

**Adult education and work life. A comparative  
study of Norway and Japan.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main problem of this paper is the interaction between adult education and work life and the expression of it in two different countries. The globalization process is indicating that problems and issues are getting a common international degree. But the importance and influence of national context reveals the different levels of challenges and solutions. The topic is described from a comparative perspective presenting two countries, Norway and Japan. The chosen theoretical frame includes adult education and work life interaction, lifelong learning concept, national (culture and education system) dimension, organizational and individual dimensions which are hard to separate. How is the interaction of main aspects expressed in the context of chosen factors in both countries? Can traditional education system fulfill all the needs which appear from this interaction? The main method chosen to reveal the theoretical and practical aspects of the topic is literature analysis from the available sources. The variety of theoretical and empirical data is included to describe the picture of two national contexts. The method determined certain limitations which affects conclusions. There is just a small part of direct comparative data about two countries. So conclusions cannot be considered as actual facts, but more as descriptive facts and interpretations.

The emergence of lifelong learning lays the foundations for adult education and work life interaction. Traditional education is challenged by this process and the need for various educational opportunities is becoming very important for combining training and work. The interaction of the aspects in both countries is not leaving organizational frame and is mainly current-work related. The co-operation is active in theoretical and practical context of the countries in all chosen aspects. The foundations, problems are the same, the priorities and solutions are different.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	8
I. THEORETICAL FRAME: PRESENTATION OF CONCEPTS.....	14
1.1 The knowledge society and work life.....	14
1.2 Lifelong learning.....	16
1.2.1 Formal lifelong learning .....	16
1.2.2 Informal lifelong learning.....	18
1.3 Adult education .....	19
1.4 Lifelong learning concept in Norway and Japan .....	21
1.4.1 Norway .....	21
1.4.2 Japan .....	22
1.4.3 Comparison of lifelong learning concept .....	23
Summary.....	24
II. GENERAL FACTS ABOUT NORWAY AND JAPAN .....	25
2.1 General picture .....	25
2.2 Labor force participation aspect .....	28
2.2.1 Norway .....	28
2.2.2 Japan .....	30
2.3 Comparison of general aspects .....	32
III. NATIONAL DIMENSION.....	34
3.1 Cultural aspect .....	34
3.1.1 Definition of culture .....	35
3.1.2 Presentation of Hofstede and his research .....	37
3.1.3 Hofstedes cultural dimensions .....	38
3.1.4 The comparative aspect of Hofstedes cultural dimensions, with the specific reference to Norway and Japan .....	40
3.1.5 Norway: culture and society .....	45
3.1.6 Japan: culture and society .....	47
3.1.7 Comparison of cultural aspects .....	49
Summary.....	51

3.2 Education system .....	52
3.2.1 Structural frame: system, structure and statistics .....	52
3.2.1.1 <i>Norway</i> .....	52
3.2.1.2 <i>Japan</i> .....	56
3.2.2 Legal frame .....	60
3.2.2.1 <i>Norway</i> .....	60
3.2.2.2 <i>Japan</i> .....	67
3.2.3 Financial aspect .....	70
3.2.4 Comparison of education system aspects .....	73
Summary .....	76
IV. ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL DIMENSIONS.....	77
4.1 Theoretical approach .....	78
4.1.1 Organization and training: Norwegian context .....	78
4.1.2 Organization and training: Japanese context .....	82
4.1.3 Individual and training: Norwegian context .....	86
4.1.4 Individual and training: Japanese context .....	88
4.2 Empirical approach .....	89
4.2.1 <i>Norway</i> .....	89
4.2.2 <i>Japan</i> .....	103
4.2.3 Comparative aspect .....	107
4.3 Comparative approach .....	110
Summary .....	114
V. COMPARATIVE DIMENSION .....	115
CONCLUSION .....	126
REFERENCES .....	129

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: General facts about Norway and Japan. (Globalis, no date). **p. 26**

Table 2.2: Persons aged 15-74 years, by sex and labor force status. Annual average, Norway. 1000. (2006). (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007a). **p. 28**

Table 2.3: Unemployed persons, by sex and age. Annual average, Norway. (2006). (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007b). **p. 29**

Table 2.4: Population by labor force status. Japan. (2006). (numbers: millions). (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007a). **p. 30**

Table 2.5: Persons in the labor force, by sex. Selected countries. (2005). Per cent of all persons in each group. (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007d). **p. 33**

Table 3.2: Hofstede's five cultural dimensions results in the cases of Norway and Japan. (Hofstede, 2005). **p. 41**

Table 3.3: Types of schools in Norway. (2005/6). (Minifacts, 2007). **p. 53**

Table 3.4: Number of children, pupils, apprentices, students and participants, by level and type of school/institution. Norway. (2005). (Statistical yearbook of Norway, 2007e). **p. 54**

Table 3.5: Educational institutions in Japan (number). (2006). (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007b). **p. 58**

Table 3.6: Percentage distribution of student enrollments: national, public, private. Japan. (2005). (MEXT, 2006:4). **p. 59**

Table 3.7: Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP, by levels of education. Norway and Japan. From public and private sources, by year. (OECD, 2007:205). **p. 72**

Table 4.2: Who wished and initiated course participation? Norway. (1996). (Larsen et al, 1997:114). **p. 91**

Table 4.3: Employees who had formal training in the last 5 years according to the type of training %. Norway. (1996). (Larsen et al, 1997:104). **p. 92**

Table 4.4: Percentage participation in courses during the last 3 years. Norway. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:18). **p. 94**

Table 4.5: Employees views on what they will achieve by participating in organized training %. Norway. (1996). (Larsen et al, 1997:116). **p. 96**

Table 4.6: Distribution of categories of main reasons for participating in training. Norway. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:29). **p. 97**

Table 4.7: Benefits of the participant from the training. Norway. (Nordhaug, 1985:55). **p. 98**

Table 4.8: Usefulness of most recent course. Percentage of participants who responded “very useful” or “useful” to the given statements. Base= all participants who had completed a course during the last 3 years.Norway.(Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:37).**p. 99**

Table 4.9: Main barrier factors. Percentage of respondents who indicate each of the factors as the main barrier factor. Base= all non-participants in courses. Norway. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001: 43). **p. 102**

Table 4.10: Index Of Expenditure Per Worker For Education and Training. Japan. (1979). (Inoue, 1985:36). **p. 103**

Table 4.11: Education and Training Performance In Manufacturing Companies. Japan. (1979). (Inoue, 1985:35). **p. 104**

Table 4.12: Methods Of Self-Development for The Management. Japan. (Inoue, 1985 :37). **p. 105**

Table 4.13: Methods Of Education And Training For Employees. Japan. (Inoue, 1985:37). **p. 105**

Table 4.14: Competitiveness factors in Norway and Japan. 2007. (IMD, 2007). **p. 108**

Figure 2.1: Men and women in the labor force, by age as per cent of the total in each group. Norway. (1980 and 2006). ( Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007c). **p. 30**

Figure 2.2: Labor force participation by sex. Japan. (2006). (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007a). **p. 32**

Picture 3.1: Students at universities and university colleges, by sex. Norway. (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007f). **p. 55**

## INTRODUCTION

“DIFFERENT MINDS BUT COMMON PROBLEMS” (Hofstede, 2005:2)

### *Topic*

“The world is full of confrontations between people, groups, and nations who think, feel, and act differently. At the same time, these people, groups, and nations <...> are exposed to common problems that demand cooperation for their solution. “ (Hofstede, 2005:2).

The contemporary world is in continuous process of change. This process can be defined by the globalization concept. The international level of the topic cannot exclude globalization, because this is the active unifying process in the contemporary world. Often it can be defined only by economical aspects and importance of international economical competition. But globalization includes technological, cultural, social, political and other aspects too. The nations are getting closer because of the informational development. There are described some effects of globalization which can also be considered as characteristics of this process. The examples of this are emergence of worldwide production markets, political globalization (European Union), the flow of information between separate geographical locations, growing cultural contacts and consciousness, ecological challenges, circulation of people (immigration, emigration), cultural exchange, technological development. (Wikipedia, no date c). Globalization process is bringing different nations closer to each other in the face of the same challenges and benefits. But the ways of meeting all the changes are different. The effects of globalization are both, positive and negative. The national reactions are also very different. The national identity and traditions are challenged and even threatened by the variety of international offers. Yet, all countries are trying to keep their identity and to accept different cultures at the same time.



All the aspects of the contemporary world are depended from national dimension too. This process of changes and solutions is influenced by the differences inside the countries, like history, culture, traditions, norms, society structure, economy, etc. It is very important to know the national context of the country in order to realize the background and main influence of the processes there. Especially it is important for revealing the context of education and work life interaction. Both aspects are influenced by globalization processes at international and national levels. The word co-operation becomes the key-word in this context, because globalization and national cultures should collaborate and exchange the ideas.

The work life and adult education is emerging as two communicating aspects in the context of the changes. As Sharan B. Merriam indicates: “One of the most powerful motivators for participation in adult learning activities is the need to stay abreast of changes in society that affects one’s work and personal life.” (Merriam, 1993:105). Evers is concerned that long-term employability is no longer an option in the companies. He points out that: “Individuals are responsible for their own lifelong employability rather than relying on the lifelong employment contract of the past.” (Evers, 1998:9). Education is the provider of foundations necessary for employability, but that’s about it. So studies and education should help to develop the skills important to make the right choices and continue to learn. There is the need to match the skills learned at the college and necessary skills in the workplace. (Evers, 1998). The other aspect is pointed out by Useem: “The challenge is to translate the demand into supply, to convert what companies require into what universities provide.” (Useem, 1998:xiii). This emphasizes the importance of co-operations of different related actors for lifelong learning preparation. Knowledge is changing very fast, and everyone has to adapt to this change, be flexible and able to learn.

What is happening with education? Carol A. Twigg determines that the definition of learning is changing. The changes occur in the types of skills needed, the increase of adults in education, the emergence of lifelong learning, new methods and places of

learning. All this is the reaction to the new demands. (Twigg, 1994). She also questions traditional education system, if it is still effective and suitable in this changing situation. She asks: “Does our current teaching infrastructure, with its emphasis on the traditional classroom, provide an effective mechanism...”? (Twigg, 1994:24).

Education is part of every society; every country is challenged by the changes of the contemporary world. The definition of learning is changing and the importance of lifelong learning is increasing. Traditional education system is not enough to meet the needs of contemporary individual. Adult education field becomes the special area in the system of lifelong learning. And I am particularly interested in the situation of this educational area in the contemporary societies. Work life is one of the most important parts in the life of individual and social system. The emerging lifelong learning concept is uniting the interaction between adult education and work life. Educational certification is more and more important for individuals to start in the work life, but is at the same level as the experience requirement. So what is more important, education or work life experience? Why the number of participation in higher education is increasing? Why learning during the individual work life is getting increased importance? What individuals need to get a good start in the work life and to be successful there? What is the meaning of lifelong learning for the society and the way of life? This changing and confusing work life situation got me interested in the topic of adult education and work life interaction.

### ***Problem and questions***

The main topic and problem of this paper is the interaction between adult education and work life in the context of lifelong learning. The comparison of two countries, Norway and Japan, will be the main context to reveal the aspects of this interaction. The main hypothesis is that the effective interaction is possible when there is a communication and collaboration of both factors. But there are other areas which are influencing each other, and they cannot be excluded from this interaction. So a certain theoretical frame of

influential factors is chosen to discuss the interaction of two main aspects.

The frame of interaction:

key aspects: adult education ↔ work life

framing dimensions: ↓↑national (culture and education) ↓↑organizational ↓↑individual

The questions and issues in the context of interaction:

- How strong is the interaction of all aspects?
- How this interaction is expressed in different countries? (Concerning national and international aspects).
- Is it enough just formal traditional education to meet the needs of adults and work life?
- How traditional education should change facing new challenges and demands?
- Which educational form is the most effective in this interaction?
- Classical /general or practical education?

Comparative aspect is a good method to discuss such ambiguous, various and problematic topic. The example of certain countries is the way to show the common problems of the interaction and the difference of solutions. The focus in this topic will be mainly on the realization of the interaction among main aspects in two countries. So why Norway and Japan? Both, Norway and Japan are strong, industrial countries with highly developed educational system. It is really interesting to compare the situation of the same aspects in the countries which has a lot in common from international point of view, and are very different in other aspects:

- Two different cultures in the context of the world.
- Japan relies more on knowledge and innovation, Norway- on natural resources and adaptability. The background for the need of knowledge is different concerning work life and educational needs.
- The world is changing and knowledge society is becoming more important in Norway

too. Japan has to keep being strong in international competition too.

### ***Limitations***

The fields of education, lifelong learning, adult education and work life are very broad. A lot of various aspects are included in each case. So there are certain limitations of this paper which define the main focus of discussion. Only formal adult education, adult education after school as the field to analyze its interaction with the work life is chosen. The main emphasis in all chosen factors is on formal work- related training.

The conclusions are hard to make as actual facts of reality because of the methodology. Most of the empirical data chosen for comparison of two countries do not provide direct comparative information. It is mainly empirical facts about similar aspects from two different countries. Also part of information is not from the recent years, but from earlier decades. Many other aspects which are not included there are influencing the situation too. The topic is presented in descriptive way. A possible reality or expectations how it should be is presented and discussed.

### ***Methodology***

The main method used to present the topic is literature analyses method. The literature sources, such as available documentations, publications, research reports, documents are used. The used literature includes both, qualitative and quantitative data, so the combination of both methods for data analyses is used. The study field is very broad and based on different theoretical perspectives. The discussion is the combination and interpretation of contributions in the comparative perspective.

### ***Structure***

The paper is divided into the chapters according to the discussed aspects/dimensions revealing the interaction of two main aspects in that particular context.

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical frame of the topic. The main concepts chosen for this paper have a variety of broad meanings. So it is necessary to choose the most suitable definitions of lifelong learning, adult education and their definition in Norway and Japan.

Chapter 2 presents some general facts about Norway and Japan with particular view to the labor force situation. Even if both countries are highly developed, there are differences important in the case of adult education and work life interaction.

Chapter 3 presents the national dimension context of the topic. It is divided into cultural and educational aspects. The discussion about cultural aspect is based on Hofstede's cultural theory and research which gives a certain picture about both countries. Educational aspect concerns structural, legal and financial aspects of education system.

Chapter 4 presents organizational and individual dimensions. These two dimensions are the main area of interaction. It is quite hard to separate them in the context of work life, so they are presented together. The discussion is divided into theoretical, empirical and comparative aspects.

Chapter 5 is generalized comparative discussion about the interaction of adult education and work life in the context of all chosen dimensions.

## **I. THEORETICAL FRAME: PRESENTATION OF CONCEPTS**

The topic of adult education and work life interaction includes many theoretical concepts which are not so easy to define. The context in which education and work are connected is really various and very wide, so it is important to choose certain aspects to discuss specific problems. In this chapter chosen theoretical concepts are presented. They are part of education and work life interaction and define theoretical frame of the problem. These concepts are knowledge society, lifelong learning divided into formal and informal, and adult education. Also there the definition of lifelong learning in Norway and in Japan is presented separately.

### **1.1 The knowledge society and work life**

“In today’s world all these skills are necessary, in order to face rapid change in society. This means that it is important to know how to go on learning as we require new skills for life and work. In addition, we need to know how to cope with the flood of information and turn it into useful knowledge. We also need to learn how to handle change in society and in our own lives.” (UNESCO, no date).

The quote is taken from UNESCO description of six ”education for all” goals by the year 2015 which show growing importance of lifelong learning and adult education in contemporary world. The development of technology, the change of information, the world of economy are causing changes in society, bringing new demands for its members and of course affecting the system of education. The main demand for every adult would be to be able to know new information, improve professional knowledge. Otherwise it will be hard to participate in the work life successfully and to keep personal well-being, which now depends from the work life a lot.

