

# **Lifelong education and learning together with their influence on the life quality of the adults - sociological view**

## **Abstract**

*Lifelong education does not seem to know any limits of age or scientific disciplines. For the most part, it could be perceived as an ongoing aspiration for something new and different. Furthermore, a society based on lifelong education can provide more stable environment for better future and better quality of life.*

*With relation to skills, abilities, support of primary and secondary environment together with their dependence on financial possibilities, individual motivation and energy connected with ever changing needs of workplace, most people are bound to educate and acquire knowledge throughout their entire life.*

*The empirical part of my research task consists of a questionnaire (Appendix 1) that was answered by 92 respondents, out of which 56 (60,9%) were female and 36 (39,1%) male. Considering the level of education, 12% of respondents had PhD, 30.4% of them acquired MA, 28.3% had professional degrees, 21.7 acquired associate degrees, 4.3% did not finish higher/university education, whereas 3.3% had secondary/high school education only. Average age of the respondents was 44.9 years. They were chosen by the method of random sampling, and submitted their answers via digitally-formed questionnaire.*

**Keywords:** *lifelong learning, education, adult education, third age education*

## **Introduction**

In the adult age, people are increasingly deciding in favour of obtaining some additional education. There are several reasons for it: inability/inaccessibil-

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ity of education in their young age, lack of maturity in their past occupational decisions, restructuring of workplaces demanding higher educational standards and better qualifications of their human resources.

People have always strived for better knowledge and education, predominantly in their eternal search for answers to various problems of life: war, natural catastrophes, illnesses and diseases etc. Yet, the deepest source of questions has been life itself, with its mysterious course from birth to death. They've been learning through work, play, dance, religious festivities and other occasions, thereby largely relying on their past experience.

Nowadays, the lifelong learning and education are becoming permanent habits of every individual. Knowledge and experience are acquired all the time: frequently, it does not get awarded or confirmed by any certificate, but it still provides the skills necessary to do a good job. Usual housework can provide a very good example: we rarely need or get the education for different kinds of housework. Still, we are able to manage it just fine, sometimes even quite excellent.

Our work is based on experience and knowledge obtained in youth, often taught by our parents. However, some types of work do seem to require information from books or inclusion into a specific work group in order to get the necessary knowledge that can only be learned by (continuous) education. Thus, we are able to enjoy great pleasure, seeing that our experience has been expanded and confirmed professionally. It can, therefore, be used to a much greater effort in our future life.

## **1 Lifelong education of the adults**

For their entire life, people participate in one or the other form of education/learning. First working habits and basics of learning are acquired in the phase of primary socialisation. Later on, further and more complex skills needed in course of life and work are gathered under the influences of secondary environment and various educational institutions.

The education of adults should represent one of the components included into the concept of lifelong learning, if we understand this notion as education and learning through the whole life, i.e. from birth till the end of life, says Kump<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Sonja Kump in Sabina Jelenc Krašovec, *Vseživljenjsko učenje – izobraževanje starejših odraslih*. Ljubljana: Pedagoški inštitut, 2009.

Ličen asserts that the education in adult age can be described as a skill/prowess of adapting to the environment, its change and personal development. Forms of adult education are under constant change. Numerous new technologies produce technically ever more sophisticated media which, in turn, form new, additional possibilities of education and learning in the virtual world<sup>3</sup>.

However, the education and training of adults cannot redirect the flow of social transformation. They can contribute to higher knowledge of population and its awareness of consumer behaviour and induce them to express their discontent provided that's what they desire. Adult education and training stimulate the development of civic awareness which qualifies people for decision-making related to public good and performance of active citizenship. Thus, it is of vital importance that people as individuals learn to participate, contribute, perceive the needs of others and take responsibility for others while striving for common good<sup>4</sup>.

### ***Lifelong learning and education***

According to Illiers<sup>5</sup> learning is a tripartite process: cognitive, emotional and social. Its cognitive part is related to the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Learning as emotional process, however, represents psychological energy transferred by emotions, beliefs and motivation. Learning as social process refers to the interaction between the individual and the environment. All three dimensions are always an integral part of learning process, and in practice they do not exist as separate functions.

Lifelong learning denotes a system of phenomena and processes that are subject to constant change: they evolve, develop and are frequently intertwined. Hence, they cannot be observed as independent and static formations. Because we all constitute part of lifelong learning process by active participation and creation of its flow and development, it is getting increasingly hard for all of us to evaluate and describe it from neutral point of view<sup>6</sup>. The education itself is a very important process in the life of an individual. Jarvis<sup>7</sup> defines education as an institutionalised learning process by which society reacts to the basic educational needs of people.

<sup>3</sup> Nataša Ličen, *Uvod v izobraževanje odraslih: izobraževanje odraslih med moderno ni postmoderno*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Dušana Findeisen, *Dileme današnjega sveta so tudi dileme izobraževanja odraslih*. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani. Filozofska fakulteta, 2001, No. 1, 35-36.

<sup>5</sup> Knud Illeris, *The Dimensions of Learning*. Frederiksberg: Roskilde University Press, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Nataša Ličen, *Uvod v izobraževanje odraslih: izobraževanje odraslih med moderno ni postmoderno*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Jarvis, *Adult education and Lifelong Learning. Theory and practice*. 3rded, London, New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004.

By the introduction of lifelong learning and education the role of adult education changed significantly. That change cannot be described as a mere addition of new skills and habits to those that we have already acquired in our childhood. The concept of lifelong learning presents education as a process and activity that evolve through all periods of life. It should therefore be conceived as an interconnection that consists of education, training and interchange of experience which can be transferred by different ways and methods of learning in all periods and roles of life.

Consequently, lifelong learning cannot only be perceived as a means of increase in productivity stipulated by the given circumstances of consumer capitalism. Rather, it should be regarded as a path by which we learn how to use renewable forms of energy together with simultaneous focus on very sensitive interconnections between people, animals, plants, materials and energy<sup>8</sup>.

