

## THE MODERN CONCEPT OF ADULT EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

### *O CONCEITO MODERNO DE EDUCAÇÃO DE ADULTOS NA UCRÂNIA*

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The intensity of transformation processes and the significant pace of globalization in social relations development are increasingly creating new challenges for the educational system. As a result, they define the role of education as a crucial area that shapes the effectiveness of social and economic progress. Today, special attention is paid to adult education. It can be described by personalization of direction in development, close interconnection with other socio-political institutions, and the ability to increase Ukraine's competitiveness in all spheres (science, politics, economy, social sphere, etc.). The article aims to identify the peculiarities and key trends of adult education in Ukraine. Research goals also include identifying key factors of adult education in contemporary society, the fundamental principles of the development of this sphere, and the problems of adult education development as a structural element of the modern education system. During the research, descriptive, comparative, and analytical-bibliographic methods were applied to study the scientific literature on adult education issues. Systemic-structural, comparative, logical-linguistic methods, abstraction, and idealization were used to analyze and process data in the research area.

**Keywords:** Adult education, Adults' learning forms, Andragogy, Continuing professional development, Continuous learning activities.

#### **RESUMO**

A intensidade dos processos de transformação e o ritmo significativo da globalização no desenvolvimento das relações sociais criam cada vez mais novos desafios para o sistema educativo. Como resultado, definem o papel da educação como uma área crucial que molda a eficácia do progresso social e económico. Hoje, é dada especial atenção à educação de adultos. Pode ser descrito pela personalização da direção do desenvolvimento, pela estreita interligação com outras instituições sociopolíticas e pela capacidade de aumentar a competitividade da Ucrânia em todas as esferas (ciência, política, economia, esfera social, etc.). O artigo visa identificar as peculiaridades e as principais tendências da educação de adultos na Ucrânia. Os objectivos da investigação incluem também a identificação dos factores-chave da educação de adultos na sociedade contemporânea, os princípios fundamentais do desenvolvimento desta esfera e os problemas do desenvolvimento da educação de adultos como um elemento estrutural do sistema educativo moderno. Durante a pesquisa foram aplicados métodos descritivos, comparativos e analítico-bibliográficos para estudar a produção científica sobre questões de educação de adultos. Métodos sistêmico-estruturais, comparativos, lógico-linguísticos, abstração e idealização foram utilizados para análise e processamento dos dados da área de pesquisa.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação de adultos, Formas de aprendizagem de adultos, Andragogia, Desenvolvimento profissional contínuo, Atividades de aprendizagem contínua.

## Introduction

According to the forecasts of international and intergovernmental organizations, adult education plays and will continue to play a significant role in both personal and societal development in the XXI century.

The theoretical part of this research justifies the relevance, structure, and role of adult education within the educational system. In the theoretical analysis of the research topic, the principles of the adult education concept are revealed, along with the advantages of this component of the educational process.

The practical part of the research includes an overview of adult education directions in Ukraine, shortcomings in legal and methodological regulation of adult education transformation, and identifying key factors indicating the increasing role of this subsystem of education in contemporary society.

Based on the research findings, conclusions have been drawn regarding the issues raised. In particular, it is noted that most scholars associate the prospects for the development of the adult education system primarily with the following global socio-economic processes:

- integration;

- informatization;
- increasing the active age of a person;
- intercultural interaction;
- intensified migration processes;
- the growing importance of human capital.

Altogether, these processes contribute to the overall societal development.

The practical aim of the study is to identify the key factors in the development of the adult education system. The study also aims to outline the advantages and shortcomings of this process, as well as the directions and trends that have developed over the past years in Ukraine.

### **Literature Review**

The research in the field of adult education involves its exploration as a complex, multifunctional, socio-educational, and sociocultural system aimed at satisfying adults' professional, educational, and personal needs. This is one of the most important factors influencing the life of society and all its structural elements, as well as a mechanism for regulating social behavior and a means of social control (Shamanska, 2023).

The system of providing knowledge to adults is based on the theory of andragogy, which is specific to the education of individuals in this age category. The scientific basis of this field includes technological and methodological tools and instruments for adult education. It also relies on the psychology of adult education, which is based on the necessity of continuous education throughout a person's life (Bondar-Pidhurska and Glebova, 2023).