Carnoy's point helps to express the position that one of the most important reasons for the growth of adult education is based on its connection with the changes in the work life. He states that: "Increasingly, workers change the kind of jobs they do over their work lives, and their jobs tend, more and more, to be multitasked. This translates into pressure to increase the average level of education in the labor force and to provide more opportunities for adults to return to school to obtain new skills." (Carnoy, 1999:15). Therefore it is not strange that the field of adult education is full of different concepts, that the topic of adult education as lifelong learning strategy is gaining more importance and need for research. Thus education system has to change and to create possibilities for everyone to get education, to attain necessary knowledge.

Cropley is indicating the psychological aspect of the changes in education. He is pointing out population growth, increased social mobility and public participation, availability and demand of goods, technological and communication changes which are affecting education, work life and the need for knowledge. He is summarizing the importance of these aspects claiming that: "...today's schoolchildren may be preparing to enter a social and vocational world that will not exist at the time they become adults." (Cropley, 1977: 12). In my opinion he is describing the knowledge society without naming this concept. The presentation of contemporary world situation according to him suggests the need of new educational goals. Author says that it is necessary for individuals to learn to live in the changing world. This is important for individuals working abilities and satisfaction, personal development and stability. This means that the areas of educational aspects are spreading. (Cropley, 1977).

This is the formation of knowledge society. The time of rapid technological development and information orientation created the basis for the knowledge to become a key-concept in the societies. Work life is changing with the requirements for knowledge. General and specific skills, competence and personal development are the aspects describing the definition of the knowledge society for the work place. The members of the knowledge society are also the participants in the work life. They need to obtain and develop their

competence, to keep up with the changes and the flow of new information. Education can be considered as the primary provider of the knowledge and it becomes an important tool in the knowledge society. But the importance is increasing at the adult education level especially, because the need for skills and competence development is the continuous process. That is the point when adult education and work life are connected and in the need for active interaction. Lifelong learning concept is uniting all mentioned aspects and will be presented now.

## **1.2 Lifelong learning**

Lifelong learning is an overall concept in this theoretical frame. Contemporary education theory and knowledge society have a lot of terms to define new directions of education. These terms are lifelong learning, lifelong education, adult education, recurrent education, continuous education, etc. From my point of view all of these concepts are right, but lifelong learning is the main one. This concept can be found in all other terms, that is why it is uniting them all. Other concepts are mostly directed to one educational aspect or form, while lifelong learning is including the variety of educational directions. But because of this variety, lifelong learning should be divided into formal and informal.

### **1.2.1 Formal lifelong learning**

One way to define formal lifelong learning can be by using lifelong education concept. Formal education differs from informal in the way it is organized and provided. Traditional formal education is provided by educational institutions with defined structure. Lifelong learning is not changing this traditional formal education, but is adding education during the lifespan aspect and challenges traditional system with new direction to provide knowledge for all groups of people. But lifelong education is not the same as lifelong learning; these two concepts are not similar. Yet they cannot be separated from each other.



Cropley is discussing the difference between education and learning. Education is organized learning opportunities and learning is going on all the time, consciously and unconsciously. He emphasizes that: “A school system organized according to the principle of lifelong education would not *cause* lifelong learning (it goes on already), but it would involve a deliberate attempt to influence the form, degree and quality of that learning.” (Cropley, 1977:40). He is assuming that traditional role of school is opposite to lifelong learning concept. School traditionally is meant for a certain age group and has specific goals of information, knowledge, and preparation of students for existing social life. But physiological and moral growth, personal development and social changes are continuing the in all social aspects the whole life. (Cropley, 1977). This way the idea of two sides of lifelong learning, formal and informal, can be confirmed. That is why it is important to define them clearly, because it changes traditional educational direction. Lifelong learning is an overall concept of contemporary learning and educational situation. It unites all forms of learning. Lifelong education is an organized learning which can be considered as the implementation of lifelong learning; the form of education system which provides educational opportunities for people during the lifespan.

Boud points out the relation of lifelong learning and work life. He admits that it is more acknowledged now that most of the learning after full-time education occurs in the connection with work place. Author presents one of recent examples how work and learning can be combined according to the new demands: work-based partnership. It is new form of relation between organizations and universities popular in UK and Australia. This program provides formal qualifications for present employees. Students do not leave work for studies. Learning activities are part of the work, and this meets the needs of organizations and employees. The curriculum is constructed on their own according to the work. This is education at work supported by universities and organizations. (Boud, 2006). It is an actual example that education is changing according to new needs and the concept of lifelong learning. Lifelong education presents this new form of formal learning for and at the work place.

Lifelong learning concept is emerging as the new educational direction. The formal part of this concept is the challenge for education system. Education in the knowledge society is a tool to get information, but because of the rapid changes new educational forms are required. Adult life consists of many various activities and work life is one of the most important. New educational directions are important to provide opportunities for adults so that it would be possible to combine work and education.

### **1.2.2 Informal lifelong learning**

The other part of lifelong learning is informal. Learning includes variety of forms, places and intentions. Veronica McGivney notices that big part of adult learning is taking place outside the educational centers. Very often this learning is happening at home, workplace, local communities, etc. She acknowledges that there is very little attention paid to informal learning and quite often adult education specialists find it hard to find a definition for it. (McGivney, 2006). In general informal lifelong learning can be considered as activities, which are not formally organized and/or do not have special educational goals. The knowledge and skills are acquired through these activities intentionally and/or unintentionally. Personal and competence development is part of informal learning too. It is not always easy to see what knowledge is gained through various informal activities. Usually it has a natural course of learning which may not be consciously recognized, unless a certain considerations are taken. But this type of learning throughout lifespan is becoming more important and more connected with the work life.

Veronica McGivney discusses the links between formal and informal learning. For example, people can move from informal learning to formal in order to extend their knowledge. So informal learning can be a motivational background for formal learning and become a part of the work life. (McGivney, 2006). Probably there is a constant interaction between both types of learning. Both are enriching each other, bringing up the motivation and the variety of possibilities to develop competence. Of course it is hard to

make any conclusion about the influence of informal learning on employees and employers. Knowledge obtained in both ways of learning is creating personal competence for the work place, because there is the need for general and specific knowledge which probably can be fully achieved by lifelong learning in contemporary situation.

Boud states that the view to the work has changed. Work begins to create individual identity and has permanent influence. Learning has different meaning at the work place too. It became the whole knowledge and skills acquisition necessary for efficient work performance. Authors main point is that other forms of learning require acknowledgment too, not only formal education with direct educators intervention. (Boud, 2006). These points are concluding the discussion of general lifelong learning concept. It is becoming important for the work life, because lifelong learning is the basis of the knowledge society and helps to create competence, its development and acquire skills for various parts of individuals' life. Lifelong learning is divided into formal and informal, but the interaction of both parts is the process which should be acknowledged and valued.

### **1.3 Adult education**

The last concept to be presented is adult education. This concept was chosen as the main educational concept for this paper. UNESCO is working for many years now with educational problems concerning lifelong learning and adult education. Here is the definition of adult education determined by UNESCO in 1976:

“... the term “adult education” denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development...” (Tuijnman, 1994: 143).

Adult education expresses the formal side of lifelong learning concept. It is the direction of organized education for lifelong learning based on traditional education structure. Education is important not only for the economical benefits (considering work life), it includes the whole personal development (skills, new knowledge, adaptability to changes, values, ideals, views, etc.) to help individual to be valuable member of society. The concept of adult education is focusing on the need for organized adult education at many levels. Adult education concerns various adult groups: those with literacy issues, not finished compulsory education, wishing to complete any other level of provided formal education, with work life issues, social problems and needs, etc. The main goal of this organized education is equal educational opportunities for all.

UNESCO has six goals for ‘‘education for all’’ till the year 2015, two of which concerns adult education. Goal number three and four illustrates the point of broader focus of adult education. UNESCO goals are, the goal of promoting learning skills for young people and adults, and the goal of increasing adult literacy by 50 percent. (UNESCO, no date). There are problems of literacy and understanding of the demand for lifelong learning in man societies. The main idea, goal or even function of adult education is ‘‘*education for all*’’, but in each society people have different educational backgrounds. So adult education should include all groups of adults. The work of the concept should start already in education of young people showing the necessity of lifelong learning and teaching them the skills and values of it.

The purpose of adult education is specific. Often it can be defined as the second chance education in the changing world for being able to go through individual development. To be able to reach the results of such aims a person should have variety of opportunities. Most of them know exactly what they want, what they need and what they have to learn. Purposes of adult education are to disperse the idea and education of skills for lifelong learning to create possibilities for adults to be able to get education they need. The goal of education for all may seem like utopia looking at it just from the angle of equal opportunities. There is no society with complete educational equality. Adult education

concept is one of the things which helps to realize the idea of "education for all" to a certain degree. This educational strategy is meant to meet various needs and types of necessary knowledge. It leaves the choice of participation to individual and reacts to arising demands creating necessary educational opportunities.

## **1.4 Lifelong learning concept in Norway and Japan**

### **1.4.1 Norway**

Lifelong learning is the educational policy in Norway. Norwegian lifelong learning definition can be found in the information provided by the ministry of education. Norwegian objective of lifelong learning concerns human capital. Lifelong learning is a contribution of managing human capital effectively. In the presentation of this policy the terms of competence and working life are very important. Competence is the knowledge and skills; the perspective of policy is working life. The aim of lifelong learning and adult learning is to strengthen the competence for working life. (Ministry of Education and research, no date a). The report on lifelong learning in Norway for the ministry defines lifelong learning as learning during the whole lifespan in all social areas of life. It is important for individuals' personal development, for the development of democracy and society, and for the work life. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2007). Lifelong learning is defined clearly in the Norwegian context and is directly connected with the work life. This definition includes formal and informal aspects of learning. The policy is directed towards lifelong learning in education system and acknowledgement of informal learning. The value of informal learning is expressed by the competence reform, which will be presented and discussed later. Norwegian lifelong learning definition emphasizes work aspect and comprehends the whole personal development.

One of the goals that are described in the Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning (VOX) (organization will be presented in the chapter of the legal frame in national dimension)

internet pages is to provide the possibilities for adults to develop skills and widen competences throughout life. The positive outcomes of this goal are considered improved individual quality of life and flexibility in work life. They acknowledge technological and cultural development, continuous changes in social and work life. Education and training are playing important role there, and help individuals to adapt and to use new opportunities. (VOX, no date a). This confirms and complements the definition of the concept and its strong relation with the work life in the Norwegian context.

### **1.4.2 Japan**

Lifelong learning policies are also the part of Japanese education system. According to the information on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) site, there is the Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau which work includes research of domestic and international education, promotion of information technology, promotion of social education and lifelong learning opportunities related with gender equality. (MEXT, no date a). Adult education is not directly mentioned there, but it is definitely included in the understanding of this concept. The concern with lifelong learning proves that education is reacting to the global changes, to the changing society and the need for educational changes. One aspect makes it completely different from Norwegian context: gender equality aspect. Japan, country with one of the highest masculinity scores in its culture, has gender equality problems in education too. Well, this subject is included in education policies, which mean that it is seen as problematic issue in the country and brings new ideal to education.

Lifelong learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is important for educational opportunities and free personal choices. Lifelong learning includes two aspects: review of various educational systems and learning at all stages of life. Japanese concept of lifelong learning: "...encompasses not only structured learning through school and social education, but also learning through involvement in such areas as sports, cultural activities, hobbies, recreation and volunteer activities." (MEXT, no date b). Lifelong learning definition in

the Japanese context includes formal and informal learning.

It seems that lifelong learning is closely connected with social education in Japan. Before 1990s when lifelong learning was introduced, the social education concept was one of the main. Usually it was organized by local government, sometimes called adult education and was different from formal education. Lifelong learning now is referred as all continuing education for adults (informal social education and formal recurrent education). (Ishikida, 2005). There is the Social education Law as part of the Fundamental Education Law. So what is the exact connection of these two education aspects? Information about major education policies in Japan explains, that: " In order to create an enriching and dynamic society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is vital to aim toward the realization of lifelong learning society in which people can freely choose learning opportunities and learn at any time during their lives, and receive proper recognition for their learning achievements. " (MEXT, no date c). Social education is considered as the basis for lifelong learning society and is based on the voluntary will of the individual. The work of ministry would be to create opportunities for social education and to promote it. This includes the whole society, young people, adults, and women. One of the aims is to enhance education toward a gender equal society.

### **1.4.3 Comparison of lifelong learning concept**

Lifelong learning is an important part in contemporary education system and policies in both countries. It is the aspect that both education systems have and which unites adult education and its ideals. The definitions of lifelong learning are not exactly the same in these two countries, but the purpose can be defined as quite alike: equality, personal development and help to enter and continue in the social life. All this will contribute to the whole society. It touches the same areas with the focus on individual.

Also the definition of lifelong learning is similar because of the acknowledgment of formal and informal learning in both countries. The importance of formal education to

meet lifelong learning demands is stated in educational policies. And informal lifelong learning has an important part, but in different ways. Norway has the concept of competence to express the informal aspect of lifelong learning. Informal learning opportunities are acknowledged and documented in Norway. Informal aspect in Japan is expressed with social education. Various types of knowledge and the ways to obtain it are accepted and become the base of knowledge society in Norway and Japan. Very big difference of lifelong learning definition is the connection with the work life. In the Norwegian context work life concept is emphasized as one of the main aspects. Lifelong learning definition and the need is directly connected with work life needs. Adult education goal has educational opportunities for the work life as one of the main too. It seems that the whole individual development comes as second there. In Japan lifelong learning definition first emphasizes individual social development, and work life is just a part of it. The emphasis there is on social education and its promotion in the society. Gender equality issue is an important part of social education policies in Japan, which is not such a problematic issue in Norway.

## **Summary**

Theoretical frame was presented in this chapter. The conclusion is that all of the concepts are connected. The knowledge society is contemporary societies where the knowledge became an important tool and need. The change in contemporary world is the continuing process and individuals are in the constant need for personal development. Lifelong learning emerged in this context challenging traditional education. This concept is determined as an overall concept for contemporary education and most of the other concepts are part of it or are influenced by it. Lifelong learning has very wide definition, that is why it is divided into formal and informal lifelong learning. The concept of learning includes variety of aspects on its own and is the process which is going in all social areas during the whole lifespan. Formal lifelong learning includes all organized learning opportunities for various groups of people in order to meet various needs.



Informal lifelong learning includes learning in the social areas which are not organized education and have no direct educational goals. All concepts are including work life needs as one of the most important for individual.

Adult education concept proves that it is the part of lifelong learning or has lifelong learning foundations. This concept is defined as the direction, formal expression of lifelong learning is meant for various adults groups and has to create educational opportunities to meet various needs. Equality and education for all are the guidelines of adult education.

The lifelong learning definitions in Norway and Japan are uniting all the concepts too. The main goals of new educational directions are to widen and acknowledge various education forms, and to help individuals' to keep up with the changing world. Norwegian lifelong learning context is directly and mainly connected with the work life. Japanese context is more generalized with the emphases on social individual development and learning.

## **II. GENERAL FACTS ABOUT NORWAY AND JAPAN**

General presentation of two countries is a good start for comparative description of specific aspects. Both countries are strong and developed, but there are some important differences and similarities. General statistical information about labor force situation in both countries is presented too. All general facts are presented in the comparative perspective.

### **2.1 General picture**

Statistical information of chosen aspects from recent years about Norway and Japan is

presented in table 2.1. What it says about the situation of these two countries?

Table 2.1: General facts about Norway and Japan. (Globalis, no date).

