

EDUCATIONAL TRADITIONS OF UKRAINE AND GERMANY: COMMON FEATURES AND DIFFERENCES

A nation's history, culture, and social changes greatly influence its educational practices. Reflecting on their different historical paths, cultural settings, and political environments, Ukraine's and Germany's educational systems have some similarities but also clear differences. Emphasizing their similarities and differences, this article seeks to contrast the educational customs of Ukraine and Germany. Examining these systems in their broader historical and cultural contexts helps us better appreciate education's role in shaping national identities and supporting social progress.

Impressive historical events have shaped both Ukrainian and German educational systems. Soviet policies significantly shaped Ukraine's education framework by emphasizing a centralized, state-run approach. Ukrainian education began to change after it became free in 1991, moving closer to European norms and adopting new teaching techniques. However, it still deals with the lasting effects of the Soviet system.

On the other hand, the German education system, which began in the Middle Ages, has evolved over many centuries. Known for its high academic standards, vocational programs, and dual system of apprenticeships, this system combines academic knowledge with practical training. Germany's system has remained mostly decentralized; each state (Länder) has considerable authority over educational policies.

The three primary levels of Ukraine's education system are elementary, secondary, and tertiary. Ranging from four years, elementary education is required; secondary follows, comprising both vocational and regular routes. With a strong emphasis on theoretical knowledge and academic research, universities,

technical colleges, and vocational schools provide higher education in Ukraine.

Ukrainian educational goals prioritize building a national consciousness and equipping students for a quickly evolving interconnected world. The system emphasizes general academic learning and specialized occupational skills despite existing issues regarding educational quality and accessibility, especially in the countryside. A key feature of Ukrainian education, particularly post-independence, is its move towards European integration, with reforms aimed at adopting European standards of education, such as the Bologna Process for higher education [2, p. 15]. Additionally, recent reforms have emphasized the need for innovative teaching methods and the integration of technology in classrooms.

Germany's educational system is characterized by a high level of decentralization, with each of the 16 states (Länder) responsible for their own educational policies. This decentralized approach allows for regional customization of education, which results in some variations in curricula and teaching methods across the country. However, all German states follow a similar structure: primary education (Grundschule), secondary education (Hauptschule, Realschule, Gymnasium), and higher education (Universitäten, Fachhochschulen).

One of the standout features of the German system is its vocational education and training (VET) programs. The German VET system consists of three sectors: the well-known dual system of firm-based training combined with school-based education (apprenticeships); fully qualifying school-based vocational education programs (mainly for intermediate-level white-collar, mainly female-dominated occupations in sectors such as health, social work, and media, including nurses, kindergarten teachers, medical assistants), and the sector of prevocational training measures, called the "transitional system. [3, p. 3]. The dual system is considered one of Germany's most successful educational innovations, contributing to the country's strong economy and skilled workforce. Furthermore, the German system places significant emphasis on academic rigor,

intellectual development, and critical thinking, preparing students for both higher education and the workforce.

Comparing Ukrainian and German educational systems reveals shared features and contrasts. A significant commonality is the focus on high academic standards, ensuring students are ready for their professional lives. Both systems feature demanding academic programs, highlighting literacy and math abilities. Moreover, both nations are actively modernizing their educational approaches to align with the globalized world, adopting innovative approaches such as digital learning.

However, the distinctions are pretty pronounced. The most significant difference pertains to the structure and organization of education. Germany's decentralized system offers local control and adaptability. In contrast, Ukraine's system, although undergoing reforms, is more centralized, with influences from its Soviet heritage. The dual vocational system in Germany is another significant difference, which allows students to gain practical, on-the-job experience in addition to their academic education [1, p. 558]. In Ukraine, the situation regarding vocational training gravitates toward reforms, but a lot has yet to be done to form a balance between the practical aspect and academics.

Both systems are cultural products of their societies. Individualistic, independent, and personal is the German "educational philosophy," and that is very important to most Germans. By contrast, Ukraine's system, which historical Soviet practices have influenced, tends to emphasize communal values and instruction that's more about the teacher.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the educational systems of Ukraine and Germany serve some similar purposes, we can see the differences in their structure, methods, and history. Significant changes are happening in Ukraine's system as the country shifts from Soviet to more modern European approaches. Conversely, Germany has the most regional variation in qualifications due to its decentralized system and long tradition in vocational training.

Both nations struggle to prepare their students for the demands of a

globalized society despite their differences. Germany could benefit from implementing more inclusive and digital educational approaches to stay up with global developments, while Ukraine needs more reforms to integrate academic learning with real-world skills. By mutually learning, both countries can continue to refine their educational traditions and serve the needs of their future citizens.

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