Adult education has numerous unique characteristics that need to be considered when implementing the andragogical model. It's worth noting that modern students can be classified as adults. Andragogical principles and technological teaching methods for adults are still in the process of formation and development but continue to impact the educational sphere (Marchuk, 2020).

The number of adults in need of education is constantly increasing worldwide for several reasons:

- The need to fill gaps in education and professional training (communication skills, language proficiency, computer literacy, social adaptation, etc.).
- Rising qualification requirements lead to regular upskilling and retraining of specialists.
  - The necessity to retrain individuals who have lost their jobs.
  - The need to educate migrants for their employment.
  - The requirement for acquiring new professions and the socio-psychological adaptation of discharged military personnel.
- The constant need for professional development and integrating adults with special needs into society.
  - Social rehabilitation and spiritual development of individuals who have committed crimes and are in places of deprivation of liberty through various forms of education and enlightenment (Marchuk, 2020; Gioti, 2023).

The issue of adult education development has always been. It is currently at the center of attention for both Ukrainian and foreign researchers (Kremen et al., 2018; Marchuk, 2020; Benavot, 2018; Boyali et al., 2018). Its main principles are outlined in several international documents. The most important aspects that determine the development of adult education are the philosophical and pedagogical necessity of educational process continuity, normative regulation of education of people in this age group, and educational professionalization of this students' category.

In substantiating the relevance of studying the adult education system, it is worth considering the stance of A. Marchuk on the diversity and importance of andragogues' role (organizers and teachers who provide adult education). In general, they include:

- teachers of pedagogical and andragogical disciplines;
- teachers with a narrow-specialized profile who, in addition to specific subject knowledge, also have andragogical knowledge and technologies;

- researchers of andragogy as a science and object of methodological work;
- methodologists, educators, and inspectors;
- social workers, administrative staff, etc. (in companies in the industrial and social sectors) (Marchuk, 2020).

Notably, European countries have long paid great attention to the problem of training relevant specialists. Highly developed countries have long traditions in adult education and have made significant progress in this area. Almost all European universities have departments or offices of adult education (Kovalchuk et al., 2022).

At the European educational level, discussions are underway on how to most effectively develop a training and development system for teaching staff to work with adults. It refers to the theoretical, methodological, legislative, and technological level of such training aimed at forming and developing androgyny professional competence.

This issue is also receiving great attention in the United States, in particular, the Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE). Thus, the achievements of scientists and practitioners in the field of adult education are highly appreciated worldwide, and it is noted that the problem of preparing teachers to work with adults should be the subject of a separate active scientific research (Yahupov, 2023).

At the same time, it should be noted that in Ukraine, as in most countries, the professional training of andragogical teachers in higher education institutions is not systematic. Moreover, educational programs for the development of andragogical competence are not widespread in pedagogical educational institutions. As a rule, specialists providing academic services for adults in Ukraine do not have special andragogical training. At best, they are teachers of higher education institutions. However, as a rule, they are people with a pedagogical education but without a relevant specialty or practitioners without special pedagogical training. For this reason, the formation of a vocational training system for teaching staff to work with adults, as well as retraining and advanced training of andragogists of various fields and levels, is an urgent issue today (Herasymenko, 2021; Anishchenko, 2020).

In particular, the key provisions of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century Report state that "...lifelong learning is a

multifaceted dialectical process, built on everyday experience and characterized by intense efforts to understand complex data and facts. It combines scientific and practical knowledge, improving natural abilities and acquiring new knowledge and skills. This process involves both additional effort and, at the same time, the joy of discovery. In terms of the personal experience of adult learners, it is also the most complex form of social relations, as it involves the application of a culture of communication, social work and the organization of the educational process at the same time" (Lukianova, 2022; Radomski, 2023).

The concept of continuing learning is based on the following principles:

- lifelong learning;
- self-improvement and self-development of a person throughout life;
- self-motivation to learn (Terenko, 2019; Ridei et al., 2023).

Adults' education refers to learning that lasts throughout a person's life. A lifelong learning approach means that people should continue to learn and renew their education not only through non-formal forms of education (everyday learning) but also through repeated formal education and updating knowledge, skills and abilities, given their existing level of education. In addition, people can also participate in non-formal education and study beyond formal education in the workplace, in government institutions, clubs, etc.

