equal partnership' between an adult learner and a tutor**

Danish humanistic approach in the education of adults concentrates on a change of traditional roles of mature students and tutors into "one-to-one support" through professional coaching or mentoring. In contemporary Danish tertiary education, continuous coaching and mentoring can help to maintain mature persons' motivation to learn, making adult students to a larger extent co-responsible for their own learning (ELSBORG; PEDERSEN, 2010). They tend to get the most knowledge of their own life experience, from their research. They are able to identify the learning goals and weak points themselves, as well as to evaluate independently possible solutions for their problems (LOVETT, 1988).

So from the point of view of Danish free democratic philosophy, based on Nicolai Grundtvig's and Søren Kierkegaard's theories, Danish adult education is built on the students' own wishes and Danish tutor plays to a larger extent the role of an encourager of the students' achievements, focusing on the personal competences, individual needs and self-insight (OGIENKO; ROLYAK, 2009). Therefore, quality adult education is based on the learners' active involvement combined with the tutor's ability to rely on the mature learners' experiences (ELSBORG; PEDERSEN, 2010).

We should point out that historically adult education in Ukraine, similarly to Denmark, has developed through the humanistic approach (remember prominent Ukrainian scholars known all over the world Suhomlynskyi, Makarenko, Skovoroda) (OGIENKO;



LYTOVCHENKO, 2010). We consider that at the present stage Danish trends towards the humanization of methods in adult training meet the needs of Ukrainian adult education modernization. The gradual change of students-tutors roles (as in Danish pattern) can improve the quality of educational services and can be a serious means motivating adults to apply to higher educational institutions.

### **5.3. Transition from traditional to innovative learning technologies**

It should be accepted that the contemporary situation with the training of adults in Ukraine came to a serious contradiction. The actual question lies in the fact that from the point of view for the learning process organization, Ukrainian education moved to the multilevel model rather quickly, but methodologically we observe tendencies of exercising the traditional forms and methods in the process of adult training (ROLIAK, 2019).

Ukrainian authorities and teachers very often do not sufficiently understand and respect the fundamental differences between the cognition processes of young and mature people, and very often, especially in formal tertiary education, do not treat adults as non-traditional students and apply the same methods and tools as for the young students (LOKSHYNA; LUKINA and LIASHENKO, 2004; OGIENKO; LYTOVCHENKO, 2010; LESHCHENKO; YATSISHIN, 2014). So in the Ukrainian dimension, there is a threat of the true inconsistencies in the framework and goals of adult education with the means of outcome attainment.

Using Danish practice on those technologies in training of adults, that will motivate them to continue their education, we can confidently say that the main value of the learning process in higher educational institutions should lie in adults' needs and opportunities to go beyond the program material in a selective (tied to their previous experience) way, to search ways of constructing positive personal identity and fulfill self-realization (ILLERIS, 2013). Generally speaking, adult learning in Denmark is transformative, self-directed, based on "freedom of choice" (FREIRE, 1970) and aimed at helping adult learners to manage their individual educational pathways (ILLERIS, 2013).

Taken together, these details suggest that the new methodological model for training of adults in the system of Ukrainian tertiary education should be based on:

- the concept of critical thinking, with the techniques of active cognitive empowerment in the process of problem-solving;



- prioritizing of experienced-based, independent learning, developing responsible decision-making, self-organization, self-esteem, and self-confidence;
- introduction of modern information and communication technologies with distance or blended learning (the combination of online, Net-based learning and traditional face-to-face instruction);
- broad implementation of part-time, self-teaching projects, similar to Danish “Learning without a teacher”.
- shifting accents towards one-on-one or small group support and cooperative, peer tutoring;
- strengthening the value of the interest-based, meaningful learning process, rather than technical memorizing of the information;
- alignment of the acquired competences with relevant labor market skills (ILLERIS, 2004; HOLM; NORDENTOFT; KNUDSEN, 2013; MERCER; CLAY; ETHERIDGE, 2016; ROLIAK, 2019).

#### **5.4. Participation in research-oriented learning through career-based practical application**

When adults make the decision to continue their education, they would primarily choose more practical programs, directed towards a specific profession or their planned changes in a career (HOWARD; DAVIES 2013). So they would expect that acquired through these educational course skills and competences to be up-to-date and relevant to the labor market. Danish researchers Moos et al. (2005) judge that the XXI-st century professional knowledge increases three to four times during two years of specialized employment and the terms “evidence-based” and “research-oriented” are closely related to the professional knowledge and competences in the post-modern educational environments.

As our study demonstrates, adults in Danish tertiary dimension, are educated within programs that have complex curricula, combining theoretical content and academic research with the practical application of the received results in the real spheres of their professional activities. Furthermore, Danish colleges and universities have a flexible system of connections between their research projects and the workplace through close links and cooperation with real employers (THOMSEN et al., 2013). These employers are involved in the design of adult training programs as well as their continuous adaptation and implementation to meet the changing needs of the labor market (FISCHER; BOREHAM; NYHAN, 2004).



Comparative analysis of Ukrainian and Danish systems of tertiary education for adults has demonstrated, that from the perspective of the practical application of evidence-based learning, these two countries possess the same priorities. But it is important to mention that Ukrainian programs in formal tertiary adult education are structured in such a way that theoretical instruction and research-projects in a substantial amount are done before the adult learner has the opportunity to experience it in practical activity.

Most scholars press the point that particularly for non-traditional students such tradition of theory and praxis discrepancy can be demotivating (LOVETT, 1988; MERCER; CLAY; ETHERIDGE, 2016; LONG, 2018). The investigation of Danish tertiary education has demonstrated that continuous practical training, reinforced by research projects and combined with theoretical instruction, can increase adults' motivation and engagement with the program (ELSBORG; PEDERSEN, 2010).

So the Danish experience of building the direct partnership between high education institutions and employers is needed to ensure the Ukrainian adult education model. It can help to increase the career-related relevance of a curriculum and make it more attractive to mature people.

Our investigation proves that post-modern Denmark is constructing a highly efficient adult education system in which its structure, content, and methodology correspond to the major goal: to give the right for everybody in the knowledge-based society to improve competences to meet the needs of the contemporary labor market.

The results of this study indicate that:

- adult student education comprise the idea of autonomous and independent study;
- adults as non-traditional students require nonstandard approaches motivating them to continue their education and to receive advanced degrees in institutions of higher learning;
- in the structure of adult education formal and non-formal branches can effectively cooperate, interrelating with each other through the system of credits and certificates validation;
- European credit transfer system implies the possibilities for adult students to change their educational trajectories, taking into account their previous experience and according to their future plans;





- co-existence of long-term (broad) programs; medium-term and short-term (narrow) programs make adult education flexible and adaptable to the mature students' needs;
- curricula relevance to the labor market, innovative learning technologies, non-standard and career-based approaches increase adults participation in tertiary education programs and create better respond to the learners' requirements.

The study has come a long way towards enhancing our understanding of the fact that Ukraine and Denmark have both similar and different features in the adult education dimension. We assume that in the process of Danish experience implementation in the Ukrainian educational environment, the outcomes of this particular research may give a clearer insight into the general prospects of adults promoting into the system of higher learning

This research is not exhaustive. The necessity of continuous study is determined by the importance of the discussed problems. We see the prospects for further comparative investigation in the design of the content and methods for the building motivation of adult students to apply to various educational programs both in Nordic and Ukrainian dimensions.

## 6. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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