EDUCATION OF THE THIRD AGE PEOPLE AS IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE USA AND CANADA

ABSTRACT
The article deals with peculiarities of the education of third age people in the USA and Canada. The definition of lifelong education is analysed. Lifelong education is viewed as human development through a process of continued support, which encourages and enables individual to acquire knowledge, values, skills and understanding he will need throughout his career, and creative use of all public roles, circumstances and environments. Legislative basis of education of people of the third age are singled out. Mondale Lifelong Learning Act, created a legal basis for lifelong opportunities for personal development and providing conditions for a person to fulfill his potential in society in any age. Lifelong Education Act opened wider opportunities for education sphere, including the integration of education in business, industry and public life. Benefits of economic, political, social and cultural nature of adult education are analysed. It is important that the degree of involvement of this segment of population in educational activity essentially determines such characteristics of social development as unemployment, country's ability to adapt to social, economic and cultural changes, the rate of development of society in socio-economic terms, the level of independence (financial, functional, social) of adults. Thus, the development of adult education can be seen as a means of achievement of performance characteristics of social development at necessary level. Functions of educational programs for seniors are singled out: professional (acquiring new competencies or improving previously acquired); training (continuous personal development and self-realization of the individual); adaptation (increases a person's ability to adapt to rapidly changing social, economic, technological and cultural conditions of life).

Keywords: USA, Canada, third age people, education, lifelong education, function, Mondale Lifelong Learning Act, Lifelong Education Act.

АНОТАЦІЯ
У статті розглядаються особливості освіти людей третього віку у США і Канаді. Проаналізовано сутність поняття «освіта впродовж життя». Освіта впродовж життя розглядається як розвиток особистості завдяки процесу постійної підтримки, що заохочує та надає можливість особистості здобувати знання, цінності, уміння та розуміння, що є необхідними для кар’єри, творчого виконання соціальних ролей. Виділено законодавчі засади освіти людей третього віку. Мондельський акт неперервної освіти заклав основи для неперервного розвитку особистості та реалізації її потенціалу у суспільстві у будь-якому віці. Акт неперервної освіти сприяв створенню додаткових можливостей для освітньої сфери завдяки інтеграції освіти у бізнес, промисловість та суспільне життя. Проаналізовано позитивний вплив освіти дорослих у економічній, політичній, соціальній та культурній сферах.
Ступень залучення населення у освіту дорослих нерозривно пов’язаний з такими характеристиками соціального розвитку як безробіття, здатність країн адаптуватися до соціальних, економічних і культурних змін, ступінь соціально-економічного розвитку країни, ступінь фінансової, функціональної та соціальної незалежності дорослих. Розвиток освіти дорослих розглянуто як засіб досягнення показників соціального розвитку на необхідному рівні. Виокремлено функції освітніх програм для людей третього віку: професійна (добуття нових компетенцій та удосконалення наявних); підготовча (постійний особистісний розвиток та самореалізація особистості); адаптивна (підвищення здатності особистості адаптуватися до постійних змін у соціальній, економічній, технологічній і культурній сферах).

Ключові слова: США, Канада, люди третього віку, освіта, неперервна освіта, функція, Мондельський акт неперервної освіти, Акт неперервної освіти.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 21 century all characteristics of American and Canadian society are largely determined by relevant indicators of the age cohort of elderly people, because they are more educated, active and financially secure (compared to previous generations of this age group) and this social group is an important segment of users of economic, social, educational services, and therefore influences political and cultural life. It is obvious that seniors increase access to education, creating an effective learning environment and educational programs based on their experience in order to increase personal and professional development, has a positive impact on improving the quality of all indicators of social development.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to analyse peculiarities of the third age people education in the USA and Canada.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The analysis of scientific literature suggests that the US education system has always been in the field of Ukrainian researchers such as N. Bidyuk (2009), O. Ogienko (2014). The problem of adult education was researched by such Ukrainian scientists as N. Bidyuk (2009), O. Ogienko (2014). Specifics of seniors education was analysed by M. Hunt (2004) and S. Jacoby (2011). Peculiarities of the functioning of the university of the third age were systematized by K. James (2018). Procedural and content peculiarities of seniors learning are presented in the works of R. Kahn (20113) and S. Katz (2006).