*Learning how to learn* represents one of the basic needs of modern population<sup>9</sup>, which also requires a thorough training. Above all, it requires well-developed motivation for learning, constant interest in acquiring new skills and knowledge together with the ability of quick adaptation to any change. However, the external motives for development of lifelong learning in adults are usually quite weak. Consequently, the information they receive is rarely properly evaluated, structured and combined into new system of knowledge. The ultimate goal of 'learning how to learn' is therefore to prepare individuals for lifelong learning and independent education. Nonetheless, it is the level of individual's motivation that determines whether he or she will enter any form of education even without externally induced objectives and forms of evaluation. Here, it should be emphasised that the core of lifelong learning is based on individuals ability to choose independent situational objectives that go hand in hand with simultaneous learning, mostly in an informal way by Krajnc<sup>10</sup>.

### ***Lifelong learning in the third age***

Lifelong learning has become quite a popular expression in the language of politics, but despite its frequent occurrence it does not always denote the education and training of older population. In most cases, it is related to the education of adults while they still take part in their active employment. However, the

<sup>8</sup> Nataša Ličen, *Uvod v izobraževanje odraslih: izobraževanje odraslih med moderno ni postmoderno*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Delors, *Učenje: skriti zaklad*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Ana Kranjc, *Vseživljenjsko izobraževanje strokovni, vseživljenjsko učenje populistični izraz*, Ljubljana: Andragoški center Republike Slovenije. Jelenc, Z. (ur.): *Vseživljenjsko izobraževanje in vseživljenjsko učenje*, 1998, 31-36.

term 'third age' supposedly refers to the so-called *post-work* period when people usually are no longer employed in order to earn for their living costs.

Of course, the educators of older population are convinced the elderly have the right to education yet, at the same time, they find that the processes of learning in the old age and the correspondent forms of individual and occasional learning are not sufficiently known. Therefore, we also need some adequate research that would focus on the meaning of education to older people, and its impact on social and cultural environment. This way, our institutions could effectively promote the education in the third and fourth age of human life.

Nonetheless, the third age is still characterised by the possibilities of choice, creativity, and the opportunities for development, particularly because the present generations of older people often did not possess enough education possibilities in their youth. However, future generations are already expected to gather sufficient »education capital in their young and adult age. It is therefore expected that the need for education of older people will significantly increase (also at the expense of ever prolonged working age), making the older generation a welcome niche for new educational market possibilities<sup>11</sup>.

Education of the elderly that also reflects all the special features of the third age is adapted to the life situation and requirements of people after their professional retirement. It is all about the process of self-realisation that is very personal. The third age is further characterised by the increase in social freedom because of simultaneous decrease in external social pressure and stress (i.e. end of active employment, children become independent and move away). Thereafter, the majority of people find it easier to follow their own desires, wishes and challenges posed by their environment<sup>12</sup>.

Consequently, the education and training of elderly people, who represent a special group within the population, is usually characterised by high motivation, eagerness for new knowledge and learning with ease and joy. In the third age they want to listen to themselves in order to fulfill their yet unfulfilled whims and desires that can come to fruition by learning and education. Actually, in their third age parents have the broadest scope of personal freedom which enables them to discover their (new) talents in order to pursue their self-realisation by the use of their (often yet hidden and/or unexpressed) talents and needs that are finally taken into account (ibid.).

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<sup>11</sup> Nataša Ličen, *Uvod v izobraževanje odraslih: izobraževanje odraslih med moderno ni postmoderno*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Ana Kranjc, *Izobraževanje starejših v Sloveniji: zakaj in kako: nacionalna mreža nevladnih organizacij izobraževanja starejših*. Ljubljana: Društvo za izobraževanje za tretje življenjsko obdobje, 2012.

The education in the third age certainly represents one of important contemporary issues for adult population. It therefore seems adequate to provide a short presentation of the University for the third Age.

The idea concerning such type of university and education is the result of different influences and lines of thought. In 1973, French professor of international law from the University of Toulouse named Pierre Vellas founded the first university for education of the adults. And already the following year the French government established similar universities in 63 French cities and towns by the help of local authorities.

In 1984, Slovenian professor of French language Dušana Findeisen founded first experimental educational programmes that were inspired by the French example and her own ideas. She had altogether six participants who were included in her scientific research. Those first six participants together with their professor then launched first campaign for the establishment of the first Slovenian university for the third age. In Canada, the education of the adults started already in the 60's. And so, the professor of Adult Education from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana started with the realisation of her long-time idea concerning the foundation of the first officially acknowledged University for the Third Age (UTA) on the territory of Slovenia and former Yugoslavia. For eleven years, the UTA had been an integral section of Association for Adult Education of Slovenia. Today, the UTA operates within an independent association<sup>13</sup>.

Nowadays, the UTA is considered as civil education movement based on the voluntary work, cooperation and free contribution of ideas. Their mission of learning, active participation in society, creativity and social improvement greatly relies on all those who contributed their substantial effort to its establishment and further development.

The participants, mentors and their associates freely interchange their knowledge, experience, ideas and culture, thus contributing to the creative activities of their own study group, and UTA as a whole.

Their main reasons for participation in the UTA are: acquiring knowledge for personal growth, gaining additional life experience, understanding their own position within society, and active involvement in the achievement of their own good and welfare of other generations that are part of the environment.

They also commit themselves to develop and maintain a positive attitude to the old age and ageing in their organisation, as well as in public. The UTA is open to older adults and unemployed population, regardless of their education level, political, ethnical, or religious affiliation (ibid.).

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<sup>13</sup> *Zgodovina Univerze za tretje življenjsko obdobje*, Data retrieved: <http://www.univerzazatretje-obd-drustvo.si/zgodovina.html>

***Obstacles to the inclusion into the adult education process***

When trying to take part in the active process of adult education, the participants can encounter different obstacles. According to Coross (1981), they can be divided into three groups:

*Situational obstacles* that emerge from the individuals' present situation and can be reflected as lack of time and money, or too long distance from the venue of education.