Lifelong learning involves studying different aspects of people's lives and improving the skills related to their professional activities, as well as developing skills that are necessary or simply interesting for them (Lukianova, 2020).

With the emergence of modern requirements from education seekers, new trends in adult education are emerging in many world countries. These trends are necessary for the educational process to adapt to new technological changes. According to current research, the most critical trends in adult education are as follows:

1. The emergence of so-called "hybrid skills": today, it's not enough to focus solely on one area of expertise; people need various professional and personal skills throughout their lives.

2. Multi-channel education: in addition to traditional in-person learning, the role of online education will continue to grow. Online education should be adapted to the real world in a way that allows people to apply acquired skills to their own activities immediately.

3. The need for "soft skills": communication skills, teamwork, critical thinking, and quick decision-making will be the primary skills employers expect from their employees, and the education system should instill these skills in students (Cardona et al., 2023; Benavot et al., 2022).

Considering the aforementioned trends, the necessity of investments in adult education at both the national and international levels is worth noting. Social and tangible benefits of investments in this field include:

- increased employment and income levels among the population with more active participation in public life;
- improved labor productivity and professional qualifications;
- reduced spending on unemployment assistance;
- retirement-related payouts;
- social advantages;
- improved overall population health;
- reduced crime rates;
- a continuous increase in the well-being and self-realization of adults (Scholtz, 2023; Onopriienko et al., 2023).

## Materials and Methods

A practical study of current trends related to adult education in Ukraine was conducted using the statistical method. It was applied to the data processing of the dynamics of this sphere's development. Also, the comparative and analytical-structural methods were used to study the types and features of the adult education areas.

## Results

An assessment of the legislative acts and methodological literature regulating the formation and implementation of education in Ukraine helps to identify the key areas of adult education. They are a part of the general educational process system. These key directions also ensure the acquisition or improvement of professional and personal skills of this age group (Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, most skills in the adult education system are aimed at acquiring new skills or optimizing existing skills and competencies that a person has acquired through education and work experience.