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Norway</b>	<b>Japan</b>
Population	4 620 275	128 084 700
Life expectancy	79 years	82 years
Birthrate	1.8	1.3 average number of children per woman
The part of GNP from industry	37.5%	32.2%
The part of GNP from agriculture	2%	1%
The part of GNP from service industry	61%	66%
GNP per inhabitant	36 600	26 940 PPP- dollar
Equality in work life	49%	41.3%
Equality in the country government	38%	9%
Equality in secondary school	1.54	0.89 number of girls per boy
State expenditure for education	6.90 %	3.6% of GNP
Unemployment among young women	11.6%	7.4%
Export of high technologies	19%	24% of goods export
Export of goods and services	41%	12% of GNP
Import of goods and services	28%	10% of GNP
Establishment of the company (costs)	4%	12% of GNP per inhabitant

Japan has a very big population number compared with Norway. That means that various educational groups are much bigger in Japan. It might imply that it can be harder to obtain equality in educational situations for Japan. Differences in population number might be one of the reasons, because it is easier to cover most of educational needs of smaller population. So then it is not so surprising to see that Norway (6.9%) has bigger expenditure on education than Japan (3.6%) has. This leads to the fact that public education system dominates in Norway, while Japan has strong and widespread tradition of private education, especially at higher education levels. The situation of public and

private education is discussed in the national dimension chapter. There is statistical information showing these different educational priorities in both countries (see: table 3.3; table 3.5; table 3.6). Public education is usually free, while private education means more and bigger personal expenses on education which might be part of bigger inequality.

Norway (1.8) has bigger birthrate (1.8) than Japan (1.3). But life expectancy is longer in Japan (82) than in Norway (79). So Japan has bigger population, longer life expectancy and smaller number of birthrate. This definitely affects labor force situation and suggests that there might be differences in each country. These aspects will be discussed later in this chapter. What is economical situation then? GNP per inhabitant is bigger in Norway than in Japan. So this might explain the bigger amount spent for education in this country. Both countries are economically strong, but in different industry areas. The industry part of GNP is bigger in Norway (37.5%) than in Japan (32.2%), but Japan has bigger part from service industry (66%) than Norway (61%). Both countries are not that different in the agriculture aspect. The numbers in export are showing which industry types are leading in both countries. Norway (41%) exports more goods and services than Japan (12%), Japan (24%) exports more high technology than Norway (19%). This indicates that the types of organizations can be different in both countries according to the types of dominant industries. This requires different types of specialists, but does not mean the difference in educational needs. Norway (28%) is also more dependent from import of goods and services than Japan (10%). It is much easier to start company in Norway according to the needed costs which can be related with higher number of multinational companies in Norway (5105) than in Japan (4710), especially considering the fact the much bigger number of Japanese population. This also indicates that Japan probably has bigger number of national organizations and of course is less dependent from import than Norway.

A very important aspect for this paper is equality. Equality numbers are bigger and stronger in Norwegian situation. One example is gender equality in the government. Norwegian government has the index of 38% and Japanese government- 9%. This

indicates strong masculine culture tradition in Japan. The situation of work place is not very different, but still better in Norway (49%) than in Japan (41.3%). Equality at secondary school is more in favor for girls in Norway. But there is bigger unemployment number of young women in Norway (11.6%) than in Japan (7.4%). Some things can be explained by cultural differences, some things need deeper discussions. But this is the general picture of two countries.

## 2.2 Labor force participation

In this part of the chapter general labor force situation is presented with the main attention to the age based population groups and gender issues.

### 2.2.1 Norway

General labor force situation is presented in table 2.2. The exact numbers from this statistical information are used only to describe the picture of the labor force in Norway. There is big number of people in the labor force, compared with those who are not. It is important to notice that considerably high number of people who are not in the labor force is probably affected because of the chosen age group. In the population group of 15-74 year old, the oldest and the youngest are not expected to be in the permanent labor force.

Table 2.2: Persons aged 15-74 years, by sex and labor force status. Annual average, Norway. 1000. (2006). (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007a)

	In the labor force	Employed persons	Unemployed persons	Not in labor
Total	2446	2362	84	951
Men	1296	1251	45	418
Women	1150	1111	39	533

Unemployment rate can be considered as low. The gender situation shows that there are

differences and that men have bigger number in the labor force. Men have a little bit bigger unemployment rate than women. But there are more women than men who are not in the labor force at all.

Table 2.3: Unemployed persons, by sex and age. Annual average, Norway. (2006). (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007b).

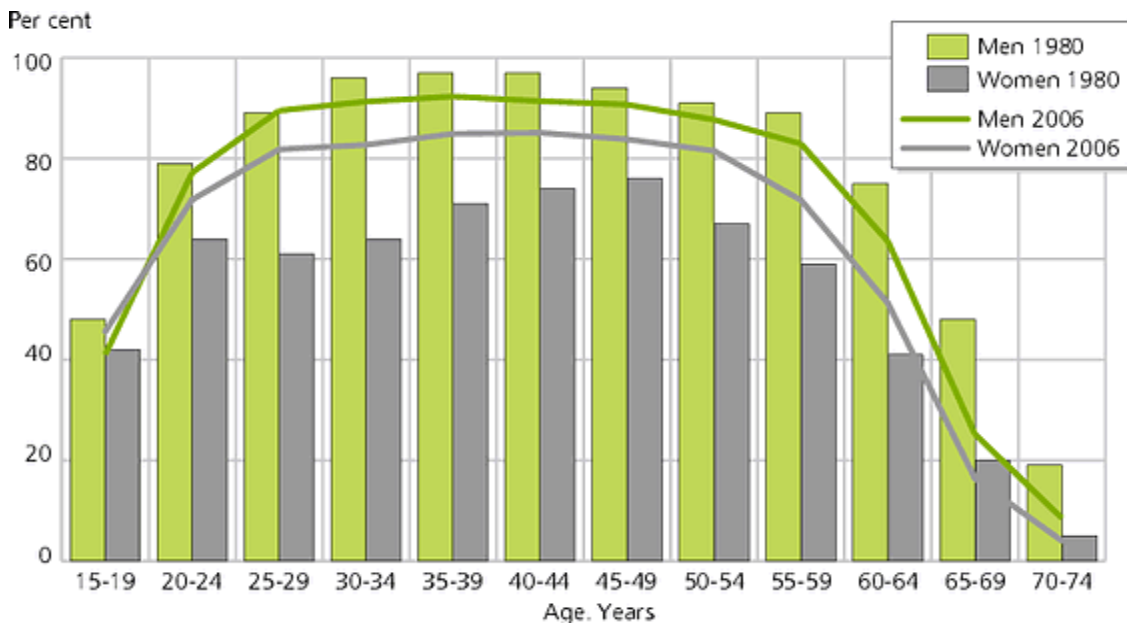
Aspect	Percent
Total	3.4
Men	3.5
Women	3.4
Age: 15-19	11.5
20-24	6.8
25-54	3.0

Table 2.3 presents more detailed situation of unemployed people in the labor force and gives better view of the situation. The total unemployment is not really high in Norway and there is only a slight difference between men and women in this case. The unemployment rates in different age groups are not surprising at all. This rate decreases with the age and it is a natural course in the society based on knowledge and education in the labor force.

Figure 2.1 gives detailed information about men and women in the labor force according to the age groups and the difference in two periods of time, year 1980 and 2006. Norway is the country with higher gender equality in the government and work life situation. In 1980<sup>th</sup> men in all age groups have bigger number in the labor force than women. The number of men is increasing and decreasing with the different age groups quite equally. The situation of women that year is different according to the age groups. Women at the age of 25-34 have lower number in the labor force, which probably is because of the family and children birth. After that there is an increase of women in the labor force. The scale of the year 2006 shows that gender aspect in the labor force has changed and became more equal between women and men. There is still as lower labor force

participation number for women, as it was already presented in table 2.2, but the difference is smaller than it was in 1980<sup>th</sup>. The scale of men and women is almost equal in the increase and decrease of labor force according to the age groups. So the labor force situation changed in Norway towards bigger gender equality.

Figure 2.1: Men and women in the labor force, by age as per cent of the total in each group. Norway. (1980 and 2006). ( Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007c).



### 2.2.2 Japan

Table 2.4: Population by labor force status. Japan. (2006). (numbers: millions). (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007a).

	Population aged 15 and more	Labor force total	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labor force
Total	110,200	66,570	63,820	2,750	43,550
Males	53,270	38,980	37,300	1,680	14,250
Females	56,930	27,590	26,520	1,070	29,300

There is a certain situation in Japan, because of the population explosion in the country

and the decrease of the labor force since 1998. The reasons for this continuous process are the falling birthrate and ageing population. The situation is improving a little bit as those who left labor force are starting to return. The exact labor force situation is presented in table 2.4. General picture of people in the labor force shows that there is big number of those who are not in the labor force at all. Unemployment rate can be considered as low looking to the number of employed people. There is bigger number of women in the Japanese population in total, but much bigger number of men in the labor force. The total number of women who are not in the labor force at all is much bigger. The differences in employment and unemployment rates of women and men are not big. There are more employed men in their group than employed women. But unemployment rate is lower for women than for men. So Japanese gender situation in the labor force is quite ambiguous and needs to be discussed more.

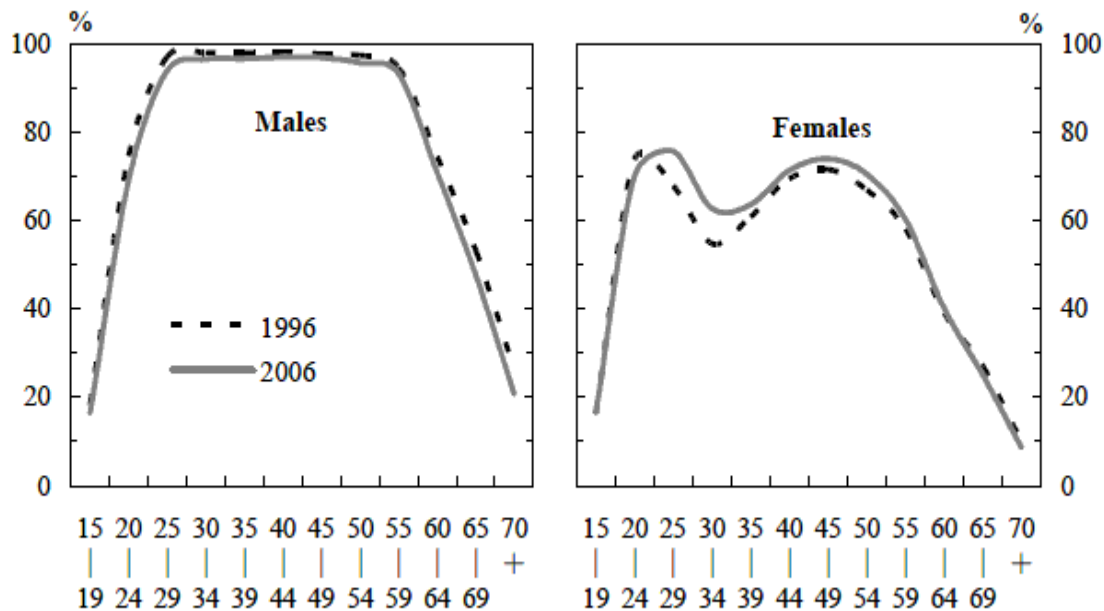
The unemployment rate surprisingly was and still is higher among men than among women, also at different age groups. In my opinion this can be explained by the situation that women has a higher percent as irregular employees. Statistical information shows that there were 14.8% men and 50.7% women as irregular employees in 2002. Important fact is that unemployment rate among 60-64 age group is decreasing because the enterprises are employing elderly workers. (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007a). Figure 2.2 presents detailed information about women and men labor force participation according to the different age groups in two periods, year 1996 and 2006. The shapes of the scales show that there is a very big difference between men and women. There is almost no change of men labor force rate during the decade. Men have labor force rate increase till the age 25 and decrease only from the age of 55. Women have a rate variety in the labor force and clearly lower rate of total labor force.

There are some reasons provided in “Statistical handbook of Japan” about different females situation in the labor force which is visually described in figure 2.2. According to the information women are leaving labor force when they get married and have children and are going back to work after children grow up. This mainly concerns women at the age group of 25-35. But the current labor force situation in Japan is indicating the

increase of women participation in the labor force. Provided information indicates that since 1996 till 2006 the participation of women in the age group of 25-29 increased by 7.8% and in the 30-34 age group by 8.0 %. (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007a).

Figure 2.2: Labor force participation by sex. Japan. (2006). (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007a).

**Figure 12.1**  
**Labor Force Participation Rate by Sex**



Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC.

### 2.3 Comparison of general aspects

There was presented general picture of two countries and special picture of the labor force situation. Two countries emerged as different highly developed countries. Japan stands out with a huge population number and difference in the population groups because of the lower birthrate than Norway. This and ageing population with a bigger life expectancy are affecting Japanese labor force situation which is more difficult than Norwegian. Economical conditions seem to be better in Norway, especially educational situation where more state money are spent on education. Equality issues are also



different in two countries. Female situation in general and in labor force is better for women in Norway than in Japan.

The industry has special differences inside the countries, but it can be considered as similar aspect as well. Both countries has strong industries, just dominant areas are different. Norway is relying more on import than Japan which is releasing more inside its own industry. Norway's export is based on goods, Japan's on technologies. So both countries are economically successful, just in different industry areas.

Table 2.5: Persons in the labor force, by sex. Selected countries. (2005). Per cent of all persons in each group. (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007d).

Country	Total	Men	Women
Norway	78.9	82.3	75.4
Japan	72.6	84.4	60.8

It is important to compare labor force aspects of Norway and Japan. They were presented separately for each country, so what is different and what is similar? Table 2.5 presents a comparative general view of total and gender-related aspects in both countries. The total labor force is bigger in Norway, than in Japan. This implies that total unemployment rate is bigger in Japan. There are more women participating in labor force, but a slightly lower rate of men in Norway than in Japan. So the total labor force and employment rates are bigger in Norway and unemployment is lower there. The gender situation is quite difficult to compare. General situation in this case of equality is better for men in the labor force in both countries, but it is better for women in Norway than for women in Japan. There are fewer women in the total labor force in their group and less employed women than men in both countries. The number of women who are not in the labor force at all is bigger than that of men in both countries too.

Unemployment situation is more specific. Unemployment rate is slightly lower for women than for men in Norway. The situation in Japan is quite alike, only the rate of unemployed men is much bigger than for women in Japan. This fact is the only similarity in this case,

because Japanese women have quite big rate as irregular employees and have completely different situation of labor force participation in various age groups. The women labor force participation has improved during the decade (1996-2006) in both countries, the change for bigger equality is bigger in Norway than in Japan. Women labor force participation in Norway is increasing and decreasing evenly at different age groups, almost the same as men labor force participation. Japanese situation is different, female labor force participation scale is different with uneven increase and decrease at different age groups.

Even if both countries are similar with their economical, industrial and development situation, various aspects inside are different according to their levels. General labor force is strong in both countries, but gender aspects are different in the case of equality.

### **III. NATIONAL DIMENSION**

National dimension is one of the framing factors which have influence on adult education and work life interaction. This chapter is divided into cultural and educational aspects. Both countries are representing two different cultural traditions in the international context. It is important to look into this part of social life and see what differences can be influential to the interaction of main aspects. Education system is one of the foundations for adult education. What part adult education has in different national educational systems?

#### **3.1 Cultural aspect**

In this part of the chapter the cultural aspect is discussed. Culture, cultural differences, cultural communication is important part of nowadays societies. First the definition of

culture is presented. The data from Hofstede's research and culture dimensions will be used to present the situation of Norway and Japan. His research and dimensions are presented first, and then the situation in both countries is analyzed according to professors' work. General discussion about some Norwegian and Japanese societies aspects is included too.