*Institutional obstacles* that are mostly related to the inadequate offer of the educational programmes, conditions of enrollment, unsuitable organisation/management, help/counselling in relation to the education process etc.

*Dispositional obstacles* that, above all, include psycho-social characteristics of individual, such as self-esteem, motivation, beliefs, abilities etc.

Radovan<sup>14</sup> suggests that the most common obstacle is definitely combined either with the lack of money or high prices of educational programmes. The overall presence of these economic obstacles decreases with higher levels of education and higher complexity of one's workplace – higher payment and better skills of individuals usually corellate with the better chance of getting different education grants and/or subsidies. Dispositional obstacles are also important because they influence the investment of individuals' time, money and energy into the process of further education.

***Adult Education Act***

In 2006, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia passed the Adult Education Act. The summary of the Act from the Article 2 to 4 is stated below<sup>15</sup>.

The education of the adults is based on the following principles:

- lifelong learning/education
- accessibility of education on equal terms
- freedom and autonomy of choice with regard to the method, content, form, means and modes of education
- laity of adult education that is performed as public service
- professional and ethical responsibility of educators
- respect for personality and dignity of each participant
- achieving equal educational standards of publicly valid programmes as they are met in youth/regular education

<sup>14</sup> Marko Radovan, *Ovire odraslih pri vključevanju v izobraževanje. Andragoška spoznanja*. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Source: <http://www.uradni-list.si/>, website of the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia

A person included into adult education programme is awarded the status of participant in adult education.

According to publicly valid programmes of adult education the eligible persons must fulfil the requirements concerning their past completed education, or special psycho-physical abilities that are required for participation in the given programme(s).

The participants within the programmes of adult education have the right to professionally organised education, participation in the management of organisation providing their educational programme, and, if so stated in the act of organisation establishment, also the right to paid educational leave, together with other rights stipulated in the relevant regulations and collective contracts.

All participants that acquire their knowledge according to publicly valid programmes of education (from elementary school to the highest level of professional education) have the right to public healthcare as it is derived from mandatory health insurance according to the law stipulating health care and health insurance. In addition, they also get right to some other benefits related to the transportation, grants, performance of temporary works by the authorised organisation – all according to special regulations valid in case of unemployment and if they are NOT already part of education process according to the regulations on employment and insurance in case of unemployment (*ibid.*).

## **2 Empirical research**

### ***Definition of the research problem***

Education of the adults denotes the totality of organised educational processes with any content, level and methods used. This definition is offered by UNESCO in the framework of UN (in 1978).

In 1997, the UNESCO organisation passed Hamburg declaration which defines the adult education as a cluster of learning processes (formal or any other type). By the help of these, the people whom their society recognises as adult persons can develop skills, enrich their knowledge, improve or alter their technical and/or other professional qualifications in order to become more useful for themselves and for society<sup>16</sup>.

The main aim of this paper is to conduct a research concerning the influence of lifelong education on the quality of adults' life.

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<sup>16</sup> Nataša Ličen, *Uvod v izobraževanje odraslih. Izobraževanje med moderno in postmoderno*. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, 2006, 11.

### ***Research aims and objectives***

- Definition of content and scope of lifelong education influence on the education quality of adults.
- Comparison of working environment attitudes and family attitudes towards the lifelong education of adults.

### ***Research hypotheses***

The following hypotheses/assumptions were tested in my research:

**H1:** The majority of adults takes part in lifelong education.

**H2:** Women are more severely affected by obstacles of lifelong education than men.

**H3:** Persons that are 45 or less years old receive more family support than older ones (i.e. 46 years and above).

**H4:** Work environment influences the processes of lifelong education as a motivating factor.

**H5:** Financial means and periodical opportunities of lifelong learning influence the frequency of additional education as hobby.

### ***Foreseen methods of research***

During the preparation of this article (regarding its theoretical and empirical part), the following research methods were used:

- descriptive method
- causally-explicative method.

## **3 Research methodology description**

### ***Research method***

The answers to the questions in the questionnaire about lifelong education and adult learning were statistically processed by the use of quantitative research combined with bi-variate and multi-variate statistical method.

### ***Research sample***

The empirical part of my research task consists of a questionnaire (Appendix 1) that was answered by 92 respondents, out of which 56 (60,9%) were female and 36 (39,1%) male. Considering the level of education, 12% of respondents had PhD, 30.4% of them acquired MSc, 28.3% BSc, 21.7% associate degree,

4.3% did not finish higher/university education, whereas 3.3% had secondary/high school education only. Average age of the respondents was 44.9 years. They were chosen by the method of random sampling. This way, sample is more representative and stratified as the respondents were chosen among persons (plus their family members) that have already participated in some form of lifelong education. After the questionnaires had been submitted, the respondents were stratified according to their education levels.

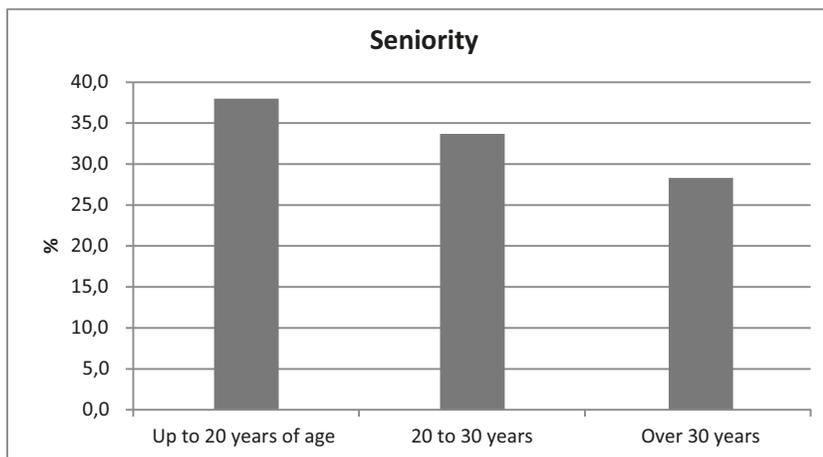
### *Data processing procedure*

The data provided were consequently processed by the SPSS programme used for statistical data processing.

