

Transforming Ukrainian Education: Adapting to the Changing Job Market and the Influence of Global Practices

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Annotation. In this article the modern challenges in education, particularly in Ukraine, and the necessity for educational reforms to adapt to the changing job market is discussed. It highlights the importance of practical learning experiences, such as project-based learning and internships, as well as the role of public and private partnerships in enhancing education. The article also addresses the influence of global examples, including Finland, Singapore, and Israel, on the development of education systems and the creative economy.

Keywords: education reforms, practical learning experiences, project-based learning, internships, job market adaptation, educational partnerships, public-private collaboration, creative economy, global education examples, Ukraine education challenges

Трансформація української освіти: Адаптація до змінюваного ринку праці та вплив глобальних практик

Анотація. У статті розглядаються сучасні виклики, що постають перед освітньою системою України, а також необхідність реформ для адаптації до вимог змінюваного ринку праці. Автор акцентує увагу на тому, що традиційні підходи, зосереджені на теоретичних знаннях, не відповідають вимогам сучасного світу, де важливі не тільки знання, але й практичні навички, інноваційність і гнучкість у швидко змінюваному професійному середовищі.

У статті підкреслюється важливість впровадження практичного навчання через проектно-орієнтоване навчання, стажування, кейс-методи та розвивається ідея співпраці між академічними установами, бізнесом і державною владою. Це дозволить не тільки покращити підготовку студентів, але й підвищити їх конкурентоспроможність на ринку праці.

Актуальність теми зумовлена необхідністю інтеграції теоретичних знань з практичним досвідом для підготовки молоді до викликів професійного світу. Окремо розглядається досвід таких країн, як Фінляндія, Сінгапур та Ізраїль, де освіта інтегрована з реальними потребами ринку праці, що сприяє розвитку креативної економіки та інновацій. Фінляндія є прикладом відкритого навчання, яке поєднує когнітивні та практичні навички. Сінгапур наголошує на розвитку цілісної особистості та інтеграції технологій у навчальний процес. Ізраїль вирізняється тісною співпрацею освіти, бізнесу та інновацій, що дозволяє швидко адаптуватися до нових викликів.

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Особливу увагу приділено досвіду України, де через відсутність державної підтримки громадські та волонтерські ініціативи заповнюють прогалини, надаючи підтримку освіті, зокрема в умовах війни. Роль громадських організацій у реалізації освітніх проектів та ініціатив є надзвичайно важливою в умовах соціальних та економічних змін.

У статті зазначається, що реформи освіти повинні бути частиною постійного процесу адаптації програм до нових вимог економіки та ринку праці. Співпраця між державою, бізнесом та громадським сектором є важливою умовою створення гнучкої освітньої системи, здатної реагувати на потреби сьогодення та майбутнього.

Стаття пропонує шляхи адаптації української освіти до вимог глобального ринку праці, наводячи приклади міжнародної практики, які можуть стати основою для ефективних освітніх реформ в Україні.

Ключові слова: реформи освіти, практичний досвід навчання, навчання на основі проектів, стажування, адаптація до ринку праці, освітні партнерства, співпраця між державним і приватним секторами, креативна економіка, глобальні приклади освіти, виклики освіти в Україні.

Introduction

Problem Statement. The modern labor market demands from professionals not only theoretical knowledge but also the ability to adapt to rapidly changing conditions, apply innovative approaches, and work in an environment of continuous technological progress. As a result, the education system needs to be flexible and responsive to these changes, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical skills, which is essential for preparing competitive professionals. The Ukrainian education system, like many others, faces the challenge of reforming to adapt to new labor market demands and globalization challenges.

The relevance of this topic arises from the need for educational reforms that should focus not only on improving theoretical training but also on developing practical skills that will allow students to effectively integrate into the modern labor market. In this context, it is important to examine the experiences of countries that have already implemented successful educational models, particularly Finland, Singapore, and Israel, where education is closely aligned with the real needs of the labor market, fostering innovation and a creative economy.