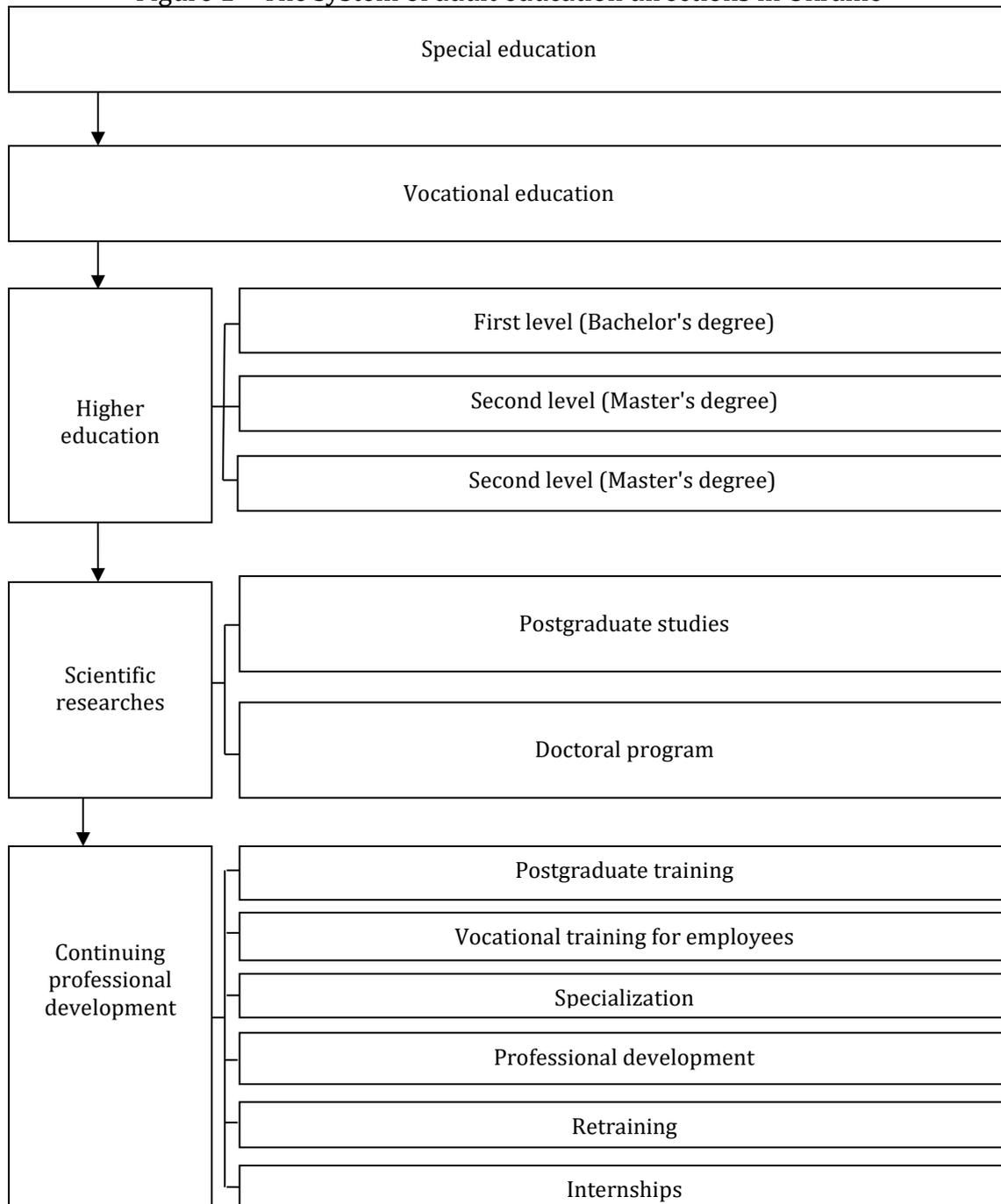
The learning of adult education seekers is basically a process aimed at the purposeful acquisition of special knowledge by students, the development of knowledge defined by the field of education. In addition, this process seeks to form new skills to increase the overall efficiency of work and personal effectiveness. At the same time, the main elements of vocational training are the provision of primary education, retraining and advanced training of education applicants following the needs of professional activities. These elements can be carried out both at the workplace during the production process and in vocational education institutions or HEIs. In addition, courses that involve retraining and/or advanced training are aimed at adults who want to acquire new skills.

Based on the foregoing, continuing professional development implies an ongoing learning process. During this process, specialists who have graduated from university or completed postgraduate training have the opportunity to improve or optimize their professional skills. Continuity in adult education is focused on a long time throughout the entire adult's working life.

According to L. Moskalenko, until recently, all changes in the educational sphere were mostly narrowly focused due to the peculiarity of the long-term development path in previous years, in which the institutional model, methods and techniques of the previous system were constantly reproduced in these educational processes. Modern attempts to adapt the education system to socio-economic and cultural challenges in the country's development, highlighting adult education as an

independent area in the educational process, indicate its systemic changes. Thus, the gap between the directions of development of the educational system and social needs is gradually decreasing (Moskalenko, 2018).