## **4 Results of the research and interpretation of hypotheses**

### *Graphic presentation of obtained questionnaire results*

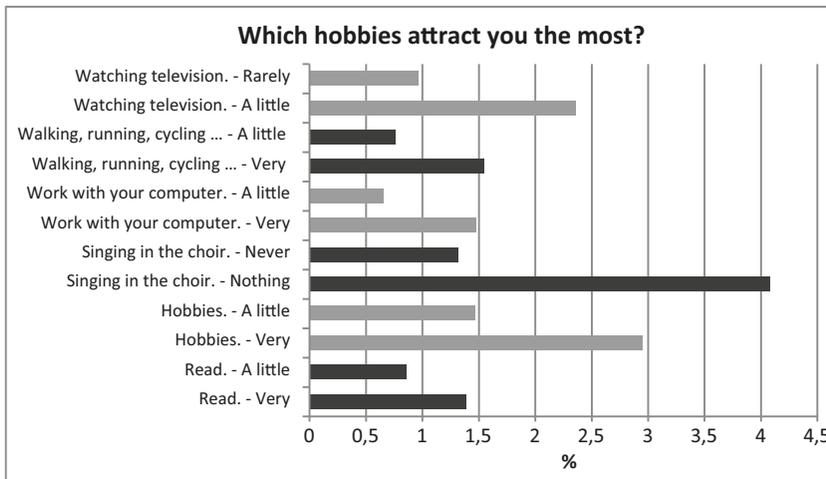
**Figure 1:** *Working period*



Source: Original research, 2014

The data presented in the Figure 1 show fairly equal distribution of working period among the respondents: 38% of them have up to 20 years of working period, 28.3% have been working between 20 and 30 years, and 33.7% have listed more than 30 years of work.

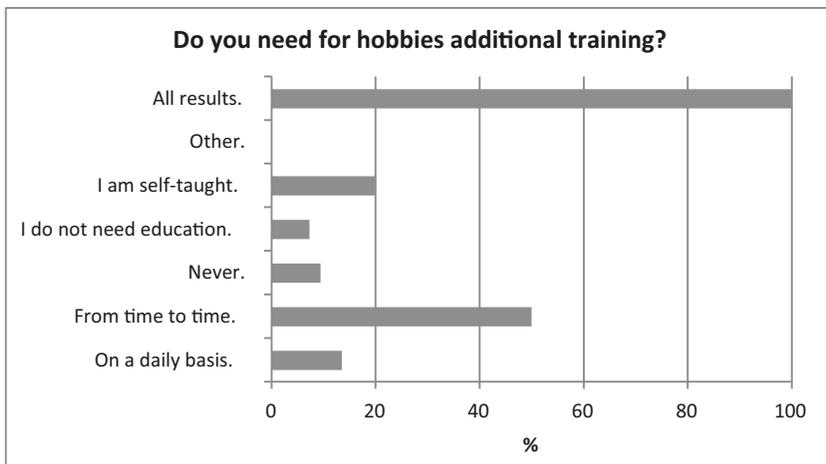
**Figure2:** *What are your favourite hobbies?*



Source: Original research, 2014

As it is evident from Figure 2, most of respondents enjoy hiking, jogging, cycling; least of them participate in choirs.

**Figure3:** *Do you participate in some kind of additional education related to your hobbies?*



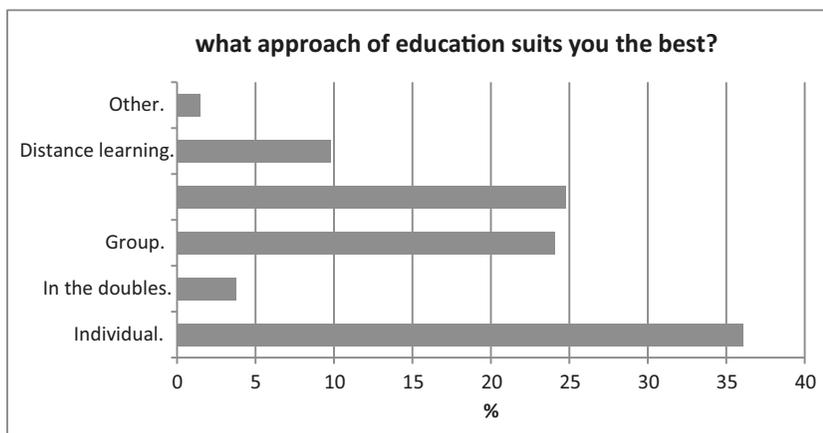
Source: Original research, 2014

Half of the respondents occasionally participate in some kind of education related to their hobbies, 19,8% are self-educated, whereas 13.5% of them learn every day (Figure 3). This means that more than 60% of the respondents participate in some kind of education related to their hobbies.

**Figure4:** *Do you participate in lifelong education?*

Source: Original research, 2014

Figure 4 clearly shows that almost three quarters of respondents (i.e. 72.3%) participate in some form of lifelong education, and 13.8% are considered to be engaged in some form of it. Therefore, vast majority of respondents are at least thinking about getting included in some programme of lifelong education.