Analysis of Recent Research. Recent research and publications highlight the necessity of transforming educational systems in response to the demands of the modern labor market. Specifically, works by authors such as Sahlberg, P. [1], Fullan M. [2], Schleicher, A. [3], Gibson D.[4], Pink, D. [5].

Of course, in the context of adapting Ukrainian education to the requirements of the modern labor market, it is important to take into account the cultural, social, and historical characteristics of the country, which may limit the direct application of foreign models without appropriate adaptation. However, this does not mean that we should ignore research and educational practices from other countries, particularly those that have similar socio-economic conditions or are actively investing in the development of the creative economy.

Research from other countries can serve as valuable benchmarks or examples for developing our own educational reforms, but they should be considered in light of the specific Ukrainian context. For example, Finland's experience in integrating practical skills into education may be useful, but its implementation in Ukraine will require adaptation, taking into account our realities: economic conditions, organizational features of education, technological development levels, as well as cultural traditions and educational system requirements.

Accordingly, it is possible and necessary to reference international research, but with consideration of the context in which Ukraine finds itself. This allows for a comparison of different educational models and the selection of the most effective practices for adaptation to our system, taking into account national interests and specificities.

Thus, there are international studies on this topic, but their number is limited, and few have been analyzed considering the Ukrainian experience. Therefore, the relevance of this article is high.

However, despite numerous studies, Ukraine still lacks clear models for integrating practical skills into educational programs, and there is insufficient literature addressing the adaptation of the education system to the needs of the creative economy and innovative industries.

Aims and Objectives of the Article. The aim of this article is to investigate the process of adapting Ukrainian education to the changing labor market, particularly in the context of globalization and technological innovations. The objectives of the article are:

To analyze the main issues facing Ukrainian education in the context of labor market demands.

To review international experiences (Finland, Singapore, Israel) and their potential application in Ukraine.

To define the role of practical learning in shaping competitive specialists.

To assess the impact of collaboration between government, private, and public initiatives on the effectiveness of educational reforms.

Thus, the article focuses on addressing the important scientific problem of adapting education to the needs of the modern labor market, considering international experiences and the internal needs of Ukraine.

Results

The modern job market is changing faster than ever, and traditional education programs often fail to adapt to its needs. Employers have to essentially retrain new workers—teach them to forget many of the “important” concepts they learned in college. This shows the impracticality of university education and leads to increased costs for companies to retrain and adapt new personnel, which, in turn, reduces the overall efficiency of the education system.

What is the point of getting an education if the knowledge you gain has no practical application? For today's students entering the job market, the question of "why?" becomes very important. They are looking for an education that will not only provide theoretical knowledge, but also equip them with the skills and experience necessary to succeed in a fast-paced digital world.

To gain a competitive advantage, there is no other choice but to derive practical value from educational programs. A modern university program must combine academic rigor with skills that can be applied immediately at the workplace. The introduction of project-based learning, internships, case studies, and close cooperation with business will contribute to better preparation of graduates.

Programs that provide students with a structured environment for experimentation and practical experience ultimately yield real results. For example, dual education models, already successfully operating in Germany and Switzerland, allow students to study and work simultaneously, which significantly increases their competitiveness.

To gain a competitive edge in today's rapidly evolving job market, it's imperative for educational programs to deliver practical value that aligns with industry demands. Traditional academic approaches especially in Ukraine often emphasize theoretical knowledge, which may not equip graduates with the hands-on skills required in the workplace. Integrating practical learning experiences into curricula can bridge this gap and enhance employability.

Countries like Singapore and Finland exemplify the benefits of integrating practical skills into education systems. Singapore's student-centric approach emphasizes holistic development, including cognitive and practical skills, contributing to its top performance in global assessments. Similarly, Finland's focus on inclusive and autonomous education fosters creativity and problem-solving abilities among students.

Incorporating practical learning experiences into educational programs is not merely beneficial but essential for preparing students to navigate and succeed in the complexities of the modern workforce.

Aligning educational content with current industry needs ensures that graduates possess relevant competencies. Collaborations between academic institutions and businesses facilitate the co-creation of curricula that address real-world challenges. For example, partnerships in curriculum development have led to programs that effectively prepare students for the demands of the job market.