Figure 1 – The system of adult education directions in Ukraine

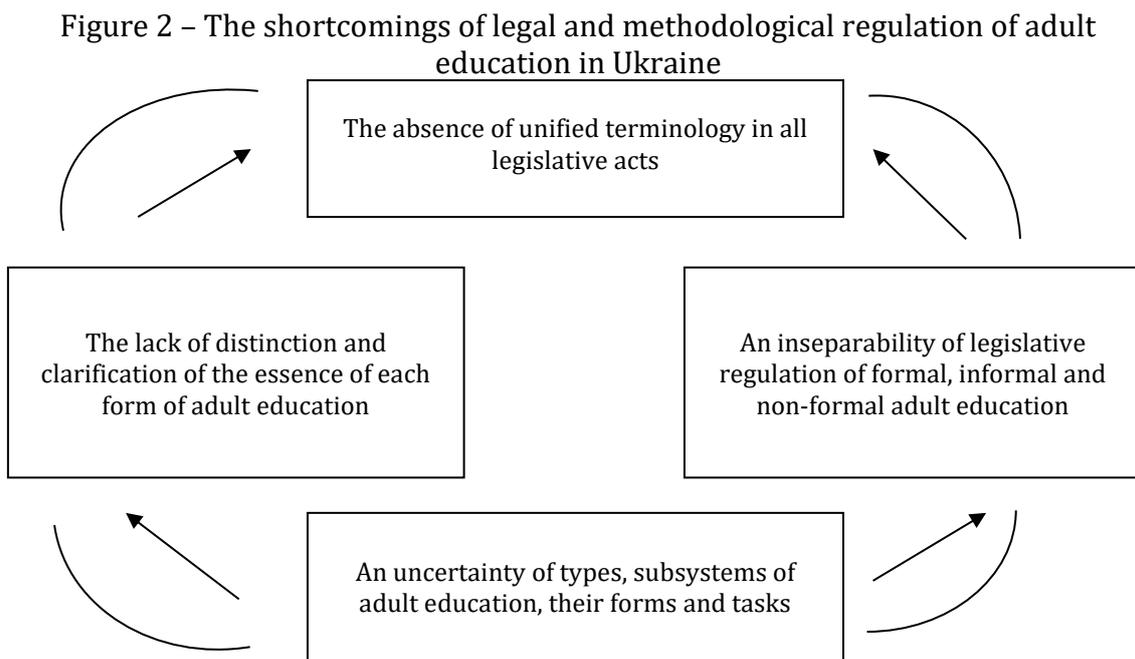


Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (Kremen et al., 2018; Marchuk, 2020).

According to the President of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, V. Kremen, adult education, as a structural part of the lifelong learning system, is one of the most critical innovations in the country. First, it requires transforming the legal framework and improving the quality of organizational support for its development (Kremen et al., 2018).

Considering the above, it is worth noting that, according to many scholars, the current legislation on adult education in Ukraine needs to be completed and perfect. Moreover, as a structural element of the educational system, it cannot comprehensively regulate the development of adults' educational process.

The shortcomings of the legal and methodological regulation of educational institutions aimed at providing educational services to this category of students are shown in Figure 2.



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (Marchuk, 2020).

The absence of a unified terminology system in the regulatory framework is one of the primary reasons for the lack of high-quality centralized management in this area. Today, the most widely used categories in the scientific and methodological literature and legislative acts regulating this area are "lifelong learning", "training of able-bodied people", "continuous professional development",

etc. At the same time, introducing the definition of "adult education" in the Law of Ukraine "On Education" requires the adaptation of other legal acts and methodological sources. For this reason, the concepts of "adult education," "lifelong learning," and "continuous education" should be clarified and their interconnection clearly defined.

Among other issues, according to scholars, it is vital to introduce new definitions into the legislative field. These include such definitions as formality, informality, and non-formality of adult education. It is also essential to take the following actions:

- to distinguish and clarify the essence of each form of adult education will help to overcome contradictions between them;
- to level the monopoly of educational institutions that provide formal education;
- to develop an understanding of the complementarity of all existing links and areas of education in terms of organizing effective adult learning.

From this perspective, it is most relevant to study the experience of European countries. These countries have long and successfully adopted regulations on formal, informal and non-formal adult education at the legislative level. Other categories requiring legislative clarification include, in particular, the innovation of technologies in adult education, an overview of andragogical education and other basic concepts for this age group's complete design of the education system.

An essential aspect in regulating this area is the establishment of relations between a person, society and the state in the implementation of adult education. Moreover, the absence of separate legislative support for adult education in Ukraine does not comply with the customary and legislative norms introduced in the European Union, where adult education is an essential element of the European direction of society's development. Bringing education policy in Ukraine closer to the norms and values accepted in the international community is intended to help activate the approximation of the national education system to the European educational and cultural space. On the other hand, legislative regulation of adult education will help establish Ukraine's state policy in this area and will stimulate

the scientific institutionalization of adult education in the relevant scientific field. There are all the prerequisites for this, as structures and institutions that provide a range of practical services for adult education and postgraduate education are actively working and developing in the country.

