

Vocational schooling in the Volyn voivodeship in the interwar period

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Abstract.

The purpose of the study is to analyse the main features of the functioning of vocational schools in the Volyn Voivodeship in the interwar period. **The research methodology** is based on the principles of historicism, scientificity, objectivity and systematicity. The study used both general scientific and special methods: historical and systematic, statistical, analysis, synthesis, and generalisation. **The scientific novelty** lies in the comprehensive study and analysis of the work of vocational schools, the use of statistical information that allows to reveal the regional specifics of the activities of vocational schools and courses, an attempt to prove how the development of vocational education depended on the socio-economic conditions of the region. **Conclusions.** The organisation and functioning of vocational education in the Volyn Voivodeship can be observed to have a number of peculiarities that were determined by the historical past of the region. The most popular in Volyn were agricultural, commercial, and craft institutions, vocational supplementary schools and courses of professional improvement. The interwar period saw an increase in women's vocational schools, which was due to various public organisations. However, there were many problems: a lack of school premises, a perception that gymnasium education was more prestigious, and the difficult socio-economic situation in the region.

Keywords: vocational schools, women's vocational education, vocational supplementary schools, Volyn Voivodeship, interwar period, Second Polish Republic.

Професійне шкільництво у Волинському воєводстві в міжвоєнний період

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Анотація.

Мета дослідження полягає в аналізі основних особливостей функціонування професійних закладів освіти у Волинському воєводстві в міжвоєнний період. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах історизму, науковості, об'єктивності та системності. Під час проведення дослідження використані як загальнонаукові, так і спеціальні методи: історико-системний, статистичний, аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення. **Наукова новизна** полягає в комплексному дослідженні та аналізі роботи професійних навчальних закладів, залучено статистичну інформацію, що дає змогу розкрити регіональну специфіку діяльності фахових шкіл та курсів, здійснено спробу довести, яким чином розвиток професійного шкільництва залежав від соціально-економічних умов регіону. **Висновки.** В організації та функціонуванні професійної освіти на території Волинського воєводства можна побачити низку особливостей, які були зумовлені історичним минулим регіону. Найбільшою популярністю на Волині користувалися сільськогосподарські, торгові, ремісничі заклади, професійні доповнюючі школи, а також курси професійного вдосконалення. У міжвоєнний період спостерігається збільшення жіночих професійних шкіл, що було заслугою різних громадських організацій. Однак існувало чимало проблем: нестача шкільних приміщень, побутувала думка про більшу престижність гімназійної освіти, складна соціально-економічна ситуація регіону.

Ключові слова: професійні школи, жіноча професійна освіта, фахово-доповнюючі школи, Волинське воєводство, міжвоєнний період, Друга Річ Посполита.

Statement of the problem. As a result of the events of the First World War and the Polish-Ukrainian conflict of 1918-1919, Volyn was ceded to the revived Second Polish Republic. Established in 1921, the Volyn Voivodeship was an economically backward region, dominated by traditional forms of agriculture preserved from the Russian tsarist era and with a low level of industrial production. Therefore, the establishment of a vocational education system was intended to help boost the country's economic development. The network of vocational schools in Volyn included different types of educational institutions of different levels and specialisations, which gave young people the opportunity to choose their future profession.

In general, the main problems of the article are to study the dynamics of the development of the number of vocational schools, to trace the phenomenon of increase or decrease of the student contingent, and to characterise women's vocational education. In view of this, we consider it appropriate to study the development of vocational education in the Volyn Voivodeship, which is viewed through the prism of the socio-economic situation of the region.

Analysis of sources and recent research. The problems of the development of vocational schooling in the Volyn Voivodeship have been included in the scientific interests of such researchers as O. Volontyr (Volontyr, 2017), V. Marchuk (Marchuk, 2022), Y. Kramar (Kramar, 2016). An analysis of the general trends in the development of schooling in the western Ukrainian lands during the study period is demonstrated in the study by A. Nahirniak (Nahirniak, 2018). The issues of unification of the education system in Poland after gaining independence in 1918 are characterised in the article by E. Czepczynska (Czepczynska, 2016). The peculiarities of the socio-economic situation in the region are highlighted in the works of I. Zuliak and Y. Makar (Zuliak, Makar 2023), and E. Khraplyvyi (Khraplyvyi, 1997). The characteristic features of the functioning of women's professional institutions are revealed in the study by V. Dobrochynska (Dobrochynska, 2021). On the impact of the War on schooling in Galicia and the tasks of teaching in the conditions of post-war covered in the article M. Haliv, V. Ilnytskyi, J. Matkowski (Haliv, Ilnytskyi, Matkowski, 2025). However, more detailed scientific coverage is needed on the activities of vocational schools through the prism of their educational work and the dependence of vocational education on the economic potential of the region.

The purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to analyse the main features of the functioning of professional educational institutions in the Volyn Voivodeship in the interwar period.

The results of the research. The study of the organisational foundations of vocational schooling plays an important role in highlighting the educational situation in the Volyn Voivodeship. Unlike primary schools, gymnasiums, and lyceums, vocational schools lagged far behind in their development. Among the most significant reasons for this, researchers name the region's poor economic situation, the failure of the Russian tsarist government to take into account the needs of vocational education in the early twentieth century, and the lack of a clearly developed legislative framework.

It should be noted that the development of vocational education directly depended on the existing socio-economic conditions. Therefore, we consider it appropriate to describe, first of all, the general features of the economic situation of the Volyn Voivodeship.

The territory of Volhynia suffered from the military events of the First World War, as well as from the Polish-Ukrainian armed conflict of 1920 (Marchuk, 2022, p. 24). After the signing of the Riga Peace Treaty in 1921, the reconstruction processes primarily affected the economy. The government of the Second Polish Republic tried to accelerate the industrial and agricultural development of the newly annexed 'eastern kresy', but this proved to be a difficult task due to their economic backwardness from the western and central regions (Zuliak, Makar, 2023, p. 99). In addition, the economy of interwar Volhynia was dominated by agriculture. According to the 1931 census, out of 100 people in the Volyn Voivodeship, 12 lived in cities and 88 in villages (Khraplyvyi, 1997, p. 12). In terms of occupation, the largest employment in the region was in agriculture, forestry, gardening, and fishing – 88.6% of the total population, while the number of workers in industry was only 3.9%, and in trade – only 3.0%. Analysing the state of agriculture in the western Ukrainian lands, E. Khraplyvyi argues that 'our land is a farming, agrarian country'. The researcher considers the underdeveloped industry and trade to be 'a great obstacle to the fact that the excess of peasant hands that our village has could move to other sectors of the national economy and find useful and expedient occupation' (Khraplyvyi, 1997, p. 13).

It is worth noting that the revived Polish state in its economic policy did not pay much attention to the development of the industrial potential of the Western Ukrainian lands. This was due to the division of the territory of the Second Polish Republic into Poland A (Central and Western) and Poland B (Eastern, which included Western Ukrainian and Western Belarusian lands). The so-called 'eastern kresy' were supposed to become a raw material appendage of the Polish state – a source of agricultural products and a market for industrial goods from the central and western regions (Tereshchenko, 2012, p. 107).

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Increasing the pace of industrial production, trade, revival of infrastructure and agriculture were considered key tasks in the implementation of economic reforms in the revived Poland (Volontyr, 2017, p. 9). According to A. Nahirniak, 'vocational education was supposed to contribute to the economic rise of Polish elements... and to the acquisition of economic superiority' (Nahirniak, 2018, p. 96). Staffing undoubtedly played an important role in the rise of the country's socio-economic development, so the Polish government has been promoting vocational education.

There was concern in the Polish educational environment about the low level of motivation among young people to enter vocational schools. A much larger influx of applicants was observed in gymnasiums, lyceums or teacher's seminaries, which was explained by the relatively higher prestige of gymnasium secondary education. Therefore, it was even proposed to reduce the number of gymnasiums and increase the number of vocational schools. Another drawback of vocational education was the disproportionate distribution of the school network, namely, there were too many schools in the central and northwestern regions of Poland, while in the 'eastern kresy' their number was insignificant not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality (Krzowski, 1931, p. 14).

According to the Polish authorities, the Volyn Voivodeship was characterised by a large human potential and wide opportunities for vocational education. However, the region needed to increase the number of professionals with economic or technical education obtained in Polish universities: Warsaw, Krakow, Lublin, etc. (Wołyń : tygodnik społeczny, polityczny i gospodarczy, p. 5).