### **3.1.1 Definition of culture**

Civilizations, cultures, religions, traditions, and values affect groups, individual's self-identity, societies foundations and human communication. Our history can be viewed as the study of different human cultures during the changing time. How do we define culture? Culture is given to individual, it is learned, but it is created by individuals who consider themselves as one group which is different from other groups. There is the need to take a certain position, because individuals from various cultures will have different understandings about things.

Culture definition has developed many various meanings and understandings. General definition of this concept is reaching the Latin language where the word *cultura* comes from *colere* with the meaning "to cultivate". This culture meaning is referring to significant human activities and is related with symbolic structures. Culture became an important aspect in self-definition of human and human groups in time. This concept includes variety of human ways of life, such as art, beliefs, institutions which are part of population groups. Culture is usually passed from generation to generation. According to culture definitions by region, Norway and Japan are presenting two different world cultures, Western (European region) and Eastern (Asian region). But culture is the human process in change. The change can be caused by the forces inside the society, by the contacts between different societies or by the changes in natural environment. (Wikipedia, no date a).

Hofstede has published many works on culture theory. He is taking a certain approach to

this concept. People acquire their knowledge, collect their experience in childhood mainly based on environment and culture. Culture is mental software in that situation, and has very broad meaning. It refers not just to education or literature, but also to thinking, feeling and acting to all things in human life. (Hofstede, 2005). In his words, culture is: "... the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others." (Hofstede, 2005:4). Every culture has same aspects, like traditions and value systems. However every culture has different ways of presenting the models of life, its aspects to individuals in that particular culture.

"Encyclopedia of anthropology" presents anthropological definition of culture which focuses on opposition of culture and nature. (Birx, 2006). It is quite alike to generalized culture definition presented earlier, but it provides more detailed view to the concept which I find close to my own view. I will quote now what I also think culture is. It should be: "...understood evolutionally, as a system, that is, as a result of the cultural Revolution, as an artificially constituted system within the biosphere. Cultural evolution, ignited by humans, is the other possible means of the new optical (real) structure origination on the Earth, besides the natural, cosmic evolution." (Birx, 2006:636). Human culture is constantly developing, even though it has permanent structure, system and same aspects. It is in the constant active process, just like natural evolution. Both, spiritual and material cultures are always in a process of change. The evolution of culture is created by humans, but the changes in the culture are affecting humans and bring up the necessity of changes in individual life. Americanization in the world cultures is one of the most common examples of global culture evolution. But what is important for the topic of this paper is that interaction of adult education and work life is part of cultural evolution too. Culture is unique in ability to connect many various aspects into one big definition and understanding of group, individuals, and countries identity. Education and work are, without any additional considerations, part of the culture and influenced by it. Can differences in the fields of education and work life be explained by cultural diversities? Which cultural differences are most influential on education and work life in the culture seen from a national perspective?

### **3.1.2 Presentation of Hofstede and his research**

Hofstede is born in 1928. He has diploma as a mechanical engineer, and doctorate studies in social psychology. He worked in IBM Europe personnel research department and at Maastricht University where he taught organizational anthropology and international management until his retirement in 1993. His numerous publications have been translated into many languages. He is interested in national cultural differences and studies them using access to a wide area of empirical data. For this paper the second edition of “Cultures and organizations. The software of the mind” is used. (Hofstede, 2005).

Professor supported his findings by big IBM survey data. Research was organized in many countries, with Norway and Japan among them. This research was based on comparing work based values and the importance of work goals among the countries. Nina S. Tharaldsen summarizes the description of the background of work values research done by Hofstede. His research was done in multicultural corporation (IBM). About 88000 employees answered questionnaires. The data collection was done twice: 1967-1969 and 1971-1973. (Tharaldsen, 1999). The most important goals from 19 analyzed in his research are the training aspect (training opportunities, improvement of skills) and up-to-datedness (skills related to the job).

Nina S. Tharaldsen comments upon the problem of the sample: is Hofstedes sample representative, she asks, as it was just IBM employees. Is it representative to the rest of the population? Are all social classes represented well in this research? She claims that his research refers to the middle classes of the countries. Also the number of respondents in each country is different, and the group of males is bigger than females. Are his findings based just on empirical findings or on intuition? She also questions the validity of his research now. (Tharaldsen, 1999). But I agree with Nina S. Tharaldsen’s conclusions that Hofstedes research is valuable and strong in showing that the knowledge of cultural values helps to communicate better. She points out: “Different cultures need different organizational structures and processes in order to work in the best possible

way”. (Tharaldsen, 1999:81). We have to keep in mind the difficulties of multinational research and interpretation of data. The results are really hard to take just the way they can be seen, but research gives certain patterns and views about what is the situation of certain questions in different cultures.

Hofstede understands the problems of sample and validity. He agrees that this sample of IBM employees is not representative for national population. But he argues that in multinational research the sample must not necessarily be representative as long as it is functionally equivalent. He emphasizes that employees of multinational organizations are an interesting source for international comparative research. They have different nationalities, but the same employer, work situation, educational levels. National differences might even be better revealed in this kind of sample. (Hofstede, 2005). Hofstede claims: “The IBM national dimension scores (or at least their relative positions) have remained as valid in the year 2000 as they were around 1970, indicating that they describe relatively enduring aspects of these countries’ societies.” (Hofstede, 2005:31). There are many significant correlations of this research and validation does not tend to become weaker. (Hofstede, 2005).

### **3.1.3 Hofstedes cultural dimensions**

Hofstede determines five universal national culture dimensions, based on the research. These dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity and long term orientation. According to Hofstede dimension is: “... an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures. “ (Hofstede, 2005:23). As Nina S. Tharaldsen points out: “The dimensions are tools for analysis that may contribute to clarify a communication situation.” (Tharaldsen, 1999:98). Dimensions present cultural aspects of the countries and show differences in every culture. They provide certain cultural characteristics too.

The first dimension is *power distance*. The other concept of this dimension is *inequality*.

Who has the power in society? Which factors determines the levels of inequality and which aspects of social life are important for what determines power? The power distance index in Hofstede's research is measuring the degree of inequality in society. Large score of power index shows that hierarchical system at the workplace is based on inequality (gaps in the salary system, power centralization, educational levels of employees, the status of work, etc.). In the case of small power index the flexible inequality of roles and decentralization of power in organization are considered as the main aspects.

The second dimension is *individualism*. The opposite concept is *collectivism*. Hofstede defines society as individualist society if the interests of individual are more important than interests of the group. The collectivist society has different way with the power of the group. (Hofstede, 2005). The situation may be understood in the way that individualism implies greater self-interest and self-opportunities at the work place. While collectivism may imply that individual decision at the work place will be based on group-interest. The other important aspects are family kind relationships in the groups and the question of greater security and loyalty at the workplace (employers and employees).

The third dimension is *masculinity*. Hofstede presents this dimension more in the sense of masculine and feminine goals in the culture. Masculine work goals would be earnings, challenge, advancement, recognition. Feminine work goals would be employment security, cooperation, living area, good working relationship. (Hofstede, 2005). Nina S. Tharaldsen summarizes that competition and material values are the aspects of masculine culture. The quality of life and relationships are the aspects of feminine cultures. (Tharaldsen, 1999).

The fourth dimension is *uncertainty avoidance*. It is the question of tolerance and acceptance of new things. It is important to mention that questions of this dimension are connected with the stress and tension at work, rules of the company and long-term job career at one company. Hofstede expresses presentation of this dimension in the terms of threat of unknown situations and how people deal with them or accept them. (Hofstede,

2005). What do strong and weak uncertainty avoidance in culture show? It seems that strong level of this dimension is like prevention of negative things, and has nothing to do with competition avoidance. Culture with weak score for this dimension may be seen as culture with more freedom in the sense of laws, religion, etc. (Hofstede, 2005).

The fifth and the last dimension is *long-term orientation*. Opposite concept is *short-term orientation*. The terms which Hofstede is connecting with long-term orientation are orientation to future, perseverance and thrift. Short-term orientation is connected with past and present, tradition and social obligations. (Hofstede, 2005). This dimension is closely connected with economical and business aspects of the culture. Long-term orientation makes work and family almost the same things in life. The other aspects of this orientation are hierarchy in the relations creating stability, bigger expectation for innovation than tradition, and equality as stronger value.

#### **3.1.4 The comparative aspect of Hofstedes cultural dimensions, with the specific reference to Norway and Japan**

General view to the dimensions proves that different cultures have various ways of approaching their own and other societies, that they have their own ways to reach success. The poles of the dimensions cannot be seen as negative and positive. Both sides have their own advantages. Hofstede is discussing that business world has the tendency of shifting competition. Technological advantages are not lasting and cultural position is important in offering competitive advantages and disadvantages. Hofstede indicates that: “...no country can be good at everything; cultural strength implies cultural weaknesses. <...> This is a strong argument for making cultural considerations part of strategic planning and locating activities in countries, in regions, and in organizational units that possesses the cultural characteristics necessary for competing in these activities.” (Hofstede, 2005:344).

Information of research results about Norway and Japan in each dimension is presented in table 3.2. The scores characterize each country in every dimension. The questions from



the research where chosen for each dimension and the indexes where statistically counted according to the answers of participants to these questions. Factor analysis method was used to sort the questions into the groups. The formula was used to count the scores of the countries. The scale of the scores is between 0 and 100 which indicates the strength of the aspect in each country. The countries then are ranked in the scale from strongest indexes to the lowest according to their scores in the dimension.

Table 3.2: Hofstede's five cultural dimensions results in the cases of Norway and Japan. (Hofstede, 2005).

	Norway		Japan	
Dimensions	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
The Power Distance Index	31	67-68	54	49-50
The Individualism Index	69	16-17	46	33-35
The Masculinity Index	8	73	95	2
The Uncertainty Avoidance Index	50	55-56	92	11-13
The-long term orientation	44	13-14	80	4-5

All dimensions include 74 countries and regions total. The scores of 57 countries (Norway and Japan included) were counted directly from the IBM database. The rest of the countries results were calculated from replications or based on informed estimates and represent the relative scores. The score 100 is the strongest index and the score 0 indicate the weakest index of the dimensions. The power distance indexes indicate strong/weak power distance in the culture. The rank of countries in the individualism dimension indicates strong/low individualism and strong/low collectivism. The masculinity dimension indicates strong/weak masculine- or feminine- values oriented culture. The uncertainty avoidance scores indicate strong/low uncertainty avoidance in each country. The long-term orientation dimension was added later and includes 39 countries, but the scores were counted the same way. The score 100 indicates strongest long-term orientation in the culture and the score 0 indicates short-term orientation. Each

dimension will be presented separately.

### ***The power distance dimension***

In the worldwide situation of education, equality/inequality concepts are becoming really important. Hofstede's research of inequality in societies is shown by power index, which shortly can be explained as a reflection of power relationships in societies. As it is seen in table 3.2 Hofstede's research indicates that Japan and Norway are considerably low in power distance index dimension rank (Norway- 31, Japan- 54). Japan has bigger power distance index and is in the bottom part of countries list. This can tell us that there is stronger acceptance of inequality in society and at the work place in Japan. The question is how inequality is understood in each country? This will be discussed later in this chapter. But it shows that Japanese employees are in the different acceptance level of hierarchy at the work place than Norwegian employees. This difference can be connected with cultural work traditions. Norwegian work place situation might be more based on individual responsibilities.

### ***The individualism dimension***

Individualism and collectivism are two very important aspects comparing Norway and Japan. The power and interests of the group, the dependence from the group are the corner stone for Hofstede in this dimension. Norway scored 69 and ranked 16-17 in the individualism index table. Japan scored 46 and ranked 33-35. (see: table 3.2). None of these two countries are in the extremes of that aspect, but Norway has definitely stronger index in this dimension. At first sight it is quite surprising that Japan has an average score for individualism in their society. There is often, possibly we can call it a stereotype, considered that Japan is collectivist society where individuals have very little personal freedom. Looking at these numbers we can see that Norway has more space for individualism in their society, but so and Japan has. There is need to talk not only about different degrees of individualism and its influence, but also to analyze different individualism understandings in two societies. How each of them defines individualism?

Norway is the country where equal opportunities are one of the key words in society. The process of individual integration to society has an important role, which means that individual and society has a strong bond. The main interest is individuals' self-interest. But the structure of society and culture is created in a way to meet interests of both, individuals and society. There is communication of society and individual, but is there communication of adult education and work life? Japan has different concept of individualism. Hayashi and Kuroda are indicating that Japanese culture is not excluding individualism, it just has other form where self-interest is connected with all members of the group. They determine that Japanese are more concerned with socialization and own interests are sought with the concern to interest of other members of the group. The understanding of own identity in Japan is connected with the belonging to the group (company or family) which is the background for comfortable life, stability, and safety. (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997). This is the proof how important it is to know other cultures better. Cultures are using the same concepts to define themselves, but the meanings are different as it can be seen from these understandings of individualism.

### *The masculinity dimension*

Masculinity index shows very clear difference between Norway and Japan. This brings both countries to different extremes. Japan scores 95 and ranks 2, and is on the extreme of highest masculinity index in the society. Norway is on the other extreme of lowest masculinity index; it scored 8 and ranked 73 together with other Scandinavian countries. (see: table 3.2). Masculine culture shows highly visible competitive situation in the society. While the example of Scandinavian countries gives different equality understanding and not so visible competition. The results of both countries imply that the position of females in education and labor market is in favor for women in Norway. The situation of women in Norwegian labor market would seem being perfect according to the results there, but is it really so? How far gender equality can be actually reached? The other important concept for education and work life is competition. Possible conclusion might be that there is strong and visible competition in masculine countries, and less

visible competition in feminine countries. No doubt that competition is the driving force of economics in the world and is one of the influences in individual levels of education and work life. The type of culture is affecting the reasons, the ways and the necessity of competition aspects.

### ***The uncertainty avoidance dimension***

The uncertainty avoidance term is borrowed from sociology. It is subjective experience, but highly dependent on external situation in society, culture, country, and the whole world. It was measured in connection with (in) tolerance of ambiguity in the society. Research of this dimension involved questions which concern job stress, rule orientations, long-term career. Japan scored quite high in that case-92 and ranked 11-13, while Norway scored 50 and ranked 57 (see: table 3.2). The difference between these two countries is quite big. Norway is more free country in the sense of social structure, rules and the rules at the work place. This is connected with higher level of individualism. Very high score of Japan proves rules- oriented behavior in the society and the workplace, and the power of the group. It also shows that uncertainty avoidance is not connected with competition and innovation. Japan is industrialized and economically successful country, actively participating in international competition. The results can indicate that social and labor safety, and moral comfort is more important for the countries with high level of uncertainty avoidance.

### ***The long-term orientation dimension***

In a long-term orientation Japan scores 80 and is in the 4<sup>th</sup> place, Norway scores 44 and is number 13 (see: table 3.2). The top six countries in the list of this dimension are East-Asian countries. Hofstede discusses this aspect and economical growth in Asian countries, but of course the economical boom of Asian countries can not be explained only by long- term orientations. This might be connected with the difference of most important industries in each. Hofstede defines certain characteristics of these orientations

in the competition: stronger long-term orientation with the concept of new market development and short-term orientation with fast adaptation. Japanese industry might depend more on innovation, while Norwegian on fast adaptation of new technologies. According to these criteria, the conclusion might be right. But it cannot be concluded as the fact that Japanese culture is long-term oriented and Norwegian is short-term. The difference in the rank list can be considered as not that big, especially considering the changes which continue in the contemporary world. The emerging world wide issues (climate change, population changes, economical issues) are emphasizing the need for long-term orientations. Can it be that this direction is getting more important in most of the cultures?