However, analysis of scientific literature makes it possible to peculiarities of the third age people education in the USA and Canada has not been the subject of systematic study and special analysis. To fulfill the aim of our research we will apply the following methods: analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, analogy, comparative historical method, genetic method, problem-chronological method.

RESULTS

The definition of lifelong education was formulated in accordance with the European Initiatives on Lifelong Learning and American Council on Education. Lifelong education is viewed as human development through a process of continued support, which encourages and enables individual to acquire knowledge, values, skills and understanding he will need throughout his career, and creative use of all public roles, circumstances and environments (Keith, 2002). This definition includes several basic ideas of the concept of lifelong education: a) making a lifelong human potential and the possibility of its
implementation throughout life; b) permanent acquisition or improvement of knowledge and skills necessary for a successful life; c) recognition that learning can occur in different forms and media: formal, informal and non-formal; g) the need for an integrated support system for people, that can provide acquisition of critical competencies.

In the USA the concept of lifelong education was crystallized in 1976 with the adoption of Mondale Lifelong Learning Act, which included a section on education of adults and pensioners. This document has declared maintenance of American society of relevant capacity for lifelong education for all citizens, regardless of previous education, gender, age, ethnicity, social and economic situation. In fact, the Act created a legal basis for lifelong opportunities for personal development and providing conditions for a person to fulfill his potential in society in any age. The main principles, forms and methods of lifelong learning due to rapid technological changes significantly affect society's views on education. In the United States, “Lifelong Education Act: opened wider opportunities for education sphere, including the integration of education in business, industry and public life. Business sector and industry use educational resources to train their future professionals, maintain a high professional level of employees and their retraining for new professional challenges in the rapid technical and technological development. On the other hand, higher education institutions expand the scope of activities involving training seniors through development of programs of informal education (Keith, 2002).

Interest in lifelong education both in Europe, Canada and in the USA increased rapidly in the early 1990s. A new direction of research in this area actively promoted the idea of lifelong education, and it became part of the state policy, particularly toward global competition and economic restructuring, as the company, based on knowledge gained prevalence. Accordingly, due to these circumstances the need to maintain professional competence of experts by investing in human capital formation arose. Lifelong education is one of the main factors of social development. Therefore, adult education in the USA and Canada is considered in the context of the concept of “human capital”, according to which the costs of education are considered as investment in the future of social development. Accordingly, it is necessary to draw attention to the benefits of economic, political, social and cultural nature of adult education. It is important that the degree of involvement of this segment of population in educational activity essentially determines such characteristics of social development as unemployment, country’s ability to adapt to social, economic and cultural changes, the rate of development of society in socio-economic terms, the level of independence (financial, functional, social) of adults. Thus, the development of adult education can be seen as a means of achievement of performance characteristics of social development at necessary level.

Rapid technological development in the USA and Canada led to awareness of the need to create conditions for education of people of all ages. It is obvious that in the learning society adults are one of the largest segments of citizens in the population of the USA and Canada, who require services of educational institutions in various forms. Educational programs that are worked out for socio-demographic group have appropriate physical and temporal resource for learning, and secondly, presuppose usage of experience and competence for professional and life goals. Most of these programs are focused on support and assistance to adults in solving problems in professional, social and personal spheres with which man is faced entering retirement phase of life. That is, education of seniors in the USA and Canada combines two main areas of activity – professional and leisure, and occurs in two forms – formal and informal (Jacoby, 2011).
Formal education is aimed at a relatively small portion of adults who want to acquire new qualifications or improve already existing to continue their professional careers. The basic form of education is informal education. According to the International Standard Classification of Education, informal education is any organized educational activity that may take place in schools and beyond, has different duration and includes people of all ages. Informal education is the most common form of education for seniors because of the specially selected program of study (according to interests and taking into account the previous experience of a person), flexible organization and combination of different forms of educational activities, which, in turn, motivates people to further personal development while maintaining its cognitive capacity, intellectual capacity and psychological stability. Also cognitive activity of people in senior age is a way of self-realization, in terms of demographic aging it hinders society from destructive social processes. So, the main functions of educational programs for seniors are: professional (acquiring new competencies or improving previously acquired); training (continuous personal development and self-realization of the individual); adaptation (increases a person's ability to adapt to rapidly changing social, economic, technological and cultural conditions of life) (Keith, 2002).