The task of vocational schooling was to provide training for specialists in the most developed industries, agriculture, construction, mining and forestry, trade, service sector, etc. In this regard, the system of vocational education included industrial, craft, commercial, agricultural, communication, professional and complementary institutions and home economics schools (Pahuta, 2019, p. 15).

In the early 1920s, a small number of vocational training schools operated in the Volyn Voivodeship. From the general list of professional institutions for 1924, we learn about the activities of the state school of surveyors and road technicians in Kovel, located at 17 Korolewa Bona Street. It is known that the school, founded in 1921, trained road builders and geodesy specialists. Thanks to the efforts of the state, 4 classes were opened in each of the two departments: land surveying and road construction. The teaching staff of the school was represented by the director Adam Godowski (engineer, teacher of geodesy), and among the teachers of special subjects we can name Michał Dietrich, Stanisław Kaminski, Leopold Skulski, Mieczysław Sawicki, Juliusz Bielsze, Marcel Giżyński, Zygmund Kucharski, Sergiusz Neapolitanski, Stanisława Malinowska and others. In addition to general education subjects, specialised disciplines were taught, such as construction, electrical engineering, drawing, and geodesy (Spis nauczycieli szkół wyższych, średnich, zawosowych, seminarjów nauczycielskich oraz wykaz zakładów naukowych i władz szkolnych, p. 412).

Among the agrotechnical schools, we cannot ignore the state secondary agricultural school in Bila Krynytsia, which was part of the Kremenets Lyceum complex of educational institutions. It was founded in 1921 as a vocational school on the site of a former Russian elementary school, from which it inherited the Bilokrynytsia estate (5238 hectares), which belonged in turn to the Zbarazh, Vyshnevetskyi, Radziwill, and Chosnovskyi families. The agricultural school was famous for its professional teaching staff: the director was Henryk Tarłowski, the teacher of hydrometry and hydrology was Sergiusz Białoszycki, the teacher of soil science, geology, and zoology was Jan Zawadski, and the teachers of geodesy, botany, and knowledge of agriculture were Antonii Jahodynski and Erika Tarłowska. The national composition of the Bilokrynytsia Agricultural School was dominated by Polish students (138 students), while there were only 16 Ukrainians (Kramar, 2016, p. 24).

In the context of the studied aspects of the development of Polish vocational schools in Volyn, a special place is occupied by the organisation of women's education. At the beginning of the twentieth century, women's access to education remained extremely limited due to the established stereotypes about their main employment in the household. According to the researcher V. Dobrochynska, in the interwar period in Volyn, the unequal position of women in society continued to be observed, with the male population having much more chances to obtain a vocational education (Dobrochynska, 2021, p. 119). However, it should be noted that Polish NGOs tried to dispel preconceived notions about the role of women in public life and promote their involvement in the active cultural and educational environment of the Second Polish Republic.

One of these organisations was the Association of Women's Public Labour, established in 1928, which had an extensive network throughout Poland. The main mission of the Association was to raise the educational level of women, thus promoting their civic activity in the spirit of a deep sense of patriotism towards the Polish state (Piwowarczyk, 2013, p. 264). In the Volyn Voivodeship, the largest number of the organisation's representatives were active in the Kovel Poviāt (320 members). It is known that in 1936, on the initiative of the Association of Women's Public Labour, a professional women's tailoring school was opened in Kovel. Before its opening, cutting and sewing courses were organised here. A subvention for the needs of the newly created institution was provided by the Curatorial Board of the Volyn School District. The full course of study at the school lasted 3 years. The

tuition fee was 100 zlotys for 1 year, but 40% of the students enjoyed privileges or were exempted from paying at all. Poor students were entitled to free meals. In total, there were 170 students in three classes. The position of director was held by Valeriia Pankova, who was also the head of the Kovel Association of Women's Public Labour. The school had youth student societies – Brotherly Help and Khartsertsvo. Every year, the school organised fashion shows, in which future tailors and seamstresses took an active part.

Statistical data for the 1927/1928 academic year provide information on the activities of 15 vocational schools in the Volyn Voivodeship, including 3 public and 12 private schools. In all 15 schools of the Volyn Voivodeship, 1262 children received vocational education, and there were 1368 residents per vocational school student. The researcher Yu. Kramar notes that 'by the end of the interwar twentieth century, the number of vocational schools had increased to 35' (Kramar, 2016, p. 23).

