

## THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION REFORMS ON DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN TURKEY

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### KEY WORDS:

education reforms, Turkey, vocational education and training, continuing vocational education, lifelong learning.

### Abstract

The article analyzes modern education reforms in Turkey and justifies their impact on development of continuing vocational education in the country. It was found that the reforming of vocational education and training in Turkey is carried out by the Ministry of National Education. It was stated that the system of vocational education in Turkey is aimed at performing innovative functions in the specialists' vocational training, since their relevance is confirmed by the experience of developed countries and the European Union. However, the strategies for continuing education development in Turkey complement formal, non-formal and informal education to create a flexible system of lifelong learning.

It was determined that core elements in reforming vocational education include establishing the links between the system of vocational education and the labour market; developing vocational standards and prospective training standards; designing vocational education curricula taking into account competency- and module-based approaches and learning outcomes; strengthening social partnership in vocational education; justifying and implementing the concept of lifelong learning etc. It was indicated that the lifelong learning concept implementation required that Turkish government develop and approve legislative and regulatory documents (the Law on Vocational Qualification Authority; the Non-Formal Education Institutions Decree etc.), aimed at realizing core principles of a Memorandum on Lifelong Learning in Europe.

It was concluded that the above-mentioned reforms related to the lifelong learning concept implementation in Turkey are extremely important for the country's innovative progress in the European area. However, there still exists a range of issues relevant for modern reforming processes in vocational education, namely, coordination and compliance of vocational training outcomes with the labour market needs; development of standards in vocational education and corresponding educational standards; strengthening of social relationships with employers and their involvement into active participation in the process of improving vocational education etc.

It was proposed that positive aspects of Turkish experience in reforming vocational education in the context of developing continuing vocational education should be implemented into the national system of professional (vocational) education in Ukraine.

**Introduction.** Transformational changes in society predetermined by globalization and integration processes, establishment of the single European area and enhancement of international communication facilitate continuing development of education systems towards their reforming based on the international requirements and practices.

Being a country, which strives to compete and defend its social and economic position in the global market, Turkey launched education reforms and started restructuring the education system including vocational education and training (VET). These actions were aimed at meeting the rapid changes in all aspects of life, ensuring modernization and adaptation to the socio-economic needs, as well as compliance of the existing education system with the international requirements, including those that are of high priority in the European Union. The driving factor in implementing education reforms

in Turkey was the need for the subjects of education to be ready for effective implementation of vocational functions in a dynamic and changing life, which necessitates acquisition of necessary qualifications with further continuing upgrading of vocational knowledge, abilities and skills of all members of society, regardless of their age, gender, welfare and social status.

**Analysis of recent researches.** Ukrainian and foreign scholars study the education systems in Turkey and their development under reforming. Having thoroughly explored the system of vocational education in Turkey in the 20th century, the Ukrainian scholar T. Desiatov outlined those challenging aspects that should be solved in the early 21st century [3]. Studying development trends in the system of Turkish higher teacher education, S. Usmanova conducted comparative analysis of educational levels in Ukraine and Turkey [6]. The scholar concluded that Ukrainian

and Turkish higher education systems are characterized by the advantages of multi-level structure of higher education, namely, the implementation of a new education paradigm and the possibility of integration into the global educational space [5]. Researches by A. Gazizova and L. Gure analyze the strategies for reforming higher education in Turkey and the issues of teacher training in higher education institutions. The researchers state that the characteristic feature of higher education reforms in Turkey is the search for an optimal correspondence between Turkish traditional higher education and the new trends caused by the Muslim country's participation in the Bologna process [1]. In his researches, F. Yakubov monitors and highlights achievements of Turkish universities in recent decades, namely, university autonomy was increased; their financial dependence on the state was reduced; academic freedom of teaching staff was promoted; the structure of universities internal management was improved; the European model of research activities was developed; the adaptation of universities to changing conditions was enhanced etc. [8]. While analyzing the national education organization in Turkey, S. Sapozhnykov reviews modern higher education and indicates that Turkey's higher education management is centralized and carried out by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), which includes the central office as well as provincial and foreign representational offices [4]. The main duties of MoNE include planning, monitoring and managing all educational services in different institutions; establishing formal and non-formal education institutions; organizing Turkish citizens' training abroad; developing and approving curricula; coordinating activities of official, private and public organizations; updating facilities in education institutions [4].