### **3.1.5 Norway: culture and society**

Hofstede's presentation of cultural dimensions gives a certain picture of Norwegian culture. Equality aspect is one of the most important in the Norwegian society. The country can be seen as the society with high equality value and not that strong hierarchy at the work place. The acceptance of responsibility indicates the importance of individualism in society. In fact Norway is the country with very high individualism level. The aspect of low masculinity dimension in Norway is connected with higher equality level and individualism. Lower masculinity level is pointing towards more equal society in many aspects, gender issues included. Of course this leads to the less rule-oriented society with lower group influence for individual decisions. The competitive advantages of Norway are related to the type of natural resources industry and can be based on adaptation concept.

Ottar Hellevik presents research about values in Norwegian society in the period of 1985-1995. It is a series of interview research collected by MMI (Markeds-og Medieinstituttet). The changes and development of Norwegian society and values are the main aspects of this research. This information will help to present an updated picture of Norwegian culture. Equality is historical and central value of Norwegian society. But author points

out that there are signs of increasing inequality in the society. For example, the equality of company staff is decreasing because of internationalization. Bigger difference among the salaries and income is one more example. But how this affects the value of equality? Author points out that research shows low tendency of inequality acceptance during the decade. Equality in society is understood as equal access to resources (economic goods) and to social offers (school, health, public services). People wish for resource equality, stability and economical equalization, but they also feel the change towards bigger inequality. (Hellevik, 1996). The equality value is strong, but inequality in society is getting bigger.

Gender equality aspect in the culture is presented more in details in this research. Half of the population is choosing the equality of men and women in both, family and work. During the decade the number of families based on equal roles increased, but only in the period between 1985- 1987. After that there was no increase of such attitude. Possible reason is the problematic reality for families with small children. How to combine family and demanding work life for both parents? How women are treated in contemporary work life? The questions of this aspect gave results showing that between 1993 and 1995 there was an increase in the view that women are still discriminated in Norwegian work life. The change was from 54% till 59%. The point might be that women do not have the same opportunities in the work life as men. (Hellevik, 1996). So there is a difference between gender equality value acceptance and its actual realization.

This research points out the change from idealistic to materialistic value orientation in Norwegian society. The values of use, ownership are important. The values of personal needs priority and pleasure increased, while the values of spiritual development decreased. But it is not the dramatic change. This does not mean that Norwegian society cares only about materialistic pleasures. The results point out that younger people are more modern and more materialism- oriented than older people in the society. This only indicates that materialistic value understanding became more common. (Hellevik, 1996).

The importance of equality orientation is strong in Norway as it can be seen from both researches. But the levels of actual equality are changing together with the increasing materialistic values orientation. Gender equality problems in the work life situation are showing that masculine dimension in this culture still has a certain place. The realization of values and relations is changing in the culture, but culture itself is not changing drastically. Cultural picture of Norway presents economically strong and competitive country, with strong level of individualism and equality. But the changing world is challenging the values and strengthens some equality issues.

Norwegian culture is influenced by globalization and immigration. Marianne Gullestad indicates that economical differences are smaller in Norway than in other countries. But there still are regional, cultural and economical differences (for example [samene], new immigrant groups). (Gullestad, 1989). Frønes and Ragnhild Brusdal are emphasizing the situation of Norwegian culture becoming a multiethnic society, because immigration rates in Norway are growing up. (Frønes and Brusdal, 2003). Bjørkås observed the question of Norwegian culture. The words which help to describe it are: homogeneity, equality values, nationalism, traditional values, the center of lifestyle: private sphere, nature, compromise. But Norwegian culture had to move to cultural pluralism, as the number of culture minority groups increased, the relations with international cultures expanded. (Bjørkås, 2003). Of course this situation is influential and has affects which probably are not visible yet. The differences inside the culture suggest probable existence of differences in education and work life opportunities. Even in highly industrialized and developed countries the opportunities are problems of equality.

### **3.1.6 Japan: culture and society**

In the picture presented by Hofstede Japan is masculine values oriented country. It is not strange that in highly masculine country like Japan the power distance is not low and status hierarchy at organizations is an obvious structure. But the results indicate that inequality in society is average comparing it to the other countries. Considering high

results of Japan in long- term orientation dimension, the results there are connected, because inequality is not desired in general long- term orientation dimension. Group orientation and discipline-based decisions are one of the most important characteristics of Japanese culture. Advantages of this country in international competition are based on innovation, which might be explained by the types of industries.

Very often Japanese society is seen as homogenic culture. But whenever there is talk about culture and its homogeneity, the relativity of this term should be kept in mind. Y. Sugimoto presents general literature view to this question: Japanese are portrait with a loyalty to the group as the primary value, group- orientation gives psychological satisfaction and security, strong hierarchical ties and communication ways. On the other hand other observations show the diversity of Japanese society. The author does not claim that Japan is fundamentally different country from the others. The difference is that concrete forms inside the society are in contrast with for example western traditions. Japan is a capitalist country with high levels of unequal income distributions. It also contains many subcultures, which can be really powerful and influential (for example management subculture, male subculture, Tokyo subculture). Variety of subcultures can be based on such variables as education, occupation, gender, age, ethnicity, etc. The base for differences is variety of groups and power distribution. (Sugimoto, 1997). The results of Hofstede's research can be connected with this aspect. Japan scored very high in masculinity dimension, quite high in power distance dimension and quite low in individualism dimension. Norwegian culture is not based on group dependence as Japanese culture. This may imply that cultural differences in Japan are bigger at the group level, while in Norway they are bigger at individual level. Can we say that motivational education and work life reasons in the culture are closer to individual levels in Norway, and to group levels in Japan? There is thought that differences in cultures are affecting the aspects of adult education and work life interaction.

Influence of western culture is spreading all over the world. How Japan is reacting to it? Suitable words probably would be: be open, take, change, adapt and make it better.



Hofstede mentions this thing when he discusses innovation comparing Britain and Japan: “Britain has produced more Nobel Prize winners than Japan, but Japan has put more new products on the world market. There is a strong case here for synergy between innovating and implementing cultures-the first supplying ideas, the second developing them.” (Hofstede, 2005: 186). Professors Hayashi and Kuroda are analyzing Japanese culture in comparative perspective. They also mention this quality of Japanese culture. That not like many other cultures, it is able to react to changing world situation in its own way, to choose and to adopt the aspects from other cultures. (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997). Japanese culture is taking advantage from other countries experience. In Hofstedes cultural dimensions there is prove of competitive and successful Japanese culture which is not afraid of new things, but keeps an order inside the society.

The discussion of general observations helps to get the view of Japanese culture, and the place of education and work life in it. It can be concluded with the words of Hayashi and Kuroda :“Japan is unique in some basic ways that separate its culture from those of the West or its Asian neighbours, while it shares a number of thought patterns with others...” (Hayashi and Kuroda, 1997:91).

### **3.1.7 Comparison of cultural aspects**

Norway and Japan are representing two different cultures in the world, Western and Eastern. The cultural aspects in both societies are alike, but the levels of their importance and expression ways are different or the same. Hofstedes presentation of various countries according to the chosen cultural dimensions helped to determine certain picture of Norway and Japan. Norway can be seen as the country with much higher individual level. Japan can be pictured as group and rules oriented culture. Hierarchy status has more significant level in Japanese organization life in that case. So the relation of individual and the groups is different. But there can change towards stronger individualism in Japan. And individualism in Norway possibly is getting stronger with more materialism-oriented values in the society.

Norway can be seen as the country with more equal society than Japan. This means equality of resources and social services availability. Group orientation and rules can be the keyword for Japanese society and equality- for Norwegian society. But more recent research indicates that reality of equality value is changing. Norwegian society gets the increased levels of inequality, but the value is still important. This can be connected with the increased level of materialism and individualism. Japan is the country with economically based inequality in the society. Various subcultures and aspects like education, occupation, gender, age are important for individual status in the society and inside the group. The gender equality issue is different too. In general Japan is highly masculine values oriented culture and the equality for women in society and work life is lower than in Norway. This was also discussed in the first chapter. Norway is the country with stronger feminine values orientation, but still there is a very big percent of people who think that women do not have equal opportunities in the Norwegian work life.

The interaction of adult education and work life in the cultural context would be mainly related with the aspects of competitiveness, equality and individuality/group-orientation. Norwegian situation implies the importance of individual needs, responsibility and motivation to participate in this interaction. Equality is the value of the Norwegian culture and it concerns both aspects directly, because education and work are very important for individual identity and integration. But the question is if individuals have to take more actions themselves to get what they need from society and social opportunities. Japanese cultural context is based on rules and group-orientation, but individuals are important too. Equality is obviously more problematic issue in this country and there is more social stratification in Japanese culture. It is possible that education and work life are one of the aspects from which the social hierarchy depends. So interaction of the aspects might include more equality related issues in this country. Group-orientation tradition would have an influence to individuals' participation in this interaction, but would have positive outcomes for both sides.

The aspect of competition is the aspect of similarity in two cultures. The interaction of

adult education and work life is the part of international competition and the part of the cultures. But there is difference in competition methods: adaptation in Norway and innovation in Japan. Yet globalization and industrial development is changing the aspects of the countries bringing more alike issues to the same importance levels.

## **Summary**

Culture is human created evolution of human world. It is different in various societies, but quite often is facing similar problems. Norway and Japan are presenting two poles of the world: Western and Eastern cultures. In the process of globalization cultures are getting closer to each other as never before creating the best opportunities to know each other, learn from each other, share and improve. The presentation of Hofstede's multinational research of work goals showed that there is difference between Norway and Japan. But general look to both cultures and societies gave information that some things are quite similar and both cultures may be facing similar problems in adult education and work life.

Both countries have similar cultural issues to deal with in the interaction of two aspects. But there are differences in the level and expression of these aspects. Long-term relation is problematic issue to make a conclusion about. Asian countries in general cultural expression has stronger tendency for it, but it is becoming more important in other countries too facing global challenges. Interaction of the aspects is in the long-term orientation process in both cultures in the case for lifelong learning. Knowledge and industry type differences are defining competitive advantages of each culture (adaptation for Norway and innovation for Japan), but this difference is diminishing too. Masculine values are stronger in Japan together with group-orientation and equality issues, but Norwegian culture cannot avoid these problems too, only at a weaker level than Japanese culture.

No doubt that the interaction of adult education and work life is being affected of cultural processes, but how? How different cultures are reacting to it? What reasons are lying beneath? Different intensity of cultural and equality aspects makes me ask the question how actually different are educational systems in Norway and Japan, how different is the place of adult education there and how different is interaction with work life in this aspect.

### **3.2 Education system**

This part of national dimension is focusing on the legal framing of adult education in Norway and Japan. Adult education is part of education system so it is important to see how it is expressed in the national context. First there is general presentation of education systems and structure with some statistical information. The second aspect is the legal frame which can be viewed from theoretical and practical positions: theoretical laws and their practical expressions to fulfill adult education ideals. Norway is presented as an example country in this case, because there is direct connection between legal education system aspects and work life. This connection can be found in such aspects like the Adult Education Law, the Competence reform, the competence [realkompetanse], actual work of two state organizations. Japan does not have such exact adult education policy as Norway. But there is part of it in the education system and it is revealed by presentation of lifelong learning and social education policies. The third aspect presented in this chapter is financial information of national expenditure on education in both countries.

#### **3.2.1. Structural frame: system, structure and statistics**

##### ***3.2.1.1 Norway***

Norwegian education system is based on the ideas of democracy and equality. Rust is discussing the evolution of democratic tradition of Norwegian school. The changes where

going on in society bringing innovation and school development. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe was important period with the concept of common school and its legislation. He points out that: “Norway was the first to pass legislation, which would provide for a school intended to be free and open to all children, regardless of social background.”. (Rust, 1989:117). According to Rust, the cycle of educational change in Norwegian context indicates the importance of democratic tradition and equality in society which became the basis for the developing education system. (Rust, 1989). Equality of educational opportunity was and is one of the main goals of Norwegian education system. This indicates that adult education has strong and positive educational background in this society.

Contemporary Norwegian school is compulsory for children from age 6 to 16. The school year starts late at August and finishes in the mid June next year. It is divided into two terms separated by Christmas holidays. The school system can be divided into three parts:

- Elementary school [grunnskole]: grades 1-7, age 6-13;
- Lower secondary school [ungdomsskole]: grades 8-10, age 13-16;
- Upper secondary school [videregående skole]: grades VG1-VG3, age 16-19;

Higher education is anything beyond upper secondary school, and normally lasts 3 years or more. This type of education is provided by universities, university colleges and private schools. (Wikipedia, no date b).

Table 3.3: Types of schools in Norway. (2005/6). (Minifacts, 2007).

Type of school	Number of schools
Primary/lower secondary schools	3160
Private primary/lower secondary schools	145
Upper secondary schools	650
Private Upper secondary schools	241
Universities and colleges	70
Private Universities and colleges	30

Private and public education provision has different levels in various countries. Norway

has low percent of students at private schools. During the school year 2000/01 only 1.7% of all primary and lower secondary school pupils were in private education institutions. But the statistical information also shows that in 15 years period the number of pupils at private schools increased. There were 0.8% pupils at private schools in 1985/86. (Statistics Norway, no date). The numbers of private and public education institutions are presented in table 3.3. Public education system dominates in Norway, but participation in private education institutions is increasing. There are less private education offers at primary and lower secondary level and more at upper secondary level. But general number of public education institutions is much bigger. The number of private universities and colleges (30) can be considered as quite high compared with the number of public institutions (70).

Table 3.4: Number of children, pupils, apprentices, students and participants, by level and type of school/institution. Norway. (2005). (Statistical yearbook of Norway, 2007e).

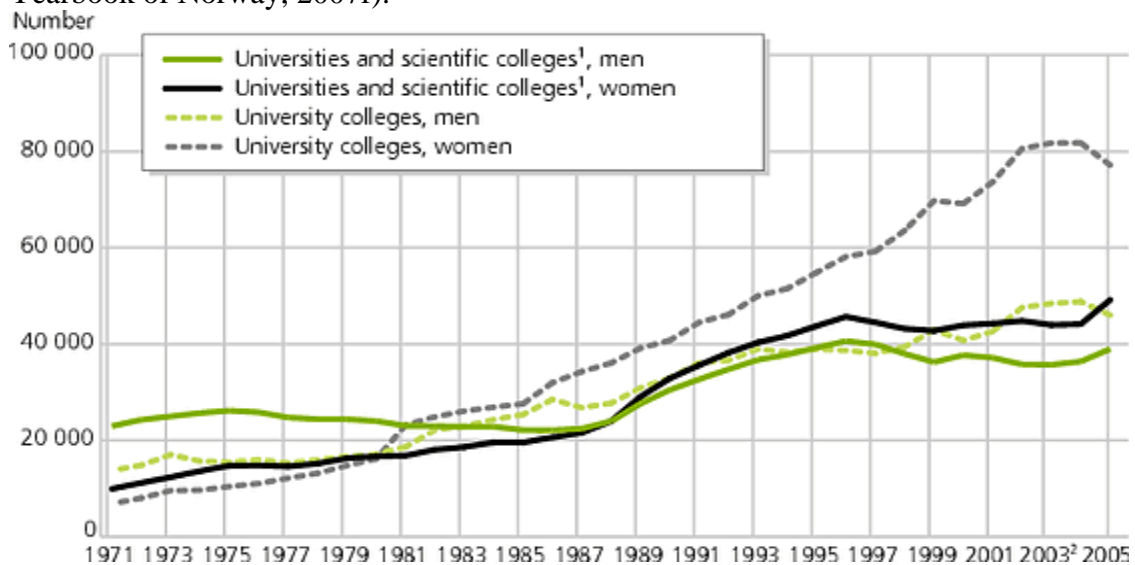
Type of schools	Number of students
Primary and lower secondary schools, total	619 640
Upper secondary schools, total	222 208
Folk high schools, total	6 250
Vocational schools, total	3 376
Tertiary education institutions:	
Total	223 607
State university colleges	92 443
Military university colleges	601
Other university colleges	30 115
Specialized university institutions	6 581
Universities	81 524

Information about education in Norway is very positive. The numbers from 2004 show that 86% of 25-64 years old population has elementary school education, 56% have secondary education and 31%- higher education. It is important to notice that there have been changes in Norwegian higher education, like new graduation structure, grades system, study areas and possibilities to study abroad. (Utdanning, no date). Table 3.4 presents information about the participants number at different educational levels. It is

not dividing participants in public and private educational institutions, but gives total participation number of population. The number of participants in upper secondary education is almost similar to the number of participants in tertiary education (which is mainly higher education). So the goal of secondary school is preparation for further education. This also indicates the importance of higher education in the society. Vocational and folk high schools have considerably low participation numbers. This proves that higher education is the priority in Norwegian society. There are various types of institutions which provide tertiary higher education, but state colleges and universities are leading in the number of participants.