A significant contribution to the development of adult education has been made through its institutional support through the adoption of the Concept of Adult Education in Ukraine in 2011 the emergence and development of educational organizations, including adult education and business schools, over the past twenty years. Such intensification of the adult education institutionalization process in Ukraine raises the issue of proper legislative support for these processes. Their necessity is reinforced by the declared strategic goal of the state - to ensure effective and comprehensive development of adult education as an independent structural unit of the Ukrainian education system. Given the importance of education in implementing Ukraine's strategic initiatives for European integration, this approach is fully justified. According to scholars, adult education indicates the socio-economic, scientific, technical and cultural level of state development (Demchenko et al., 2021; Kremen et al., 2018; Marchuk, 2020).

While evaluating the features of the adult education concept, let us formulate the main factors that indicate the increasing role of this subsystem of education in modern society:

1. The main component of present times is changes in all aspects of social life. The rapid improvement and complexity of technologies and the introduction of new types of technical support for the economy, as well as the production sector, require constant personnel training. According to the results of statistical studies, the adult education system will have a significant positive impact on the pace of global economic development by improving the quality of labor potential of people who have been trained before. This is one of the ways in which society can hope to overcome the socio-economic crisis.

2. The world is becoming a market with a significant level of competition between different countries. Those countries with a more advanced education system are becoming leaders in this competition, as they have the ability to respond

to any "challenge" by increasing productivity in a short time. According to experts, the main indicators of a competitive national education system are, in particular, indicators of the level of development of the personnel training system as a basis for designing lifelong learning.

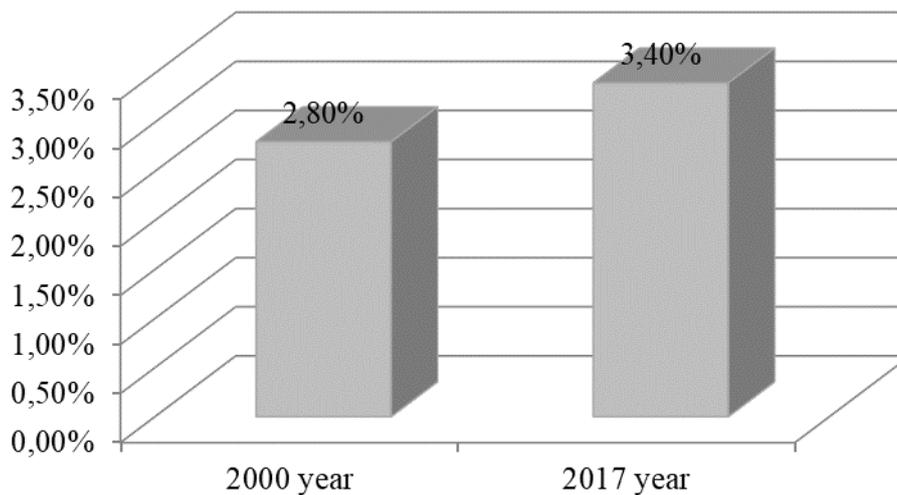
3. Education is most in demand both in times of economic growth and in times of crisis. During economic growth, the importance of adult education increases due to favorable changes (formation of motivation for personal development, the possibility of increasing rationality in the use of time). At the same time, in times of social development slowdown or social crises, attention to the process of adult education is determined by market needs and, in particular, is dictated by the need to acquire knowledge in new activities, new skills, etc.

4. The intensity of population aging requires new approaches to the perception of this phenomenon and the introduction of a strategy to ensure the educational process of people of this age. Nowadays, the trend of supporting "active aging" is gaining popularity globally. It involves increasing the economically active age by implementing exercise programs and educational activities for older people. In addition, educational programs for adults, in most cases, are aimed at forming an active civic position, which is extremely important given the political situation in Ukraine.

5. In the XX century and since the beginning of Russia's war in Ukraine, migration flows have been rapidly increasing, and the phenomenon of migration has become a component of all global problems. It significantly affects the socio-economic and political spheres of life, as well as key aspects of the labor market in many countries. The number of migrants worldwide has increased from 2.8% of the population in 2000 to 3.4% in 2017. In other words, that is 49% and currently reaches 258 million people (Figure 3).

The experience of European countries shows that the effectiveness of the policy of integrating migrants into society can be achieved through education. Many European countries take the necessary measures for migrants' integration and successful adaptation. In addition, various educational programs play an essential role in this process (Lukianova, 2020).