Having analyzed researches by Turkish scholars (Ünal Başusta, Mustafa Yunus Eryaman, Sava Küce, Leslie David, Özelli, M. Tunç, Cem Tarhan, Berna Tezcan, Özgener Şevki et al.), M. Chykalova describes how the leading universities in Turkey organize and support the education policy of continuing education and vocational development of hospitality specialists under modern conditions of tourism education in the country [7]. The scholar mentions, "every year there are innovative approaches, systems and traditions, which depend on many factors of

economic, political and social development of the country" [7], thereby enhancing relevance of the studies on modern education reforms in Turkey that are being continually developed.

Thus, researches by Ukrainian and foreign scholars prove their diversity in studying the strategies for improving higher education quality in Turkey. However, the current reforming processes and changes in Turkish education systems do affect vocational schools, whose experience in modern development can be perspective and advisable while modernizing vocational education in Ukraine.

**The aim of the study.** The aim of the study is to analyze modern education reforms in Turkey and consider their impact on development of continuing vocational education in the country.

**Results.** The reforming of vocational education in Turkey is carried out by MoNE, which is responsible for general education management, comprehensively reforms all areas of VET and higher education. Presently, the national education structure in Turkey is regulated according to the Basic Law of National Education (1973), and its main types are formal and non-formal education. Formal education provides individuals of certain age with regular training based on the programmes designed for different purposes. Formal education is provided by preschool, primary, secondary and higher education institutions. Non-formal education involves short courses, social learning, distance learning in public and private schools, vocational education centres, which are coordinated by MoNE.

Preschool education is optional for children under the age of 6; subsequently, they are to obtain primary and secondary education. Modernization of secondary education in Turkey began with the adoption of the Primary Education and Secondary Education Law in March 2012. It states that four-year secondary education in the country can be of two types: general high secondary education (general high schools, Anatolian high schools, natural sciences high schools, social sciences high schools, fine arts and sports high school, teaching schools, multi-programme high schools) and vocational secondary education (technical and industrial vocational high schools, technical and industrial schools for girls, vocational schools of hotel management and tourism, business schools, medical schools, multidisciplinary schools).

Consequently, the structure of modern secondary school in Turkey comprises education institutions called “vocational schools”, which, in our opinion, are quite similar to Ukrainian high vocational schools.

The system of vocational secondary education in Turkey includes two main aspects: theoretical aspect (training in vocational schools) and practical one (training in enterprises). Changes in the system of students’ vocational training started long ago. The latest of them date back to 2001, when a law that determined the creation of new and strong links between vocational schools and enterprises (cooperations) of industry and trade was passed in Turkey. The vocational training policy in vocational schools is still carried out mainly under the Law on Apprenticeships and Vocational Training (1986), adopted by MoNE. This law is aimed at implementing vocational education, vocational guidance and training and contains requirements for the subjects of education in vocational schools and the conditions for their vocational training. In this context, it must be noted that in Turkey, vocational schools provide training for more than 130 professions; after finishing studies, graduates receive the qualification of a specialist and a technician. Without violating the norms of laws, the system of vocational education in Turkey is aimed at performing innovative functions in the specialists’ vocational training, since their relevance is confirmed by the experience of developed countries and the European Union.

It is well-known that the innovative concept of lifelong learning (LLL) is the fusion of two logics within its framework, namely, the logic of education (the development of citizens’ abilities) and the logic of production (an optimal use of human resources), aimed at uniting two systems, namely, the general education system and the vocational education one. Therefore, the strategies for continuing education development in Turkey complement formal, non-formal and informal education to create a flexible system of LLL.

Particularly significant changes are needed in the system of VET; its core elements are the following: establishing the links between the system of vocational education and the labour market; developing vocational standards and prospective training standards; designing vocational education curricula taking into

account competency- and module-based approaches and learning outcomes; strengthening social partnership in vocational education; enhancing qualification of teaching and managerial staff engaged in vocational training area; meeting the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework; justifying and implementing the concept of LLL; supporting the Vocational Qualifications Agency; promoting vocational education value; raising awareness of vocational education; developing vocational information systems [9].