The gender equality issues are interesting in the Norwegian education system context too. The situation about men and women situation in the work life was discussed in chapter 2 and in the cultural aspect of national dimension. The information showed that Norway is the country of actual equal opportunities, but there still are problems of actual attitude and women positions in the work life. So what is the situation in the case of education? In the picture 3.1 can be seen the general increase of women participation during the 1980<sup>th</sup> period which later became much bigger than men participation, especially since 1997. The information is divided into participation at universities and university colleges.

Picture 3.1: Students at universities and university colleges, by sex. Norway. (Statistical Yearbook of Norway, 2007f).



The participation of men and women at the university education do not have very big differences during the years. Before 1987 men had bigger participation at this type of educational institutions, but there was a break point in the 1989. Since then women have bigger and increasing participation rates. The numbers of participation at the university colleges shows more extreme differences. The break point of women participation at this type of higher education was earlier than at the university level, in 1981. The fact is that much more women are participating at university colleges than at universities. This difference is very big, especially considering that the number of men at both types of institutions is not very different. Also it can be noticed that more recent general participation is bigger at university colleges, than at universities. So the situation of women in education changed with increased number of participation and bigger participation numbers than men. Does this indicate equality or equality issues? Can it be that women feel bigger need for education, because they need to prove more in the work life?

### ***3.2.1.2 Japan***

J. E. Thomas, professor of Adult Education at University of Nottingham, presenting postwar Japanese education system points out that it was based on the United States example. Competition and schools hierarchy developed and are very important parts of Japanese education system. (Thomas, 1993). Sugimoto admits that educational background is very important in Japanese society, that it is examination- oriented culture. He also considers that students really depend on their parents' income and support for their education, and: "University education in Japan is regarded as a private privilege rather than a public commodity." (Sugimoto, 1997:112). This indicates that Japanese education system, being part of the culture, is influenced by cultural characteristics presented in the cultural aspect of this chapter. Masculine values, competition, rules, long-term orientation values characterize education too.

Ishikida presents the current Japanese education system. From 1987 educational reforms



are ongoing in Japan based on deregulation, diversification and individualization. The structure of the system now is divided into the structure: - 6-elementary school, - 3-middle school, - 3-high school, - 4- college. The school year starts 1<sup>st</sup> of April and ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March next year. The school week from 2002 is five days and the school year is 210 days. Before, it was a six days long school week. According to authors' information from a survey, 59% of people were opposed for five days long school week. The system of primary and secondary school is based on trimester system. School has 40 days summer vacations, two weeks winter-spring vacations. Also it is permitted for schools to have a semester system and part of schools have it. Educational expenses for public primary and secondary education are affordable according to the author. Private schools and private tutoring is an expensive deal. But college education is expensive and mainly parents have to pay full costs for this education. In general the number of students at high schools was increasing since the postwar period. Since 1990s it was decreasing because of the falling birth rates. The biggest number of students is attending academic high schools (73%) with the goal of college preparation. Both, public and private academic high schools are ranked. High ranked schools have the biggest number of graduates who continue at universities. (Ishikida, 2005).

Competition is specific aspect of Japanese education system emphasized by Rosenbaum and Takehiko: "Japanese high schools are ranked, students compete to attend higher ranked schools, and the high school hierarchy is a crucial part of the institutional work-entry system." (Rosenbaum and Takehiko, 1989:97). Competition is not only among individuals, but also among institutions. At this level there is active interaction not inside work life, but among schools and among employers. They compete among each other, try to please different parties and puts pressure to keep commitment.

The numbers of educational institutions which provide education at various levels are presented in table 3.5. The numbers present total, national, public and private number of schools. The most important aspects are public and private education, especially for comparison with Norway. So national schools numbers are not discussed there. They are

Table 3.5: Educational institutions in Japan (number). (2006). (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007b).

Type of institution	Total	National	Public	Private
Elementary schools	22,878	73	22,607	198
Lower secondary schools	10,992	76	10,190	726
Upper secondary schools	5,385	15	4,045	1,325
Secondary schools	27	2	15	10
Colleges of technology	64	55	6	3
Junior colleges	468	8	40	420
Universities	744	87	89	568
Specialized training colleges	3,441	11	199	3,231

included only to complete the total numbers. There are very few private elementary schools. Public institutions are obviously the main in providing this level of education. Also the number of public elementary schools is the biggest in the list of all educational institutions. This indicates the focus of the government to the elementary education. This level of school is the governmental policy with the history. Inoue admits that during industrial development period Japanese state was focusing on primary education. Because it develops universal literacy and the second is the attitude to be modern workers. Primary education was seen as a basis of modern manpower.(Inoue,1985). As the level of school education is increasing, the total number of institutions is decreasing and the number of private institutions is increasing. Lower and upper secondary levels are in this tendency, but still there are more public than private institutions. The total number of secondary schools in the country is 27, 15 of them are public and 10 are private. So the gap between different providers decreased extremely. Interesting situation is at tertiary education levels. Technical colleges are mainly provided by national institutions and have very little number of other providers. Junior colleges, specialized training colleges and universities have mainly private providers. The gap between numbers of different providers is very big at this level of education with the lead of private institutions.

Table 3.6: Percentage distribution of student enrollments: national, public, private. Japan. (2005). (MEXT, 2006:4).

Type of institutions	National	Public	Private
Elementary school	0.7	98.4	1.0
Lower secondary school	0.9	92.6	6.4
Upper secondary school	0.2	70.3	29.5
Junior college	1.3	7.1	91.7
University	22.2	4.4	73.4

The participation rates at different educational levels are presented in table 3.6. Again only private and public education aspects are discussed. The participants at elementary school level are almost only in public institutions. Quite alike situation is at lower secondary schools, where only 6.4 % are participating in private institutions. Situation is changing at the upper secondary school where participation at private institutions is higher than it is at lower educational levels. But participation at public institutions still has the biggest rates. Junior colleges and universities have totally different situation with the highest numbers of participation at private institutions. Only 4.4% of participants are attending public universities. Participation enrollment numbers strengthens the picture of Japanese education and show the difference of private and public education. Very high percent of participants at public elementary, upper secondary school levels and at private higher education levels points out the financial priorities of the state and the importance of competition in the society. State priorities are given to the lower educational levels. The question is if there is equality issue? Most of people are getting an equal start in education supported by state and only later become dependent from parents and own financial possibilities. But educational certification is very important in the work life as it will be revealed in the next chapter.

What about gender issues in Japanese education system? Some statistical information points out: "The advancement rate of students, including those who had already graduated from upper secondary school in the past, to university or junior college was

52.3 percent in 2006. The advancement rate was 53.7 percent for men and 51.0 percent for women. (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2007c). Thomas is quite critical to the positive information about women positions in education. He gives example from the year 1989 when there were announced increased rates of women entrance to higher education which even exceeded men entrance rates. But the fact was that most of women entered two-year junior colleges, while most of men entered prestigious four-year universities. Also it should be taken into the consideration that it is much harder for well-educated women to get the same high ranked jobs as for men. The research from 1982 about women in administrative and managerial posts in several countries showed that proportion in Japan was 6%, while for example in Sweden it was 19.4%, and 28.3% in USA. (Thomas, 1993). This women education participation picture might correspond with presented labor force situation. In chapter 2 there was indicated that women have much bigger percent to be in the work life as irregular employees than men. There is tendency to leave work life in the age group 25-35 (see: figure 2.2). The situation changing with increasing women participation in labor force and they also tend to go back there after children grow up. This may correspond with increasing education participation and the priority of college education.

### **3.2.2 Legal frame**

#### ***3.2.2.1 Norway***

In Norway, as in most of the countries, the social areas of society are taken care by the state. The usual system is that there are various state departments for different social areas and one of them is the Ministry of Education and Research. Norway is one of the most interesting example countries of adult education. The situation of adult education in the education system in this country is not just a positive theory, but a practical active example too.

#### ***Laws***

Norwegian law system has educational laws which are defining the legal frame of adult

education. These laws are The Training Law [Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregåande opplæringa (opplæringslova)], The Adult Education Law [Lov om voksenopplæring] and The Working Environment Law [Lov om arbeidsmiljø, arbeidstid og stillingsvern mv. (arbeidsmiljøloven)].

The Training Law concerns compulsory public and private education, with part for adult education. The law defines that education organized especially for adults is free and is meant for people who are above age group defined for compulsory education. Adults have the right for special education courses in compulsory education institutions. The responsibility for elementary and secondary adult education is given to municipalities and county municipalities. They are responsible for organization of this education and can use various study organizations, distance education institutions. They have to take care of documentation and encourage adults to be active in education and *work life*. (Lovdata, 1998).

The Working Environment Law has goals of safe, meaningful, equality and co-operation based work life. Very important aspect is employees' right for education leave presented in chapter 12 of this law. Employee who is participating in the work life for at least 3 years and has been working for the same employer in the last 2 years has the right for a full-time or part-time leave to participate in organized education. In the case of tertiary education it should be related with employees' profession. The communication of employee and employer is important in this case. Employee should inform employer about the intention, present the papers from institution and educational relevance for the work. Employer should inform employee if the leave is relevant and acceptable, and if not- to inform what can be done. (Lovdata, 2005a). This law has active practical implementation in organizations which will be presented in the next chapter.

Norway has special Adult Education Law from 1976. (Lovdata, 1976). Titmus and Pardoen are discussing the importance of this law. They emphasize: "The major purpose of this act is to develop a higher degree of equality and democratization within the

population as a whole. It was felt that educational policy had to be adjusted to suit the increased demand for information and knowledge outside the traditional educational delivery system.” (Titmus and Pardoen, 1981:158). This indicates that foundations of the law are the ideas of democracy and equality, as it is of the whole education system and society. The question is which aspects are the most important in adult education and its practical expression now?

*Goals and areas of the law.* The law is considered as help for adults to reach meaningful life. The term “equality” is part of this law in the sense of equal access to knowledge, understanding and skills improvement. All this is understood as the help for adults in their personal development, own contribution and collaboration with others in social and *work life*. The areas of the law concern are alternative offers of compulsory education, tertiary education and short courses, *labor market training*, *training connected with the company*, distance education, other training initiatives based on individual cases.

*Responsible parties.* There are determined certain responsibilities of the state system units for adult education. The law defines that *the state* is responsible for general development of the law; for educational alternatives at educational institutions; *labor market training*. According to the law *municipalities*, *county municipalities*, *studies associations* also have responsibilities, such as developing adult education in their municipalities, engaging in the offer and organization of adult education, provide help to organizations and institutions according to the law.

*Financial aspect* of the law is clearly defined too. Compulsory adult education is free for all adults and covered by the state. *The company training* has separate financial rules too. It is defined as training which is going on or is connected with the company or is relevant for that current work. It can be organized in co-operation with public organization institutions, folk high schools, companies own regime, etc. This kind of adult education has financial coverage from the state which is inside the frame of Parliaments yearly funds, 80% of determined cost factor.

This adult education law is theoretical, juridical background for active adult education in the society. Work life is one of the areas of this law. The state, the society is taking care of its members in all social areas. People have very different educational backgrounds and many of them need to develop this part of personal life. Theoretical possibility to do that is already there. The communication and co-operation of various state units is very important, dividing the duties for society is the sign of efficiency.

### ***The competence reform***

The Adult Education Law is relatively old. Many changes happened in education and society demands since. What is the situation of practical existence of this law in Norway? How it was adapted in the fast changing, information age society? The example of positive outcomes is the competence reform which started in 1999. It "...was launched to give adults more opportunity to acquire education and training and to improve their qualifications. The main objective of the reform is to help meet the need of society and *the workplace* for skills and knowledge. It is both an education reform and a workplace reform." (Regjeringen, no date).

The motivational background of this reform is the view that educated people are human resources of the society. People need new knowledge to be able to adapt to the changes at the workplace. The objects of this reform are adults and it includes various adult education aspects. One aspect is the right for basic education, which should be adapted to personal needs and situations. The other aspect of this reform is that un-formal and in-formal learning are important too and they should be documented and assessed. Reform determines the right for the study leaves (which is confirmed in The Working Environment Law). The financing of the studies improved: The State Educational Loan Fund; education is tax-free (following amendments to the Tax Act in 1999, education financed by an employer is generally exempt from tax). (Regjeringen, no date). So the main focus of competence reform is work place, individual and actual actions to improve adult education in Norway. The competence reform can be seen as practical version of

theoretical adult education law. The goals of the reform are adapted to the changes in the world and to the changing demands of society towards education and its relation with the work life. It shows that the level of individualism in Norwegian society is high as it was determined in Hofstedes research. The needs of individual are the most important in this case. The presentation of this reform is evidence which points out direct connection of adult education and work life, and the need for changes in education systems.

It can be acknowledged that the competence reform has positive outcomes for adults and adult education. So what is already achieved? Here is the information from 2004 where Stette is discussing the results. Adults have the legal right for compulsory education which is defined in the Training Law. The competence can be legally documented and valued. Employees have the right for education leave and it is legally included in the Working Environment Law. Financing became better, the rules of loans and grants applies for adults who has the right for general and secondary education too. From 2002 the loan for a year is 80000 crowns. Plus tax-free education which is financed by employer from 1999. Establishment of VOX (the Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning), from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001. (Stette, 2004).

### ***The competence [realkompetanse]***

As the outcome of The Competence Reform, the competence can be considered as one more practical prove that the Adult Education Law is active in Norwegian society. The competence concept can be defined as all knowledge and skills acquired by formal and informal education, work and organizations activities, leisure time activities, etc. *Formal competence* is documented with attests from educational institutions. *Informal competence* is considered as knowledge from work and other activities, courses and can be documented too. This competence shows certain knowledge and skills, and indicates that person does not have to learn the same things in a certain educational courses, studies, etc. That means learning in a shorter time, time saving. This aspect of Norwegian education system is very important, because it gives the right for adults with certain



experiences to be accepted to higher education institutions. (VOX, no date b). Who exactly needs this competence? People who might need to use the documentation of their competence are those with professional experience, but with no formal education; those who lack documentation for their education and experience; people who want to finish their education; if hobbies and social works gave experience in a certain professions, etc. (VOX, no date c). This concept of Norwegian education system is an example on how education is reacting to the changes and new demands; that education system is in the process of evolution (as the culture is); that ideas are being turned into practice. It also is the prove of Norwegian equality ideal and of what is done to reach the ideal of equal opportunities.

The competence is included in The University Law [lov om universiteter og høyskoler]. (Lovdata, 2005b). According to the law, the general demand for person to be accepted as a student is completed Norwegian secondary education and other certain subject demands. The competence is considered as the basis to be accepted to university too. This concerns certain studies and it is understood as the basis of necessary qualifications for these studies. It is also stated in the law, that the competence can be the reason for exemption from exams and tests. (Lovdata, 2005b). There was mentioned that the status of higher education has changed during the centuries. This level of education system is becoming more connected with the work life and adult education. The high social status of higher education is the same, but the function is getting closer to the labor than before. The competence reform, the competence concept are directly aimed towards work life and now it is included in the higher education legal frame. This indicates the co-operation of education system, adult education, higher education and work life at theoretical and practical levels.