According to statistics, 75% of the population was engaged in primitive agriculture, which indicates a crisis in the functioning of vocational schooling in the 1920s. Reports from the Volyn District Department of the Polish Teachers' Union state that "the organisation of vocational education does not meet the needs of our society. Many vocational schools are being opened that provide vocational training that cannot be used in the current state of our economic life" (DARO. F. 184, op. 1, d. 30, p. 451).

According to the 1932 law, vocational education became a three-stage system: lower, gymnasium and lyceum. In the functioning of vocational institutions, we can observe their close connection with primary 1 and 2 grade schools. According to researcher O. Volontyr, vocational schools of the gymnasium and lyceum level used the curriculum of general education gymnasiums, which made it impossible for primary school students to enter vocational education institutions (Volontyr, 2017, p. 11). In view of this, various vocational courses were offered in secondary schools to prepare students for vocational education institutions. For example, in the 1927/28 academic year, 53 vocational courses were organised in the Volyn Voivodeship (Table 1).

Table 1

List of craft courses at primary schools in the 1927/1928 academic year
(Wołoszynowski, J., 1929, p. 183)

County names	Tailoring	Handicrafts	Carpet weaving	Weaving	Carpentry	Locksmithing	Shoemaking	Beekeeping	Basket weaving	Total
Kovel	5	–	–	1	3	1	1	1	–	12
Rivne	4	–	–	–	2	1	–	–	1	8
Kremenets	3	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	7
Kostopil	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	2	5
Volodymyrets	2	–	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	5
Dubno	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	1	4
Horokhiv	1	1	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	4
Zdolbuniv	2	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	4
Lutsk	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	2
Luboml	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	2
Total	20	1	5	4	13	3	2	1	4	53

A separate group of vocational institutions was made up of vocational supplementary schools. Their main goal was to improve the professional competences of already working young people and to form 'conscious citizens of their state' (Zagadnienie dokształcania zawodowego, p. 17). In addition, training in supplementary schools was aimed at mastering theoretical knowledge of the chosen profession and deepening practical skills acquired by the employed population in paid work (Czepczyńska, 2016, p. 41). This type of school was especially popular in large cities, for example, in Lutsk there were 12 vocational schools. In the 1930s, the State Vocational Complementary School, established in 1925 on the initiative of the Polish School Matriculation Board, was active here, and from 26 August 1934 it became state-owned and funded by the Lutsk Magistrate (DAVO, F. 13, op. 1, d. 25, p. 68; d. 94, p. 32).

It should be noted that in 1925-1928, education lasted 4 years, as there were 4 classes, one of which was preparatory. However, in 1929 the preparatory class was closed and the educational process lasted for 3 years (DAVO, F. 13, op. 1, d. 94, p. 52). Students of the school could be people who had graduated from primary seven-year schools, people who had already worked in a particular speciality, and people who took examinations externally to obtain a professional certificate. The institution trained specialists in the following specialities: accountant, production of bags and sweets; dental technician, tinsmith, boiler operator, driver, mechanic, painter, butcher, butcher, miller, hairdresser, baker, tailor, shoemaker, mechanic, carpenter, joiner, radio technician, salesman, electrician, photographer, and driver (DAVO, F. 13, op. 1, p. 94, p. 52). According to the information from the visits conducted in 1935, it is known that students studied in the premises of primary schools No. 2 and No. 9, with classes starting at 18 hours and taking place every week on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. At the beginning of the 1934/1935 academic year, 522 new students were admitted, but during the year 154 students were expelled from the school for unknown reasons (DAVO, F. 13, op. 1, d. 45, p. 181).

Conclusions. In the organisation and functioning of vocational education in the Volyn Voivodeship, we can see a number of features that were determined by the historical past of the region. The most popular in Volyn were agricultural, commercial, and craft institutions, vocational supplementary schools, and professional development courses. In the interwar period, there was an increase in the number of women's vocational schools, which was due to the efforts of various public organisations. However, there were many problems: a lack of school facilities, the perception that gymnasium education was more prestigious, and the difficult socio-economic situation in the region.

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