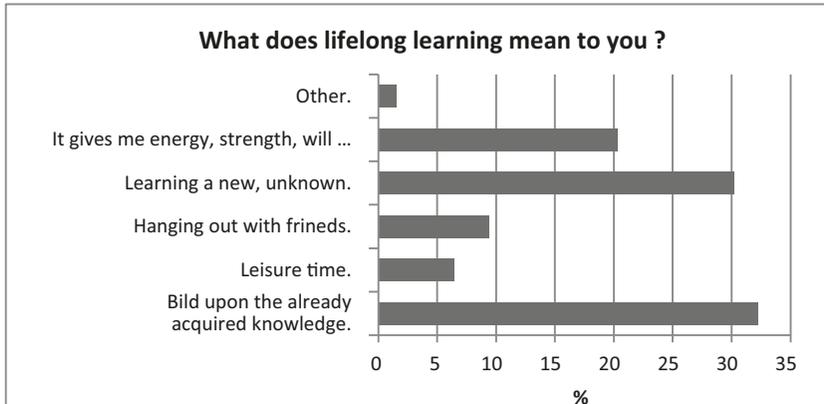
**Figure5:** *Which educational approach do you find most appropriate?*

Source: Original research, 2014

Figure 5 confirms that the respondents find individual educational approach most appropriate (36.1%), whereas almost a quarter of them favour the group approach (24.1%), or individual gathering of information by the help of some interest groups or associations(24.8%). Among other options listed in the ques-

tionnaire are also learning in pairs and long-distance learning which were chosen by 13.6% of respondents altogether.

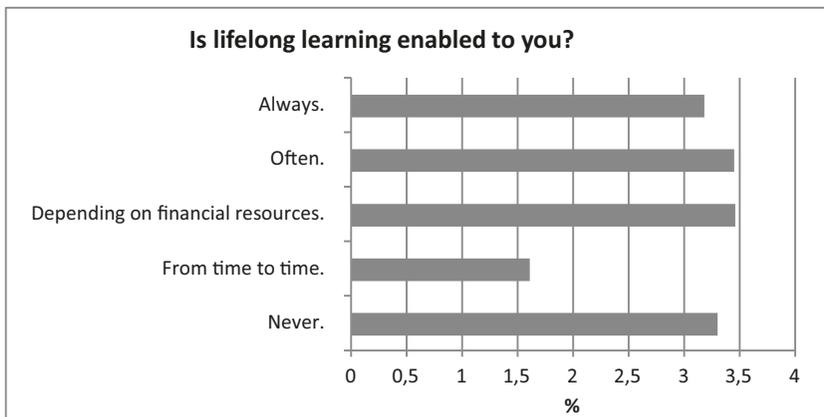
**Figure6:** *What is the purpose/meaning of lifelong education?*



Source: Original research, 2014

To 32.2% of respondents, the lifelong education means predominantly a process of improvement in already acquired knowledge. 30.2% wish to learn something new, and 20.3% of respondents regard the lifelong education as an important source of energy, strength and stamina in their lives (Figure 6).

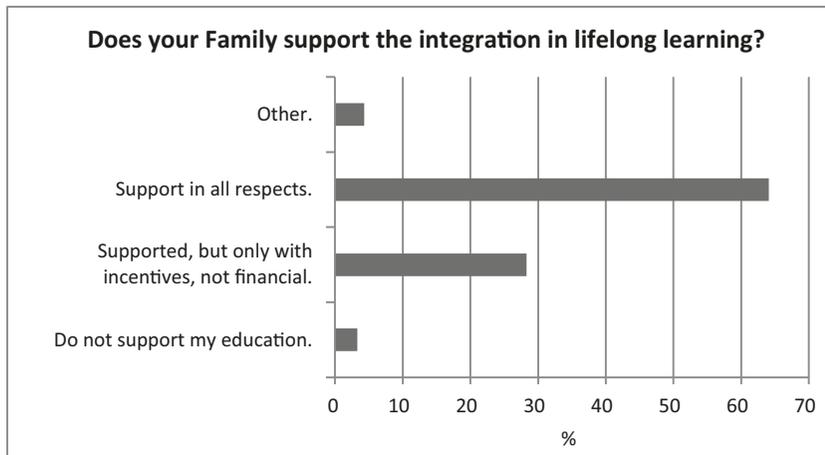
**Figure 7:** *Have you got any possibility to take part in lifelong learning?*



Source: Original research, 2014

In Figure 7 the possibility of lifelong learning was measured with the scales from 0 to 5. On average, the categories 'often', 'always' and 'dependent on financial means' were given score 3.38 % out of 5. Yet, on the other hand, the category 'never' with the average score 3.30 % also ranked considerably high.

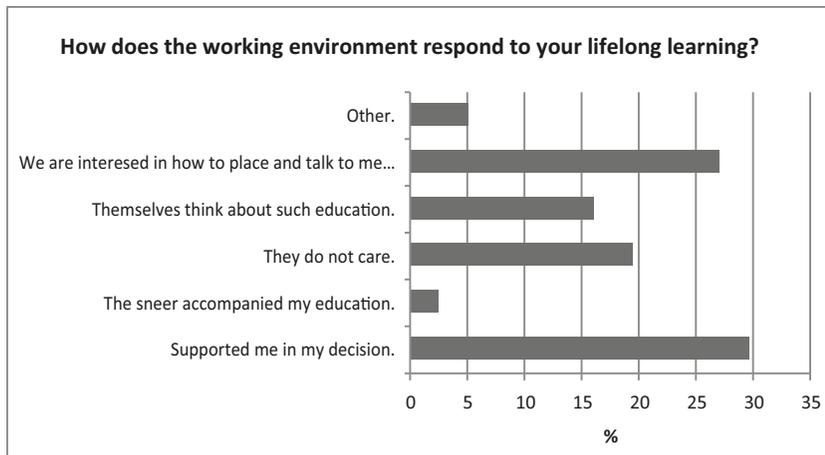
**Figure 8:** *Does your family support your participation in lifelong learning/education?*



Source: Original research, 2013

92.4% of respondents said they received support from their families which can be interpreted as a decisive argument in favour of such education (Figure 8).