Ultimately, changes in education are not a choice, but a necessity. If universities do not integrate practical approaches, real business will increasingly be involved in training, and traditional education will gradually lose its value to the market.

At the same time, the incorporation of technology into education is reshaping the learning process, with online courses, virtual classrooms, and interdisciplinary tools expanding access to quality education regardless of geographic location.

Countries like Estonia have made significant strides in digitalizing their education systems. For example, Estonia's e-school platform consolidates assessments, homework, and communication with parents into a single digital space, simplifying the administrative burden for both teachers and parents. This approach has proven to increase the efficiency of education, streamline student evaluation, and facilitate real-time interaction between all parties involved in the educational process.

Additionally, online platforms for higher education, such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), enable students from various backgrounds to access top-tier education on their own terms. These platforms, such as Coursera or edX, offer courses from prestigious universities worldwide, providing learners with opportunities to engage in high-quality educational content and skill-building.

For Ukraine, adopting similar technological advancements in education could lead to an innovative shift. Not only would this increase accessibility to education, especially in rural or conflict-affected areas, but it would also allow Ukrainian students to engage in global discussions and educational trends. This would promote a more dynamic and forward-thinking education system, better aligning it with the needs of the modern job market.

Countries with successful education systems offer valuable lessons for Ukraine as it navigates its educational reform. Finland, for instance, is renowned for its student-centered approach to education, which places significant emphasis on inclusive learning, independent thinking, and creative problem-solving. Finnish students are not only taught academic knowledge but also critical life skills, such as collaboration and innovation. Their focus on minimizing standardized testing and allowing teachers to design curricula based on students' needs has led to the country's top rankings in global education assessments.

In comparison, Ukraine's educational system traditionally emphasizes theoretical knowledge, which may not always align with the skills required in the modern job market. While Ukrainian universities have made progress in integrating practical learning experiences, there remains a need to bridge the gap between academic education and real-world applications. Finnish educational practices can serve as a model for Ukraine in terms of fostering creativity and autonomy among students. For instance, Ukrainian educators could be encouraged to adopt more flexible curricula that allow for experimentation and exploration, similar to Finland's approach, which could significantly enhance the creative potential of the students.

Another country that serves as a good example is Singapore, where the education system emphasizes holistic development, which combines both cognitive and practical skills. This focus allows students to engage deeply with real-world problems while simultaneously building a foundation in critical thinking and technical skills. The integration of practical work experiences and internships into Singapore's educational programs further enhances the

employability of graduates, preparing them for the challenges of a highly competitive job market.

Incorporating elements from these countries' educational models could help Ukraine to reshape its educational landscape, equipping students with both the knowledge and the practical skills they need to succeed in the global economy.

By focusing on these areas—innovative learning methods and adapting best global practices—Ukraine can modernize its education system to meet the demands of the contemporary job market and foster a new generation of skilled, creative individuals.

While the state in Ukraine does not pay enough attention to the practical direction of education, this role has been taken by public and volunteer organizations, which currently perform functions that the state does not perform.

Additionally, community and volunteer initiatives play a key role in supporting education during wartime. Charities open educational centers, provide textbooks and equipment, and conduct mentoring programs for children and adults. Due to gaps in state support, public organizations are taking on important social functions. For example, the volunteer movement School Recycling World has created a free online course and a number of programs to introduce waste sorting in educational institutions.

Such initiatives show that civil society in Ukraine actively supports education, compensating for the lack of state funding and human resources. A number of public organizations working in the field of education are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Civil organizations in the field of education

	Public organizations in the field of education	Site
1.	Center for Innovative Education "Pro.Svit"	https://prosvitcenter.org/
2.	Ukrainian Volunteer Service	https://volunteer.country/
3.	Joint Fund	https://biggggidea.com/
4.	Razom	https://www.razomforukraine.org/
5.	GoFundED	https://www.prostir.ua/
6.	GoF	https://gof.in.ua/
7.	Ukrainian Charity Exchange	https://dobro.ua/
8.	ЕдКемп Україна	https://www.edcamp.ua/
9.	Cedos	https://cedos.org.ua/researches/
10.	Center for Educational Initiatives	https://www.osvita.org/
11.	Network of Goncharenko centers	https://goncharenkocentre.com.ua/
12.	"Educate for Ukraine" initiative	https://teachforukraine.org/
13.	The Osvitoria Project	https://osvitoria.org/
14.	Charitable Foundation "SavED"	https://saved.foundation/

Of course, the involvement of public organizations is very effective and efficient, but, in our opinion, the state should still play a leading role, ensuring equal access to education for all participants in the educational process.