It is important to stress that the second half of the 20th century in the United States of America is characterized by future democratization of education since it has expanded access to education for different age and social groups of American citizens. This was due to rapid technological and socio-economic progress of the country, which helped to expand access to adult and senior Americans in higher education institutions. A number of government documents have declared support for educational programs for population. In particular, Civil Rights Act of 1964 initiated a program of financial aid to attract adults and seniors in public colleges and universities; Higher Education Act of 1965 provided increased expenditures on programs that have contributed to the accessibility of higher education to different age categories of Americans. Thirdly, 1960s–1980s is a period of community colleges in the United States. The main objective of community colleges – fulfill educational needs of people living in a particular area. Adult education has taken an important place in the activities of colleges. They have established cooperation with universities and provided students transfer training, developed the so-called “mission access”, that is the possibility of learning to all ages and social groups. This situation contributed to a significant increase in the number of educational programs for seniors in university campuses. The main purpose of these programs was the socialization of seniors (James, 2018).

The most common form of informal education of seniors in Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are university of the third age, which began in 1973 in France. In the United States of America, by contrast, the basic form of education of seniors are lifelong education programs, which are implemented at the lifelong learning institutes, which operate at higher education institutions and comprise about 800 institutions throughout the country; Osher lifelong learning institutes, operating in more than 100 university campuses in almost all states, and Elderhostel, from 2004 – Road Scholar – educational pensions for seniors in campuses. They cover a wide range of educational programs, courses at universities or colleges, evening classes, humanitarian education program for seniors organized by trade unions. Establishment of the institutional model of education of seniors in the United States occurred in 1962, when Institute for Retired Professionals at the New School for Social Research was organized (James, 2018).

It is important that this cohort of people had a high capacity for self-organization and self-government, as being participants in educational programs they planned course
taking into account their knowledge, competence and experience. In general, the study of seniors in the United States of America and Canada is based on segregation model that is separate from other age groups, and provides independent functioning of the institution from college or university. However, it should be noted that the issue of segregation study of seniors began in 1960s, with the occurrence of this age group in colleges and universities. Seniors reject the idea of a separate study, arguing the possibility of exchanging experience between generations. However, seniors prefer individual training, because they want to communicate more with their peers. Analysis of the organization of training activities for lifelong education institutions shows that learning occurs mainly on the basis of segregation model using integrative studies. It is implemented in particular through joint lectures, workshops, discussion clubs and excursions. The characteristic feature of the activities of these institutions is its own self-organization and self-management: the students make their own curriculum and manage educational process. Funding of these programs is provided by university funds, partly by the participants. There are also government programs supporting seniors education.

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that different approaches to aging and old age lead to diverse, sometimes polar approaches to education of seniors in American cultural and educational environment. American gerontologist J. Keith (2002) classified them into four categories: a) abandonment of seniors; b) provision of social services for people dependent on it; c) to encourage seniors to participate in core activities for the purpose of self-improvement; d) providing conditions for self-fulfilment and personal development of older persons.

Over the past decade the United States of America the number and variety of educational programs for the seniors has significantly increased. Colleges and universities offer programs of continuing education, lifelong education, training, volunteering at campus tours and tourist programs. With the appearance of more socially active and educated generation of pensioners there is a growing request for new programs related to professional development. Accordingly, institutions of higher education faced the task of expanding the range of programs offered – from informal to formal vocational guidance. Among the leaders in providing education of seniors in the USA is lifelong learning institutes. The purpose of the Institute of Education is to implement lifelong learning opportunities of adults and seniors (elderly).