**Figure 9:** *How does the work environment respond to your participation in lifelong education process?*

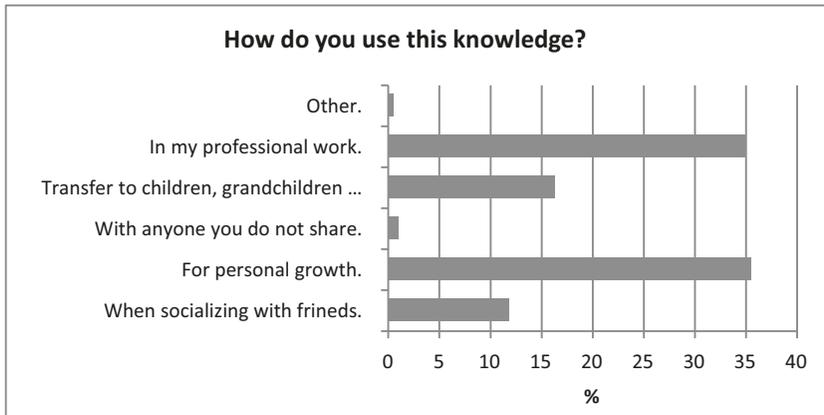


Source: Original research, 2013

From Figure 9 we can conclude that work environment represents an important factor regarding the lifelong education of respondents. 29.7% of them said they had received active support from their work environment, 27.1% said their colleagues were interested in their education (i.e. content, process), and 16.1%

said their colleagues had also expressed interest in joining some form of lifelong education. The percentage of colleagues who did not support their decision was very low.

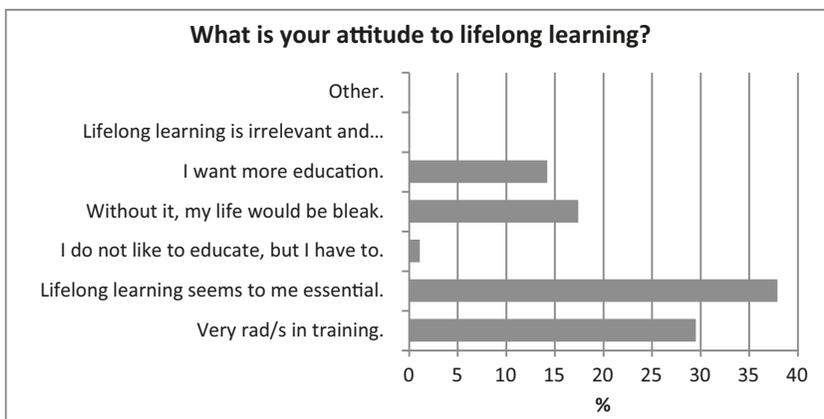
**Figure10:** *How do you use your (newly) acquired knowledge and/or skills?*



Source: Original research, 2013

Nearly all respondents (98.5%) said the knowledge and skills acquired in the forms of lifelong learning/education were very useful concerning different aspects of their lives /Figure 10).

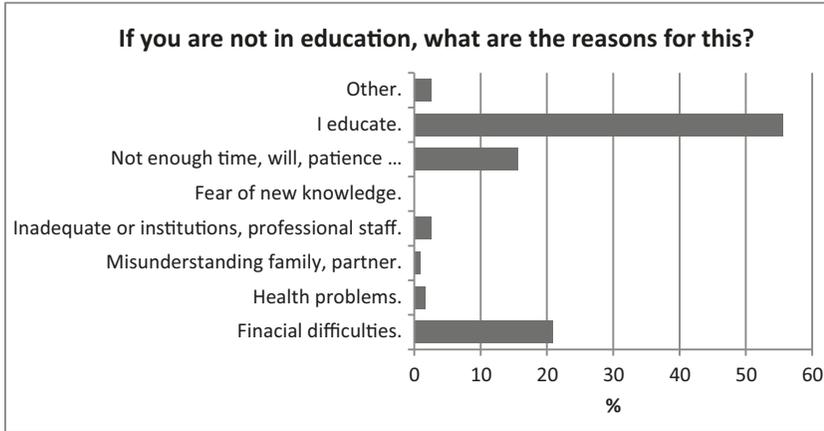
**Figure11:** *What is your attitude towards lifelong education?*



Source: Original research, 2014

In Figure 11 it can be seen that vast majority describe their process of lifelong education as very important, and only 1.1% of them answered they learn because they have to. Others regard it as crucial (to their career, each day's life etc.).

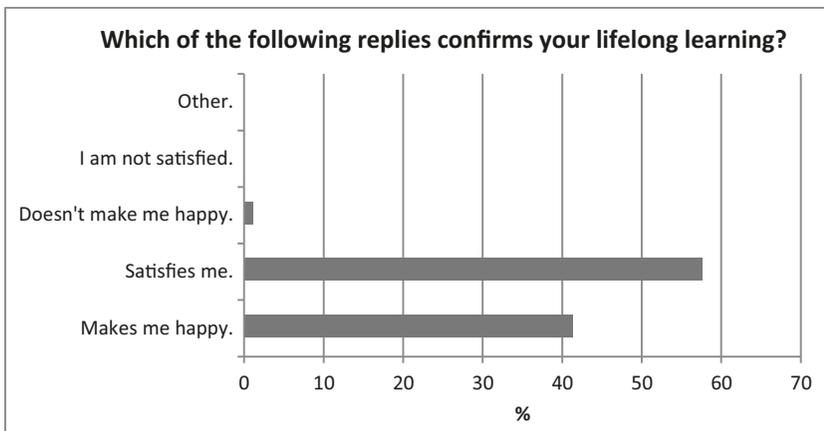
**Figure12:** *If you do not participate in the lifelong education, then what are the reasons for that?*



Source: Original research, 2014

More than half of the respondents take part in some form of lifelong education. In Figure 12 is the explanation that if they don't, the reasons are mostly financial (20.9%), and lack of time (15.7%), from which it may be concluded that if the latter conditions had been met, they also would have participated in lifelong learning process.