In fact, cooperation between the state, business, and the public contributes to the creation of a sustainable education system capable of adapting to modern challenges.

Thus, the leaders of the "Warm City" project have created a number of projects, such as "Promprylad.Renovation" and "Urban Space 100", which combine the interaction of business with education.

"Promprylad.Renovation" is an innovation center based on the Ivano-Frankivsk plant "Promprylad", where opportunities are created at the intersection of education, contemporary art, new economy and urbanism. Here, specialists from various industries, professional and creative communities, as well as local companies can gain new high-quality experience.

One of the prerequisites of the project was the urgent need to rethink and innovatively and rationally use industrial areas that have lost their economic role, as well as to create a high-quality communication space for growing local communities (including due to internal migration in Ukraine) and active categories of society (artists, activists, social entrepreneurs)[6].

The famous British urbanist Charles Landry, who also joined the "Promprylad.Renovation" project, developed the concept of the "creative city" in the 1980s. He argued that in the 21st century, industries would increasingly depend on the generation of knowledge created through creativity and innovation. In his book "The Creative City: Tools for Urban Innovators" [7]. Landry emphasized that creativity is a key factor that allows modern cities to adapt to change, implement technological innovations, and rethink their cultural heritage.

He believed that the creative city model is interesting because it allows you to gather all the elements that are needed to ensure that cities and communities can see the growth of certain characteristics that allow them to revitalize the economy, cultural life, and make social life more interesting. In our opinion, when Ukraine becomes a creative society, its advantages in the global world will increase significantly.

The famous American economist and sociologist Richard Florida, who developed the concept of the "creative class", used the "3T" index (talent, technology, tolerance) [8] in his research to assess the potential for the development of the creative economy in different countries. In his opinion, Ukraine scores high on the "talent" and "technology" components, which indicate the presence of educated professionals and a developed technological base. However, Ukraine scores lower on the "tolerance" component, which reflects the openness of society to diversity and new ideas.

This indicates the need to increase the level of tolerance and openness for the successful development of the creative economy in the country.

Ukraine's low scores on the tolerance index indicate the need to strengthen cultural dialogue and intercultural exchange. This can be achieved through:

Educational programs for the development of critical thinking and media literacy.

Support for artistic and cultural initiatives that promote the integration of different social groups.

Openness to international experience and cooperation in the field of education, science and art.

Thus, the combination of high-quality education, developed urban infrastructure, and cultural openness creates the prerequisites for the emergence of a powerful creative economy in Ukraine.

Public spaces have a significant impact on the development of urban creativity. These places open to all create opportunities for comfortable spending time, free self-expression, exchange of ideas and interaction with other residents and the city as a whole.

The development of the creative economy largely depends on effective educational policies and the creation of an inclusive environment where talented people can realize their abilities.

In addition to educational policy, an important aspect is the creation of a comfortable urban environment. Successful cities with a developed creative economy, such as Helsinki, Amsterdam, Berlin or Copenhagen, actively invest in public spaces:

Coworking spaces and innovation hubs are places where people from different professions can collaborate on joint projects.

Art spaces are galleries, art zones, and cultural centers that stimulate creative thinking.

Green areas and street spaces promote informal communication and integration of different social groups.

There are already positive examples of creating such spaces in Ukraine, for example, Platforma Ostriv in Kyiv, "Promprylad.Renovatsiya" in Ivano-Frankivsk, and IZONE in Kyiv. However, for a more active development of the creative economy, it is necessary to expand the number of such initiatives in the regions.