### ***Organizations***

Norway is really interesting example for showing the co-operation of theory and practice in adult education; the co-operation of the legal aspects, of the state and education system

itself. VOX, which is an agency for the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, administers governmental fundings for non-governmental educational organizations, opens distance learning institutions, and finances pedagogical development and adult education projects. VOX institute emphasizes the right for adult education, the importance of basic skills, and the competence. It relies on adult education law and the statement there about divided responsibilities. The provision of primary and secondary education for adults is the responsibility of municipalities and counties. The content of adult education at mentioned levels is regulated by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. VOX is responsible for improving the participation rates in adult learning, legal rights. It is specialized in programmes connected with basic skills, development and work life. (VOX, no date d). Once again it is the possibility to look back to the Adult Education Law and see the practical part of it in nowadays Norway. This institute is dealing with education system, adult education, organization and work life.

There is one more state organization in Norway which is dealing with practical side of adult education. It is the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Organization (NAV) established in 2006 and is a comprehensive welfare reform. It includes three previous organizations, one of which was The National Employment Service. The goals of the reform are: more people in work and activity, a user-oriented system, and a coordinated, efficient employment and welfare administration. There already are many local offices of NAV and the plan is that every municipality will have local offices. The services of this organization include work life, health, family welfare, retirement. (NAV, no date a). As part of NAV's work in the area of "job and work life" is *the training for work life*. It helps people to get information and to get into the process of general training, education for special professional needs. This can be done in the form of special courses or as part of common education. This organization helps people over 19 years old who register themselves for searching the job and those who lack qualifications. According to individual cases training offered by NAV can last till 10 months or till 3 years if necessary. Training is adapted to individual needs and possibilities in work life. (NAV, no date a). This organization is directly working with people, not with education system.

It is also working with adults in the case of work life, help and guidance to succeed in this area of social life.

Norwegian definition of lifelong learning is uniting the whole situation of adult education in the context of education system and legal frame. The Adult Education Law, the Competence Reform, the competence concept, the work of VOX and NAV are connected by lifelong learning idea and directed towards individual in the work life.

### ***3.2.2.2 Japan***

There is the Fundamental Law of Education from 1947 which started the postwar education period in Japan. The law includes basic educational principles, equal opportunities, free compulsory education and two other laws: the School Education Law and the Social Education Law. Japan is reacting to the changes in society, new issues and started to revise the law and the situation of education. The report on the New Fundamental Law of Education in 2003 suggested the need for Japanese education to follow five objectives some of which are really interesting: cultivation of independent-minded and personal development aimed people; cultivate civic-minded people who are active participants in the state and society; cultivate people in the basis of traditions and culture of Japan to live in a globalized world. (MEXT, no date d). Japanese ideas behind educational ideals are not that different from Norwegians. The values of democracy, equality and personal development are uniting both systems. But the cultural aspects give different needs and understandings. It is interesting to see strong point of individualism in Japanese goals, which of course has that special group-individual, individual-group relationship.

Japan has the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and it is one of the ministries in Japanese national government. MEXT is presenting Education Reform Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The concept of equal opportunities is seen as the driving force of education, but it faces various problems in contemporary Japanese

society. They mention such problems as school non- attendance, violence at schools, youth crimes; neglect of child individuality and competence oriented education; the challenges of transforming society and technological development to traditional education system. The plan for educational reform has a goal of school improvement and education transformation. (MEXT, no date e). The reform is not exactly talking about adult education. The main concerns are improvement of learning environment (technologies and enjoyable environment), students' encouragement, strengthening of education at home and in the community, school evaluation, teachers training and the review of the Fundamental Law of Education. This reform shows the part of theory and practice connection in general education system. The ideals found in the presentation of the Fundamental Education Law are difficult to be fulfilled in practice. Competitive society and new demands are facing traditional education borders. So there still lot of work has to be done.

Adult education in Japan is the social education defined in the educational laws and policies. Social Education is the organized educational activities outside general school curriculum education. It is an important part in the promotion of lifelong learning. Social education has various forms, because it is based on personal independent choices and wishes to learn. It includes private and public social education. MEXT is responsible for organizing the courses, training for the social education purpose. The National Government created opportunities to provide various learning. There are such programs for adults as university extension courses, promotion of learning activities in community (human rights, such issues as drugs, environment etc.), ELNET "open college", certification of skill assessment proficiency test, certification of correspondence course of social education, promotion of the sound development of private education programs etc. (MEXT, no date f). There is place for adult education in Japanese education system in the form of social education. It doesn't show such strong connection with work life in theory as it is in Norwegian system. But practical side of Japanese adult education is expressed in the case of training at organizations. This aspect will be discussed in the next chapter and will express certain views to education system, training and work life.

The changes are occurring in Japan and there are efforts of trying to connect school education, social education, cultural activities, sports activities, volunteer activities, corporate in-house education, etc. This is important for creation of free lifelong learning society. All institutions which offer formal and social education are the places which provide places and opportunities for lifelong learning. So adult education expressed by the Social Education is the part of Japanese lifelong learning policies.

Ishikida is discussing lifelong learning situation in Japan. There are the Lifelong Learning Bureau established in 1988, the Lifelong Learning Promotional Law in 1990, followed by Lifelong Learning Council. The government is promoting adult education and number of students is increasing. There are scholarships for adults in vocational training. Adults at work feel the changes and feel the need to keep up. Unemployed adults are turning to the educational opportunities. Also the part of retired people wants to study for their pleasure. And colleges are trying to recruit these students as the young population is decreasing. Educational institutions are offering night courses, correspondence courses, part-time courses, etc. For example the information from 2003 shows that 12.4 % of master degree students and 21.1 % of Ph.D. students were working adults. But the situation is that this career development is more encouraged for male employees and only large companies can send them to off-the-job training. (Ishikida, 2005). This information shows that adult education even if it is connected with social part in theory is getting closer to the work life and the needs of adults. Lifelong learning promotion and policies are the foundations of adult education in Japan, proving that all factors are more or less reacting to the changes and new demands. This indicates the growing importance of adult education in society, especially for the work life. Interesting aspect is the variety of educational forms provided to adults by formal and informal educational institutions. That means that the question of the most suitable adult education forms is very actual.

Hood points out some other aspects of the same situation as Ishikida did. Lifelong learning concept made it easier for adults to study at universities, which were more youth-centered before. Universities are accepting more adult students and are offering

evening classes, part timer studies. According to the author lifelong learning concept helped to change understanding of knowledge recievement from school education. This change includes foundations of knowledge, skills, behavior, and free individual choices to learn now and in the future. It helped to put bigger emphasis on individual. Author defines three types of universities in contemporary Japan: graduate oriented, undergraduate education, courses relevant for working people and the offer of lifelong education. (Hood, 2001). These points prove that lifelong learning policy is the main factor which concerns adult education in Japan. It is the part of general change in education and is related with both, social and work life aspects. But work life is not the most leading aspect in adult education theory. The formal education is reacting to population changes, participation rates changes and demands from the society and organizations. Adult education is getting an increased importance and is being closer related with the work life needs in the cases of individual and organization.

### **3.2.3 Financial aspect**

OECD is organization for economic co-operation and development. The work of organization is connected with economical, social and environmental issues of globalization. Norway and Japan are members of OECD. Organization is organizing and fulfilling various researches in the member countries comparing problems, challenges and achievements of certain issues. This offers possibilities for international co-operation and experience exchange. "Education at a glance" is one of the annual OECD published reports. The information to present national financial expenditure on education is taken from the 2007 report. (OECD, 2007). Countries are interested in international comparisons of education, because of the need to improve efficiency of education (especially economical efficiency) and to meet the changing needs of societies.

So what amount of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is spent for education in the national context? The proportion of national wealth spent on education shows the total amount spent on education and the priority of education in the context of general country

resources and budget. The general case in OECD countries is the increasing number of people who finish secondary and tertiary education. As the reaction to this, the expenditure on educational institutions increased also at all educational levels in 24 countries (between 1995 and 2004). The increase is larger at tertiary level education. This expenditure on education is seen as investment with possible positive outcomes such as economic growth, personal and social development, reduced social inequality . This kind of investment and expenditure is changing over time, governments are reviewing their yearly budgets and change priorities which often can be based on changing demands (like for example teacher salaries, number of students, educational facilities). (OECD, 2007).

The financial information about national expenditure on education is provided in the table 3.7. Information is from the years 1995, 2000 and 2004, and is divided into the information about the total amount, tertiary education and primary-secondary education. So it will be possible to see the changes in this expenditure. The earlier years has no information with OECD countries average of this aspect. So it will be possible to compare Norway and Japan with the average international level only in 2004. During the whole period Norway has bigger total amount spent on education than Japan. Some of the issues and possible reasons are discussed in chapter 2 of this paper. Total expenditure of 2004 in Norway is higher than OECD average, while Japanese is lower. This indicates quite high educational priority is the states budget policies in Norway, and lower in Japan. The actual reasons for this situation are not discussed further. The most important here is to describe the situation. During the years the amount of expenditure on education in Japan haven't changed much, in fact it increased from 4.7 % to 4.8%. Norwegian expenditure decreased from 6.3% to 5.4% and increased again to 6.2% in 2004.

What is the financial situation according to different educational levels? Tertiary education has lower priority in both countries and the main part of expenditure is going to primary, secondary and post-secondary education. There was clear difference between two countries in the case of tertiary education in 1995. But then the expenditure on this educational level increased in Japan from 1.1 % to 1.3%, while it decreased in Norway

Table 3.7: Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP, by levels of education. Norway and Japan. From public and private sources, by year. (OECD, 2007:205)

Table 3.7.1: year 2004.

Type of education	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	Tertiary education	Total all levels of education
Japan	2.9	1.3	4.8
Norway <sup>1</sup>	4.2	1.4	6.2
<i>OECD average</i>	3.8	1.4	5.8

Table 3.7.2: year 2000.

Type of education	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	Tertiary education	Total all levels of education
Japan	3.0	1.3	4.8
Norway <sup>1</sup>	3.8	1.3	5.4
<i>OECD average</i>	-	-	-

Table 3.7.3: year 1995.

Type of education	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	Tertiary education	Total all levels of Education
Japan	3.1	1.1	4.7
Norway <sup>1</sup>	4.3	1.7	6.3
<i>OECD average</i>	-	-	-

1. Expenditure from public sources only

from 1.7% to 1.3%, followed by the increase of 1.4% in 2004. Japan has stronger priority



for tertiary education in general context of expenditure. Both countries are staying at OECD average (1.4%) in this aspect. In the case of primary-secondary education levels, Norway has bigger expenditure percent during the whole period. But that is obvious, because the total expenditure amount is bigger too. The amount of expenditure on these educational levels decreased in Norway and in Japan in 2000. But it increased from 3.8% to 4.2% in Norway and then decreased from 3.0% to 2.9% in 2004. This leads to the situation where Norway spent more than OECD average and Japan less on lower educational levels. So considering the data from 2000 and 2004 both countries have alike tendencies of expenditure at different educational levels: lower priority to tertiary level and stronger to other educational levels. But because Norway has higher expenditure percent and increase in total expenditure the lower educational levels have much bigger expenditure rate.

The information for the year 2005 about the same aspect is presented in world competitiveness yearbook. (IMD, 2007). It shows that Norway had 5.8% of total public expenditure and Japan had 3.9%. So both countries had the decrease since the year 2004, but Norway had much lower decrease, while Japan considerably big decrease. The 55 countries in that presentation were also ranked according to their percent of expenditure on education. Norway got 15<sup>th</sup> place and Japan got 43d. So it can be concluded that Norway is stronger in the case of national educational expenditure. Is it related with the fact that public education is the main in Norway, while private education and tutoring has very strong positions in Japan?

### **3.2.4 Comparison of education system aspects**

Both, Norway and Japan are in similar political positions in the case of education system. Education is social area and the state is taking care of it as of other social parts. Both countries have government ministries concerning education and information from these institutions helped to reveal the situation of adult education in the general national education system. Schools system structure in both countries is not that different. Both systems are divided into elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools with

almost the same year number at each level. Post secondary education is mainly at colleges and universities. There is good situation of education attendance and graduation. Education is an important value in both societies. The reforms are going on in both countries education as the reactions to the changing world and emerging lifelong learning concept. Educational ideas are based on equality, individual orientation and other social values. However Japanese education system seems too be more competition-oriented and depended than Norwegian. It also is more difficult and intense for individuals, considering the fact that it had and partly still has a 6 days long school week and a lot of private tutoring at all educational levels.

Very big difference between these two educational systems is the public and private education institutions. Public education is leading in Norway at all educational levels. For example in the school year 2000/01 only 1.7% of all primary and lower secondary school pupils were attending private institutions. But there is tendency in Norway of increasing participation in private education. (Statistics Norway, no date). Lower education levels are mainly public education in Japan. But the number of private education institutions is increasing with the level of education, so is and participation numbers. Secondary schools are only 27 in the whole country and 10 of them are private. (see: table 3.5). There is strong competition among the schools in Japan. This is not the situation in Norway where competition is not so visible in education system. Also higher education can be considered as the privilege in Japan, as it is mainly provided by private institutions and is expensive. State university education is free in Norway. This raises the question about equality issues in education. Yet higher education is very important for individuals in both societies and has big participation numbers.

Norway is the society with strong equality value. Since 1980<sup>th</sup> women participation in higher education was increasing and got bigger than men participation in general. An interesting fact is the extreme increase in women participation at university colleges. (see: picture 3.1). Can it be that women feel a bigger need for education, because they need to prove more in the work life? Japanese women participation has a positive numbers too, but there is some critics emphasizing that women are mainly attending

shorter college courses and have different situation in the work life than men. Interesting conclusion appears from both countries: bigger women participation at colleges than universities in the case of higher education. Education is the part of legal national frames in both countries. But Norway has more detailed legal background for adult education than Japan. Norway was quite easy country to write about in this chapter. It has an active adult education policy and many examples of educational ideals becoming a practice. The Training Law, The Work Environment Law, The University Law, The Adult Education Law: all of them concern adult education, individual, formal education and work life. Individuals have the legal right for adult education at school levels, state units are taking care to provide opportunities and encourage adults. Adult education is considered as important for the work life. Important practical expressions of the educational laws are: the right for education leave related with the current work and profession; financial support from the state; documentation of informal competence and the basis of it for higher education. The work of such organizations as VOX and NAV is expressing the practical fulfillment of the law too. And all these aspects are related with lifelong learning definition and work life.

Japanese situation is different. There is no direct expression of adult education and its relation with work life in the legal frame. Education reforms are based on ideas of equality and lifelong learning. Adult education is expressed through social education in Japan and is part of the Fundamental Law of Education. It is the promotion of lifelong learning and informal education activities in society for personal development. But adult education is entering education system in Japan, especially higher education institutions. There are problems because of the low birthrate in the society and population groups. So educational institutions want to attract various groups of possible students. They start to provide various courses suitable for working adults. This indicates the need and practical provision of different educational forms according to the changing needs of individuals and organizations in the work life. Adult education and work life interaction is entering Japanese education system, but not the theoretical legal frame in such scale as it is in the Norwegian context. This Japanese situation might be explained by certain society view to education and the importance of training in the company. It will be presented and

discussed in the next chapter of organizational and individual dimension.

In general Norway has stronger financial state support for education. (see: table 3.7). National expenditure, GDP percent is bigger there than in Japan and is bigger than OECD average too. It is slightly increasing and decreasing during the years, but still can be considered as big. Lower educational levels are getting bigger support from this general GDP than tertiary education in both countries. It is important to take into considerations the fact that Japanese population is bigger than Norwegian, that Norwegian economical situation is stronger as it all was described in chapter 2 and that private education is very strong in Japan. These aspects might affect the amount of national expenditure on education.