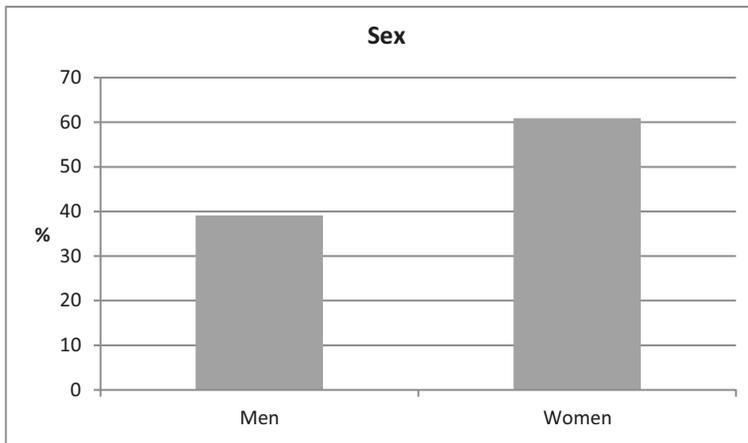
**Figure13:** *Which of the answers provided corresponds to your view of lifelong education?*



Source: Original research, 2014

Only 1.1% of the respondents said they do not enjoy learning, while others stated that the process of education provides new quality of life (Figure 13).

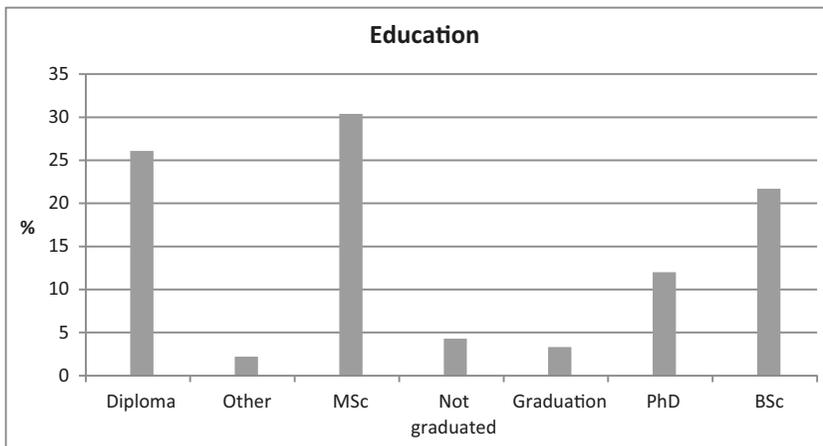
**Figure 14: Gender**



Source: Original research, 2014

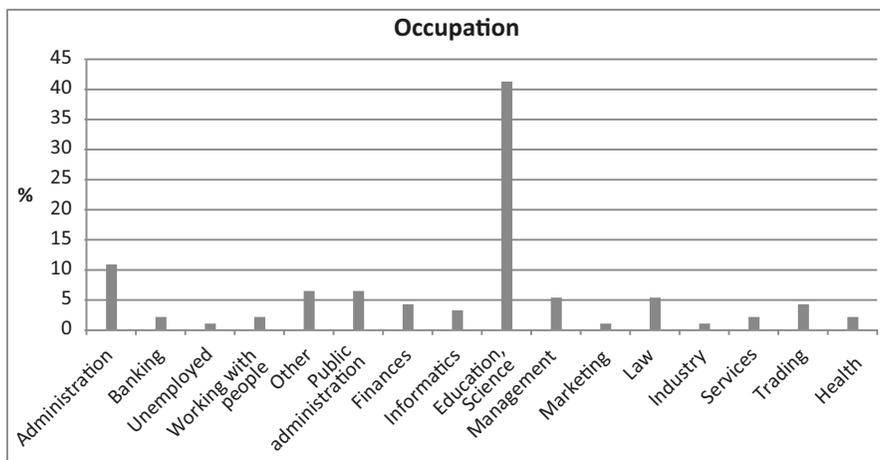
60.9% of the research participants were female, and 39.1% of them were male (Figure 14).

**Figure 15: Level of education**



Source: Original research, 2014

30.4% of the respondents had MSc, 26.1% of them had some other form of post-graduate education, 12% had PhD. Only 3.3% had college or high-school level of education. This is represented in Figure 15.

**Figure 16:** *Occupation*

Source: Original research, 2014

41.3% of the respondents were employed in the fields of education and science, 10.9% came from administration sector. The rest of them were from other fields of employment/occupation (Figure 16).

### *Interpretation of research hypotheses*

In this article, I presented the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Most of adult people take part in lifelong learning/education.

For the testing of hypothesis I used the variable »lifelong learning/education«.

Due to easier presentation of results I re-formulated the variable so that I combined the categories of those who said they didn't consider it necessary and those who stated they didn't have the financial means for it into one category of all respondents who answered they did not take part in lifelong learning/education. On the basis of re-formulated variable I presented the corresponding frequencies of it.

**Table 1:** *Taking part/deciding for lifelong learning/education.*

		Number	Percentage
Valid	Yes	68	73,9
	No	24	26,1
	Total	92	100,0

From the Table 1 it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents (73,9%) answered took part in lifelong learning/education.

Then, I also conducted  $\chi^2$ -experiment that was intended to show the existence of statistically significant differences between those who decided in favour of lifelong education and those who decided against it.

The result of  $\chi^2$ -experiment showed the existence of statistically significant differences in deciding for/against lifelong education ( $\chi^2 = 21,043$ ,  $g = 1$ ,  $P = 0,000$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis was *confirmed*.

**H2:** Statistically significant differences regarding the possibility of lifelong education in relation to gender.

In the process of hypothesis testing I used the following variables:

- Gender
- Occasional possibility of lifelong education

**Table2:** Results of t-experiment for the same variances that enable the comparison of lifelong education possibilities in relation to gender.

Gender	Number	$\kappa$	s	Leven's test		t-test		
				F	P	t	g	2P
Female	56	3,38	1,315	1,382	0,243	0,614	90	0,541
Male	36	3,19	1,470					

Table 2 shows the results of t-experiment for the same variances, because the Leven's test indicated absence (i.e. non-existence) of statistically significant variances ( $F = 1,382$ ,  $P = 0,243$ ).