Figure 3 – The dynamics of the number of world migrants, % of the global population



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (Lukianova, 2020).

## Discussion

The modernization of adult education programs in Ukraine using the world's leading experience of effective differentiation by target groups can intensify successful changes in the educational process. At the same time, it is highly effective to combine different forms of adult learning for the purpose of their lifelong professional development (Perea-Rodríguez et al., 2021).

Notably, formal and non-formal adult learning actually exists in Ukraine. Formal education is a form of adult education aimed at achieving a certain level of education or qualification in public or recognized private institutions that are part of the national education system. This form also includes postgraduate education - postgraduate, doctoral, professional development and retraining. Formal adult education usually takes place in universities and colleges (Spurava and Kotilainen, 2023).

Non-formal adult education, primarily vocational education, where curricula are planned and implemented by people or organizations to increase the competencies and skills of learners, has become increasingly popular in recent

years. Non-formal education is an alternative or complementary form of education to formal education. It is provided through vocational training, online courses, on-the-job training, etc. For quite a long time, formal education did not recognize the curriculum and the way non-formal educational institutions organize the educational process. However, according to researchers, the non-formal type of educational process is an essential and favorable factor that determines the activity of the country's social progress (Biesta, 2021).

An essential form of adult education recognized by UNESCO is self-education. It involves people taking measures to develop personal cognitive activities and applying life and social aspects of their own development. Thus, the combination of three forms of learning aimed at personal development, following the system of their needs, as well as expectations and planned actions, through the application of integrated approaches to the organization of such processes can, on the one hand, have a highly effective impact on both the individual result and the satisfaction of the needs of society, the market, the state. On the other hand, it can provide a person with the opportunity to study in educational institutions of various forms throughout their lives, which is the essence of the adult learning process (Khatsaiuk et al., 2021).

In terms of transforming forms of adult education, the experience of the United Kingdom is successful. The country has reformed not only the structure of formal education but also revived the work of non-formal adult education institutions. As a result, formal education has acquired qualitatively new features, such as flexibility and mobility. These features are necessary to allow adults to gradually specialize or improve their professional level without excessive efforts to change the education system while maintaining a stable pace of learning and achieving high results. The intensification of non-formal education has allowed adult learners to alternate formal and non-formal educational activities (Demchenko et al., 2021)

The legislation on adult education is a set of laws adopted by the supreme body of state power, as well as other normative acts that establish the procedure

and conditions for the realization of the right to education throughout the life of adult members of society.

The subject of legal regulation of adult education is divided into two main areas:

1. activities of the educational institution;
2. the relationship between adult learners and their place of work (ensuring the right to additional leave, convenient work for studying, recognition of learning outcomes, etc.).

The foreign experience convincingly shows that for the effective implementation of lifelong learning, and especially adult education, it is necessary to create a legislative framework that provides for the responsibility of the state, entrepreneurs, local authorities and public organizations to support the professional and personal development of citizens, and establishes the procedure for financing this activity, requirements for its certification, etc.

In most European countries, there are laws and regulations on the mechanisms of regulatory regulation of adult education. They define its goals, principles and tools of state support, interaction between the main actors of the educational process, their rights and responsibilities, and ways of coordination between them.

## **Conclusions**

Overall, the scientific literature analysis on the research topic showed that in the context of economic restructuring and Ukraine's active transition to market conditions, it is increasingly important to develop the ability and readiness of our country's population to adapt to new economic and social realities. Adult education should address the peculiarities of the Ukrainian mentality, which is formed during the long-term development of national history and culture, as well as consider modern world experience.

Currently, educational activities are transforming from a means to an end of human development. Therefore, lifelong learning is becoming a logical adaptive

result of transformational changes in the national educational process. Obviously, this trend is driven primarily by the country's integration into the European and international community, where ensuring comprehensive, equitable, high-quality education and lifelong learning motivation are among the key priorities.

At the same time, today in Ukraine, adult education is not distinguished as a structural element of education. Therefore, it does not meet the existing social and economic and social needs, as well as hinders the modernization of the knowledge-based economy under the European economic and cultural space requirements. The foregoing states that today, there is an urgent need for a theoretical and methodological analysis of the current state of adult education in Ukraine and systemic measures for its development.

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