Therefore, the today’s system of vocational education in Turkey is aimed at providing future specialists with quality vocational training in order to ensure welfare of Turkish citizens, support and enhance economic, cultural and social development of national and social cohesion, so that Turkey may become a constructive, creative and outstanding partner of modern civilization. On the way to the European area, it is important to promote higher education in Turkey, which signed the Bologna Declaration in 2001. The country’s higher education became stage-based after the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was introduced, and now graduates obtain academic diplomas recognized by the EU.

Focusing on the priorities of the Copenhagen Declaration (2002), identified for the candidate countries and member states of the European Free Trade Association and European Economic Area, as well as social partners in strengthening VET cooperation, Turkey has been implementing initiatives aimed at the citizens’ needs over the past decades. Thus, it ensures achieving strategic goals of joint activities, namely, improving quality and effectiveness of VET systems in the EU, facilitating access to education for all citizens, providing openness to the world [2].

Based on a new global need for improving quality of Turkish education up to the level in European or other developed countries, guided by the national resolutions outlined in plans for the country’s development, governmental programmes and the Declaration for General Education Goals, Turkey has been approximating quality of educational services to social and economic demands and principles of LLL for decades. It considers LLL to be a strategic initiative and the most flexible system that can provide optimal conditions for

continuing expansion of knowledge; ensures an organic link between various kinds of education or vocational experience and qualification; enables to adequately resolve issues related to the gap that exists between demand and offer in the labour market and adapt Turkish vocational education to European standards.

The Continuing Education Concept is the basis for Turkey's strategic development programmes, including a long-term strategy (Long Term Strategy (2001-2023)) aimed at increasing Turkey's stability and competitiveness on global scale; society informatization; completing the processes of education systems "equalization" up to the level required for membership in the European Union.

In September 2011, the changes in the MoNE led to creating a separate group of specialists in its structure, whose activities include solving those tasks related to the LLL concept implementation in Turkey, namely:

- creating a policy of education and training integration required for LLL, with the exception of compulsory education and ensuring its implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- ensuring access to non-formal education and openness of educational services;
- providing those citizens who did not obtain formal education, dropped out or did not finish formal education at a certain stage and require further training with general or vocational education through non-formal education;
- preparing and presenting non-formal education facilities for education and training outsourcing, as well as their agreement with the Education Council;
- providing services related to non-formal education in private education institutions;
- providing all population groups (students, retirees) with access to comprehensive and vocational education under the Law on Apprenticeship and Vocational Training (1986).

Thus, the LLL concept implementation required that Turkish government develop and approve legislative and regulatory documents (the Law on Vocational Qualification Authority, 2006; the Non-Formal Education Institutions

Decree, 2006; the Primary Education and Education Law, 2012, etc.), aimed at realizing core principles (everyone should be able to acquire new basic skills; significant investments should be made in human resources; innovative teaching and learning methods should be promoted; the level of educational qualifications should be assessed; mentoring and counseling should be developed; the education system should be at most approximated to national reality etc.) of a Memorandum on Lifelong Learning in Europe (Lisbon, 2000).

**Conclusions.** The above-mentioned reforms related to the LLL concept implementation in Turkey are extremely important for the country's innovative progress in the European area. However, there still exists a range of issues relevant for modern reforming processes in vocational education, namely, coordination and compliance of vocational training outcomes with the labour market needs based on its quantitative and qualitative analysis; development of standards in vocational education and corresponding educational standards; design of curricula and training programmes based on vocational skills and modular technologies; strengthening of social relationships with employers and their involvement into active participation in the process of improving vocational education; enhancement of VET teachers and managers' vocational skills; adjustment of VET quality to the European qualifications framework; implementation of the LLL concept; establishment and functioning of vocational qualification bodies required to increase awareness of vocational education prestige and create vocational information systems, etc.

The implementation of these and other education reforms in today's Turkey is based on comprehensive and systematic approaches, LLL principles and citizens' needs for high-quality training. While modernizing Turkish education in general, such guidelines contribute to establishing a modern and flexible system of vocational education, since its development results are a rather perspective research area.