If we look at the average estimate regarding frequency of possibility for lifelong education of women ( $\kappa = 3,38$ ) and men ( $\kappa = 3,19$ ) we may conclude the differences between them are very small. The result of the t-experiment indicates that the differences in average estimate of frequency regarding the possibility of lifelong learning are not statistically significant ( $t = 0,614$ ,  $g = 90$ ,  $2P = 0,541$ ). Therefore, on the basis of the data obtained, hypothesis **H2** was *rejected*.

**H3:** The persons under the included 45th year of age are more supported in their lifelong education by their family than persons older than 46 years.

For the testing of hypothesis H3 I used the calculation of  $\chi^2$ -test of the test itself.

**Table3:** Number and percentage of the family support for inclusion into lifelong education process.

Family support for inclusion into lifelong education process	Age		Total
	From 18 to 45 years	More than 46 years	
Yes	41	44	85
	44,6%	47,8%	92,4%
No	4	3	7
	4,3%	3,3%	7,6%
Total	45	47	92
	48,9%	51,1%	100,0%

From the Table 3 we can conclude that there are no obvious differences regarding family support for inclusion into lifelong education process with respect to the age of the participants. Both age groups show approximately same levels of support, as well as absence of support. Based on the calculation of the  $\chi^2$ -test in the Appendix 3 ( $\chi^2 = 0,203$ ,  $g = 1$ ,  $P = 0,711$ ), the data show that the differences are not statistically significant. Hence, the hypothesis **H3** was rejected on the basis of  $\chi^2$ -test.

**H4:** Work environment can be regarded as motivator for lifelong education.

For the testing of hypothesis H4 I used the variable »Reaction of the work environment to the lifelong education of respondents«.

The hypothesis was tested on the basis of  $\chi^2$  test of the equal probability.

**Table4:** Number and percentage of claims related to the influence of the work environment on lifelong education.

Influence of the work environment on lifelong education		Number	Percentage	$\chi^2$	g	P
They support me in my decision.	Yes	35	38,0%	5,261 <sup>a</sup>	1	0,022
	No	57	62,0%			
They make fun of my learning.	Yes	3	3,3%	80,391 <sup>a</sup>	1	0,000
	No	89	96,7%			
They don't care.	Yes	23	25,0%	23,000 <sup>a</sup>	1	0,000
	No	69	75,0%			
They also think about that kind of education.	Yes	19	20,7%	31,696 <sup>a</sup>	1	0,000
	No	73	79,3%			
They show interest in my education process and discuss it with me.	Yes	32	34,8%	8,522 <sup>a</sup>	1	0,000
	No	60	65,2%			
Other	Yes	6	6,5%	69,565 <sup>a</sup>	1	0,000
	No	86	93,5%			

From the research it can be concluded the majority of the respondents agreed with the claim that the work environment supported their decision for lifelong education (38% of respondents answered YES). They generally rejected the assumption that the work environment (colleagues etc.) would make fun of their decision (just 3.3% of affirmative answers).

Table 1 indicates the result  $\chi^2$  – test pointed to the statistically significant differences ( $P < 0,05$ ) in agreeing with all claims made about the reaction of work environment to lifelong learning and education.

For the most part the respondents agreed that the work environment can be regarded as motivator for their lifelong learning and education because it provided them with adequate support ( $\chi^2 = 5,261$ ,  $g = 1$ ,  $P = 0,022$ ).

Regarding the findings obtained the hypothesis was *confirmed*.

**H5:** Financial means and occasional possibility of lifelong learning and education influence the frequency of additional education regarded as hobby.

The testing of this hypothesis was done by the method of multiple linear regression.

The model of multiple linear regression included two independent and one dependent variable.

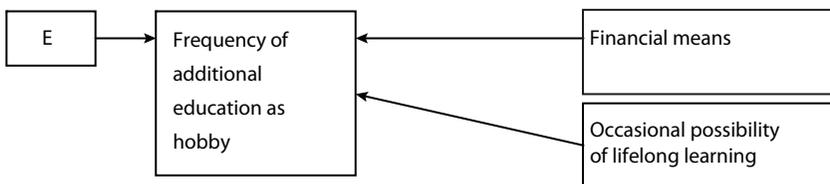
The dependent variable was 'the frequency of additional education as hobby'.

The independent variables were:

- Financial means
- Occasional possibility of lifelong learning.

The influence of independent variables was shown in the form of model (Diagram 1).

**Diagram1:** *Model of regression analysis*



From the linear regression model it can be concluded that the independent variables explain 16.8% of variability in dependent variable - frequency of additional education as hobby. The linear regression model is statistically significant ( $P = 0,003$ ). Only one of two regression coefficients is statistically significant – the coefficient of financial means.

Therefore, from the above findings we may draw a statistically significant conclusion that the frequency of the additional education as hobby is influenced only by the factor of financial means while the occasional possibility of lifelong

education is not influenced by it. The correlation between them is positive – the higher the amount of financial means the more frequent the additional education as hobby<sup>17</sup>.

On the basis of the above findings the hypothesis was *confirmed*.

## **Concluding remarks**

According to the Latin proverb *Scientia est potentia*, knowledge is power.

It is acquired ceaselessly, and used as a foundation of life. We can never get too much of it, and it is never too late to learn.

With my research I intended to demonstrate the fact that education represents an integral part of human life – regardless of one's age. The only things that count are interests, desires and needs .

A lot of people take part in some form of education, even if they have finished their formal part. They learn simply out of desire to improve the existing knowledge. Yet, at the same time, such behaviour is required by the time and place they live in. Of course, they often encounter obstacles related to ensuring of the possibilities for education (i.e. financial means, support of their partners/colleagues/family...).

With huge amount of energy and personal resolve needed to achieve the desired goals and objectives the path towards them is all but easy. However, it is attainable.

I realised that lifelong learning and education greatly influence the quality of individuals' lives. The family and a positive work environment also have huge importance.

The contemporary post-modern society is based on learning and education. Educated people form the basis of good society. Yet it is such society that demands persistent and tirelessly inquisitive mind, fostered by flexible and constant lifelong education.

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<sup>17</sup> SPSS outputs used in testing of hypothesis 5 are in the Appendix 5.

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