To a large extent, the development of the creative economy depends on effective educational policies and the creation of an inclusive environment where talented people can realize their abilities.

A key factor in the formation of a creative class is the education system, which should not only transfer knowledge, but also develop critical thinking, complex problem-solving skills, and an innovative approach. Important elements of such education are:

Project-Based Learning — develops skills in teamwork, information analysis, and finding non-standard solutions.

Interdisciplinarity — combining technology, art, humanities, and exact sciences contributes to the creation of innovative ideas.

Flexible curricula — adapting the educational process to current challenges of the labor market and technological development.

Successful examples of educational reforms in countries with strong creative economies show that investments in the development of modern educational methods yield long-term economic benefits. For example, Finland has an open learning model that allows students to explore real-world problems using innovative methods, which not only increases the level of knowledge and skills of the population, but also contributes to the growth of the country's innovative potential.

Estonia has focused on digitalizing education, simplifying administrative processes and expanding access to technological skills, while Israel has effectively integrated education with military and civilian innovations, creating conditions for the development of startups and the adaptation of veterans. This experience can be useful for Ukraine, which is currently undergoing a stage of deep transformation.

In our opinion, it would be worth integrating a number of effective initiatives from different countries into the Ukrainian education system. For example, Finland's perception of education as a strategic resource, Finnish teacher autonomy and their high level of training. In Ukraine, it is possible to increase the requirements for teachers' professional development, while expanding their freedom in teaching, as well as reduce the emphasis on assessments and standardized tests.

Implementing alternative assessment methods can reduce student stress and increase motivation to learn. Educational startups (such as Kide Science or Mightifier) that integrate science and emotional intelligence into the learning process are actively developing in Finland. Kide Science is a Finnish company that develops science-education materials for children aged 3–8 years. Their approach combines scientific thinking with playful learning methods, stimulating curiosity and a spirit of inquiry in children [9]. Mightifier is a character development program designed to prevent social isolation, loneliness, and bullying among

elementary school students (K–6). It provides online profiles for each student, tools to track well-being development, and resources for teachers with step-by-step lesson plans [10].

In Ukraine, such initiatives could be stimulated through grants and public-private partnerships. An analogue of the Estonian e-School would allow Ukrainian schools to integrate assessments, homework, and communication with parents in a single digital space.

In Israel, there is a Talpiot program that selects the best students for training in the field of technology and security. In Ukraine, a similar initiative can contribute to the development of high-tech industries, in particular the defense sector. Using the example of Israel, a system of financial support for young companies can be created, which can become an important tool for the development of technological and military innovations. Israel's experience in adapting military personnel to civilian life is important for Ukraine. Ukraine can develop similar programs for veterans, particularly in the IT sector and entrepreneurship.

Conclusions

The adaptation of Ukrainian education to the requirements of the modern labor market is an important and timely issue that requires a comprehensive approach to reforming educational programs and teaching methods. As demonstrated by international research and practices, traditional approaches to education, focused solely on theoretical knowledge, do not meet the challenges of the contemporary world. To ensure the competitiveness of young people in the labor market, it is essential to develop practical skills, innovative thinking, and the ability to adapt to rapidly changing professional environments.

A key role in this process is played by the integration of project-based learning, internships, and cooperation between academic institutions, business, and government bodies. This will not only improve the quality of education but also increase the competitiveness of graduates on an international level. Taking into account the international experience of countries such as Finland, Singapore, and Israel is an important step in developing effective educational reforms for Ukraine. However, it is necessary to consider the cultural, social, and economic specificities of the country, which may require adapting international models to Ukrainian realities.

An essential condition for successful adaptation is close cooperation between the public sector, business, and civil initiatives. In the context of social and economic changes, particularly in the war, public and volunteer organizations play a vital role in supporting educational initiatives, which is crucial for overcoming gaps in education and its development amid the crisis.

Therefore, there is an opportunity and need for Ukraine to improve educational programs and integrate the best global practices, considering national specifics. Educational reforms should be an ongoing process that will allow the system to respond to the new demands of the economy and the global labor market.

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