Higher education institutions offer more formal educational programs, including such forms of training as lectures, seminars and workshops, but without the typical forms of control (tests, examinations and so on). Regarding the organization of the learning process, training is based on the principles of self-organization and mutual experience exchange of participants. The curriculum is formed on the basis of cognitive needs and desires of the audience. However, creation and development of such programs would not be possible without an interest in education of seniors. It is obvious that American retirees are concerned about policies and legislation that is related to their lives. American Association for Retired People is one of the most influential non-profit organizations protecting and lobbying interests of seniors in the USA. It is aimed at people aged 50 years and over. Although the organization is not a direct organizer of educational programs for seniors, it sponsors them, as well as research and educational grants in the field of gerontology. As for government officials and politicians, their interest presupposes not only support of the electorate, but also has an economic justification: healthy, educated and socially active people in this age segment of Americans contributing to the economic stability of the country, especially in a situation of demographic aging of American population. Generally accepted point of view
among scientists in the field of gerontology and among gerontologists practitioners and educators is the idea of successful aging, which provides meaningful conscious aging and full of meaning life in its post-pension phase. Education in old age is one of the main factors of successful aging, not only because of the possibility of professional activity and, therefore, social and economic status of the person, but that continuing education and training activities significantly affect the health and behavioral repertoire of the individual throughout life (Kahn, 2013).

Integration is the main motivation for seniors to take part in educational pogroms. Higher education for seniors has been available in the USA since the second half of the 20th century, however, the increasing number of people in this age group extended learning opportunities and a number of educational programs has increased. Colleges and universities ensure the implementation of education for seniors – from uncredited programs that combine learning and travelling to credited programs that provide a certificate or degree. Since the second half of the 20th century educational programs targeted toward seniors began to grow rapidly in response to technological advances in the USA and Canada: universities and colleges offer courses free of charge, community colleges develop cooperation with the centers for seniors, conducting training both in schools and remotely. It is important to emphasize the role of information technology in the organization of education of seniors. They make it possible to create distance learning courses and reach a larger audience of students, including those who for some reason – physical, financial, technical – are unable to attend classes in campus (Keith, 2002).

Seniors are also involved in social welfare through volunteer activities and social service. Projects related to training for volunteer work in the service sector, offering courses in partnership with local agencies, where older people acquire new knowledge and skills that would later be able to apply to volunteer work. Such cooperation is carried out in all types of public organizations (public schools, hospitals, historic community and others.) The maintenance of social capital is provided by inclusion of each individual resource in the system (school, community, government) for the benefit of the general public purpose. This idea is particularly effectively fulfilled in the so-called programs of inter-generations education involving representatives of different age groups for joint training courses. It is important to stress the fact that welfare of the community depends on the status of seniors, as conditions of demographic aging of population the greatest burden on the social and economic sphere of the country. Studies show that the more seniors are healthy, active and socially integrated, the lower the strain on resources and social services. Thus, seniors access to education is a step towards the fulfillment of their potential for the welfare of the community. The concept of lifelong education recognizes basic human rights, including the right to education, regardless of age, is “the basis of universal understanding of humanism” (Jacoby, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

Lifelong education is human development through a process of continued support, which encourages and enables individual to acquire knowledge, values, skills and understanding he will need throughout his career, and creative use of all public roles, circumstances and environments. Basic ideas of the concept of lifelong education are: a) making a lifelong human potential and the possibility of its implementation throughout life; b) permanent acquisition or improvement of knowledge and skills necessary for a successful life; c) recognition that learning can occur in different forms and media: formal, informal and non-formal; g) the need for an integrated support system for people, that can provide acquisition of critical competencies.
Colleges and universities ensure the implementation of education for seniors - from uncredited programs that combine learning and travelling to credited programs that provide a certificate or degree.

The main functions of educational programs for seniors are professional (acquiring new competencies or improving previously acquired); training (continuous personal development and self-realization of the individual); adaptation (increases a person's ability to adapt to rapidly changing social, economic, technological and cultural conditions of life).

Future research work will be aimed at analysis of peculiarities of the third age university functioning in Europe.

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