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## Реферат

### Вплив освітніх реформ у Туреччині на розвиток безперервної професійної освіти

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#### КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА:

Освіта, реформи, Туреччина, професійно-технічна освіта та підготовка, безперервна професійна освіта, навчання впродовж життя

У статті проаналізовано сучасні освітні реформи в Туреччині та обґрунтовано їхній вплив на розвиток безперервної професійної освіти в країні. З'ясовано, що реформування професійної освіти і навчання у Туреччині здійснює Міністерство національної освіти. Встановлено, що система професійно-технічної освіти Туреччини націлена на реалізацію інноваційних функцій у професійній підготовці фахівців, актуальність яких підтверджується досвідом розвинених країн і Європейським Союзом. Водночас стратегії розвитку безперервної освіти в Туреччині передбачають взаємодоповнення формального, неформального, інформального навчання задля створення гнучкої системи освіти впродовж життя.

Визначено, що ключовими елементами модернізації професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти є формування зв'язків системи освіти з ринком праці; розвиток професійних стандартів і перспективних стандартів підготовки; розвиток куркулумів професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти на засадах компетентності, модульності й навчальних результатів; зміцнення соціального партнерства; обґрунтування і запровадження концепції навчання впродовж життя та ін. Зазначено, що для реалізації концепції освіти впродовж життя турецьким урядом розроблено і затверджено законодавчі й нормативно-правові документи (Закон щодо створення Управління професійних кваліфікацій, Декрет про інституції неформальної освіти та ін.), спрямовані на виконання ключових принципів Меморандуму безперервної освіти країн Європи.

Зроблено висновок, що означені реформи щодо реалізації концепції освіти впродовж життя в Туреччині є вкрай важливими для інноваційного поступу країни до європейського простору. Однак перспективними залишаються проблеми, актуальні для сучасних процесів реформування системи професійно-технічної освіти Туреччини, а саме: узгодження й відповідність результатів професійного навчання з потребами ринку праці; створення професійних стандартів і відповідних їм освітніх стандартів; зміцнення соціальних відносин із роботодавцями та залучення їх до активної участі в удосконаленні системи професійної освіти тощо.

Доведено, що позитивні аспекти турецького досвіду реформування системи професійно-технічної освіти у контексті розвитку безперервної професійної освіти доцільно імплементувати в національну систему професійної (професійно-технічної) освіти в Україні.

## Реферат

### Влияние образовательных реформ в Турции на развитие непрерывного профессионального образования

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#### КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА:

образование, реформы, Турция, профессионально-техническое образование и подготовка, непрерывное профессиональное образование, обучение на

В статье проанализированы современные образовательные реформы в Турции и обосновано их влияние на развитие непрерывного профессионального образования в стране. Выяснено, что реформирование профессионального образования и обучения в Турции осуществляет Министерство национального образования. Установлено, что система профессионально-технического образования Турции нацелена на реализацию инновационных функций в профессиональной подготовке специалистов, актуальность которых подтверждается опытом развитых стран и Европейским Союзом. В то же время, стратегии развития непрерывного образования в Турции предусматривают взаимодополнение формального, неформального, информального обучения для создания гибкой системы образования на протяжении жизни.

Определено, что ключевыми элементами реформирования профессионально-технического образования является формирование связей системы образования с рынком труда; развитие профессиональных стандартов и перспективных стандартов подготовки; развитие куркулумов профессионально-технического образования на основе компетентности,

протяжении жизни

модульности и учебных результатов; укрепление социального партнерства; обоснование и внедрение концепции обучения в течение жизни и др. Отмечено, что для реализации концепции образования на протяжении жизни турецким правительством разработаны и утверждены законодательные и нормативно-правовые документы (Закон о создании Управления профессиональных квалификаций, Декрет об институте неформального образования и др.), направленные на выполнение ключевых принципов Меморандума непрерывного образования стран Европы.

Сделан вывод, что указанные реформы, касающиеся реализации концепции образования на протяжении жизни, в Турции крайне важны для инновационного развития страны в европейском пространстве. Однако перспективными остаются проблемы, актуальные для современных процессов реформирования системы профессионально-технического образования Турции, а именно: согласование и соответствие результатов профессионального обучения с потребностями рынка труда; создание профессиональных стандартов и соответствующих им образовательных стандартов; укрепление социальных отношений с работодателями и привлечения их к активному участию в совершенствовании системы профессионального образования и др.

Доказано, что позитивные аспекты турецкого опыта реформирования системы профессионально-технического образования в контексте развития непрерывного профессионального образования целесообразно имплементировать в национальную систему профессионального (профессионально-технического) образования в Украине.

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