## **Summary**

The legal frame of education systems in two countries was presented in this chapter. Educational structure appeared quite alike in Norway and Japan. Education system ideals are also not so different and based on equality, social ideals and individual development orientation. The differences occurred in the cases of public and private education. Norway is mainly based on public education institutions at all educational levels. Japan has strong tradition of private education, especially at secondary and tertiary education levels. The competition aspect is important in contemporary world, but is different in two countries. Japan has open competition situation in national educational system. There is obvious competition among schools and among individuals. This makes educational situation more intense and stressful for Japanese people. Competitiveness in Norwegian education is not so visible. These aspects can be related with the difference in national educational expenditures. Norway has bigger percent of GDP spent on education, than Japan. The differences in population size, public and private education, economical situation can be the reasons for that. But this does not make the conclusion that there is strong inequality in Japanese education, and strong equality in Norwegian. The ideals are same, only it might be easier to fulfill them in Norway.

The legal frame of education system revealed theoretical and practical interaction between adult education and work life in Norway. This is an example country with strong legal foundations of adult education and active practical expressions of the laws. All aspects of the legal frame and education system in Norway are directly and mainly connected with work life and the importance of education for it. Norwegian education system has given separate and important part for adult education. There are practical results of its implementation, for example the documentation of the competence. It can be confirmed that there is theoretical and practical interaction of adult education and work life in Norwegian context. Japanese picture cannot be defined so clearly as Norwegian. There is no obvious and separate part of adult education in Japanese education system. Adult education in the legal frame is expressed through the Social Education, which is more related with informal lifelong learning and concerns various social aspects (including work life). At this level the interaction between adult education and work life cannot be defined in Japanese context. But it will be revealed in the next chapter. Both educational systems and legal aspects are reacting to the changes in the world and new requirements to education. Lifelong learning definition is reflecting there and in the reforms of education.

#### **IV. ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL DIMENSIONS**

This chapter focuses on the relation between adult education and work life at the organizational and individual levels. It is hard to separate both dimensions in the case of this relation. The co-operation of both dimensions is important for work life and adult education relation. In general, it is the main context for it. The dimensions are uniting other factors which will be the main aspects in this chapter. These aspects are training, work life, organization, individual, and their connection, communication and co-operation. The chapter is divided into three parts: theoretical, empirical and comparative approach of both dimensions.

## **4.1. Theoretical approach**

This part of the chapter presents theoretical discussion which emerged in the Norwegian and Japanese context about the issues of training at organizational and individual dimensions. Norwegian context is presented mainly using the discussions of O. Nordhaug and K.A. Larsen et al by dividing it into the aspects of training benefits and dysfunctions. Japanese context is presented with the bases of discussion by K. Inoue, R. Cole and U. Nonaka on the relation of organization and individual in organizational training.

### **4.1.1 Organization and training: Norwegian context**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century and industrial revolution was important period for Norway, as it was for the most countries. Norway became developed and integrated into the worlds economy country. F. Sejerstad points out the importance of the demand from external markets for Norway's industrialization and economical development. Of course this was connected with natural resources that Norway had (fish, timber, shipping possibilities). It was the successful exploitation of economical opportunities. There is number of factors which created the positive context for economical development according to the author. Qualitative technological changes and the big demand boom for main industries gave results. Through time Norway developed the features of modern industrial society and has certain strong industries. Author points out that Norway developed the industrial structure where small and medium enterprises are dominant. He suggests that the characteristics of industry from the 19<sup>th</sup> century have remained at some level in the contemporary Norway. (Sejerstad, 1992). Since then Norway developed into economically strong country with certain leading industries (as it was described in the second chapter of this paper). Modern organization emerged from this development, but it has to face continuous challenges of the contemporary world. So what are theoretical considerations about organizations facing the challenges connected with training in the Norwegian context?

Training and organization can be connected in different ways. Employees of the

companies can participate in formal and informal training settings, inside and outside the company. Nordhaug is discussing training benefits for organization and individuals. The aim of the author is not to analyze or evaluate Norwegian training, but to analyze the training affects in general. In his research training is defined as organized and formal training for employees at the company which is arranged by employer or organization. (Nordhaug, 1985)

### ***Training benefits at organizational level***

Nordhaug is presenting the classification of benefits at organizational level. He is approaching this topic from the point of training functions in the organization which goal is economical effectiveness. (Nordhaug, 1985). This presentation of training benefits helps to look to the positive side of training. It also reveals the reasons why such training is encouraged. This will help to lay the foundation of Norwegian context in the relation of adult education and training.

The first benefit is *qualification and changeover*. Primary function of organizational training is to develop the competence of employees to perform current and new work tasks. This is important for increasing work productivity and adaptation of new technologies. (Nordhaug, 1985). Competence is important concept in Norwegian work life and training reality. This was already discussed in the previous chapter of educational and juridical aspects. The need to acknowledge the competence and its development reached Norwegian education system reform, juridical rights of citizens and everyday life. Training in the context of work life has competence as one of the benefits and shows that there is a certain connection between education and work life.

This leads to the second benefit of training for organizations: *certification*, which is also part of traditional education, but is important for work life too. Nordhaug points out that certificates from educational institutions are showing what kind of qualifications person has. (Nordhaug, 1985). The certification of knowledge is very important part of Western societies. The competition in work life includes this part of education which can be used

by individuals to prove and use their qualities. The competence reform and laws in Norway is an example of new needs and ways to certificate various knowledge, experience, skills, etc.

Larsen et al are also positive about the competence and its need at organizational level. Competence is the key concept for the training in the company. They define the competence as: "... knowledge, skills and attitudes which needed in solving the problems or to perform the tasks." (Larsen et al, 1997:18)<sup>1</sup>. It can be very different: general, special, subject competence, task competence, even company competence can be regarded as general or special. (Larsen et al, 1997). From their point of view competence is uniting training and work life in Norway. Competence and its development at the work place can be considered more than just a benefit. It can be the process of training and it has variety of forms. The differences of competence in the relation of training and work life are depending not only from individual, but from the organization too in that case.

The fourth benefit is *justification*, which is connected with the fifth benefit- *rewards*. Justification of goals, strategies and reward systems. According to the author training can simply be a reward and influence other rewards at the work place. But it can also be used as device for competition in work life. (Nordhaug, 1985). Larsen et al are observing that companies benefit from training and competence development, because this causes the increase of productivity. Employees accept training because it can cause the increase of salary, other work tasks. (Larsen et al, 1997). These benefits are direct motivational and encouragement aspects of training. Organization expects that employees keep developing their productivity, which will increase the productivity of organization. If training and competence development is considered as an important influence to this, then the reward system is the key for encouragement and practical training benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> "...kunnskaper, ferdigheter og holdninger som kan bidra til å løse problemer eller utføre oppgaver." (Larsen et al, 1997:18).



The other benefits are *internal social mobility, socialization and social control, development of work environment and development of motivation and learning environment*. These aspects are important for individual training motivation. Author defines work environment in a broad sense, including motivation, work moral, social interaction. Work motivation is encouraged with training by introducing values and knowledge, offered personal development opportunities. (Nordhaug, 1985). The fact is that companies need employees who are motivated to learn. The created environment becomes important and has to connect many different aspects: social, work, learning, motivation. It is necessary when the company and manpower have to follow the technological, economical, informational changes and to stay in the competition. These benefits are expressing the variety of benefits, from economical to social. They are also defining the need for the co-operation of organization and individual.

### ***The dysfunctions of training at organizational level***

Besides the positive discussion about the relation of organization and training, Nordhaug also looks into the dysfunctions of training for organization. Author defines training dysfunctions as negative effects of intention and respect for goal achievements. (Nordhaug, 1985). This discussion of negative training outcomes determines some important problems in contemporary societies.

The first dysfunction is *miss adjustment between person and organization*. Author describes it as the lack of consistency between persons' competence development and organizations' need for competence. He is dividing this dysfunction into different forms: wrong education, over education and under education. Author emphasizes that it is not always beneficial to invest into education and people can be overqualified for the jobs. It might not be beneficial to employ people with wrong or lacking education as it can decrease their productivity. There can be possible outcomes of this situation: the decrease of training functions, training and development priority in the companies, the level of comfort and security at the workplace. (Nordhaug, 1985). All this is important not only

for economical, but for social benefits and positive working/learning environment too.

The second dysfunction is *the loss of resources: "brain drain"*. It is closely connected with financial aspects. For example one company finances employees training and the other company might use that if employee is changing the job. (Nordhaug, 1985). The third dysfunction is very close to the second one: *financial costs*. Training costs, whether it is external or internal courses. And most often employees cannot work a certain time of days during the period of training. That becomes the financial burden for the organization. (Nordhaug, 1985).

These training dysfunction are revealing the problems in the contemporary work life. Education is the value in Western societies. It is considered a necessary tool to succeed in personal work life. The demands in work life are very different and changing fast. The need of certificated education competes with experience in work life. Participation rates are very big and increasing at many levels of education. People realize the need of personal development and work life requirements are encouraging that. It is easy for everyone, and for individuals, and for organizations, to get lost in the variety of requirements and needs. That is why very good communication between education and work life is necessary. All parts need to learn to make right educational choices for training to be beneficial and not to become dysfunctional.

#### **4.1.2 Organization and training: Japanese context**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century is important period for Japan and organizational development too. The roots of the relation between organization and training can be found already at that period. The conclusion of Gospel and Okayama is that 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Japanese system of training in the large companies was basically internal and more firm specific with the focus on lifetime careers. At the beginning of industrialization there were not enough skilled workers and companies turned to educational institutions and internal training. This was the way for the companies to develop internal human resources. The concern of

authors with such Japanese system is that in the longer term it would not fit for research and development in new technologies. (Gospel and Okayama, 1991). Sugayama concludes that there were critical changes in employment relations in Japan during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. At this period the competition became stronger as foreign companies re-entered Japanese market. Companies started to focus more on managerial control and the role of lower-level staff became important, so their education too. That is when the “Japanese employment system” started to expand. The demand to treat workers and white-collar staff equally was rising, so employment was in demand to be extended to the blue-collar work staff. But it was just the beginning of existing system in Japanese companies. (Sugayama, 1993). Japanese education reacted to the new demands of industry and its need for educated manpower at various levels. The development of industry and expansion of education was going at the same time. The foundations of the current Japanese tradition were laid at this period. As authors stated, it was just the beginning of Japanese employment system formation, Japanese training system and manpower. A special link between general education, organization and work life training was created.

Cole is presenting more recent theory about organization and training in Japan. He considers Japan as a special case because the traditional organizational learning paradigm changed. The traditional paradigm concerns cost-efficiency, productivity and is the quality control. The new paradigm is the quality improvement and has different approach to organizational learning. Author defines this learning as routine, history and target of the organization. (Cole, 1994). The process of quality improvement paradigm is the process of organizational learning. Author points out that Japanese organization have a broad view to organizational learning. Organizational learning needs motivation, capacity and opportunity/structure. The paradigm is uniting these aspects. (Cole, 1994).

Cole presents and discusses eight aspects of new paradigm. 1. “Market-in” is the customer-orientation activity. Training and flexibility of employees is important to deal with uncertainty and pressure in this case. 2. Quality improvement is the reorientation

from cost-reduction and productivity to quality improvement and customer satisfaction. This direction in the company can contribute to individual learning motivation, co-operation between individual and organization so that learning is directed towards customer satisfaction goal. Organizational routines can be individual learning. 3. Improved quality as strong competitive strategy. This leads to larger profits and benefits for organization and individual/employee, like wages and employment security. It is the motivation for individual learning. 4. All-employee, all-department involvement in quality improvement. 5. The direction of problem solving defined as upstream. Employees are encouraged to participate. 6. The method of well-defined problem solving and training activities are characteristics of modern movement in Japan. The specific training activities for problem solving behavior and improvement are for all employees and management. 7. Quality improvement aspect is included into the control system: goals, plans and actions. This shows that all employees and their work are important for organization and provides learning motivation. 8. Cross- functional cooperation. The quality failures occur and the lack of co-operation can be one of the reasons. The quality is expanding the area of work and career development so that individuals should learn more than just one function. This learning is going inside the organization. (Cole, 1994).

This new organizational learning paradigm in Japan can define the possible general training situation at organizational and individual levels. Training in the organization concerns all employees and has variety of goals, from skills development to socialization. This is the aspect of working and learning environment creation in the organization. The strategy has the main goal of companies productivity and increased efficiency in employees work. The theoretical approach confirms the priority of group goals and influence to individual, the strength of rules and traditions which makes organization as the cultural structure. It also confirms the importance of individual and training as the part of organizational culture. This structure of organizational learning is the reaction to the changes and challenges in the competitive world. Individuals in the work life are required to be more flexible, to have variety of skills. Organization is concerned if the goals are being fulfilled and should take care of employees skills improvement. Innovation is very important there at both dimensions, because it is beneficial to both.

This quality improvement based training in Japanese work life context is theoretical strategy for organizations and individuals to face the challenges of competition.

Japan has a certain tradition or view to education importance in the connection with work life. This can explain some reasons how new organizational learning paradigm started to grow. Inoue is discussing the relation between organization and training. He determines that Japanese people might be preferring general education more than vocational. And one of the reasons might be that companies are selecting graduates based on academic qualifications and do not pay that much attention to vocational knowledge at that level. (Inoue, 1985). He indicates that: “After hiring new graduates, Japanese companies provide long and systematic education and training for all employees including blue-collar workers in order to develop their potential capability...”. (Inoue, 1985:1). So training was part of Japanese organizational culture for a very long time. This creates that special situation with importance of general education for individuals and their start in the work life. Training in organization probably has the same functions as discussed in Nordhaugs’ Norwegian theory. But Japanese goals are to include individual into that particular group, and to help to understand and accept group goals and individual benefits from this relation.

Inoue points out that training system shows that companies have the perspective. They hire unskilled, but educated people and train them during the whole period of employment. The training includes not only skills, but also introduction to the company, objectives, motivation, responsibility, etc. It is important to create harmony and team work in the company. There are various activities like staff meetings, lunches, meetings with the families of the employees, for creating human relations in the company. (Inoue, 1985). This proves the importance of individual and group co-operation in Japanese organizational training theory. The training has variety of goals which can be connected with both, quality control and quality improvement. The methods are also very different, from formal to informal training related with skills development and social part in the

team work based organization. This position proves the importance of communication between various factors of society for adult education to be successful part in the work life. Also it proves that there is a communicative connection between adult education and work life in the Japanese context.

The role of education and educational institutions in Japan is an important aspect which helps to understand the main problem of this paper better. This is also connecting individual and organizational dimensions. First of all individuals have to compete in education in order to get a good start in the work life. The system of education in this society seems to be made for individual competition. Then there are organizations and employers expectations according to the hierarchical supply of educational opportunities for potential employees. It also can become an issue of equal opportunities. The need of general education to start in the work life can be seen as the situation of equal opportunities to everybody in society. It would be only the problem of individual choice to compete in this area (if excluding the problem of expensive higher education). And then there is training for individuals in the organization.

#### **4.1.3 Individual and training: Norwegian context**

In the theoretical aspect of organizational dimension there was presented Nordhaugs' classification of organizational benefits from training in the Norwegian context. The other part of his classification is individual benefits. He divides individual benefits into 6 groups: 1. Economical (income, knowledge about economic rights); 2. Career-oriented (job change, promotion, status); 3. Work-oriented (manage the work, general skills, responsibility, independence, quality); 4. Political/Organizational (participation, personal rights, engagement); 5. Social (contact, comfort, friends, social practice); 6. Psychological-motivation, self-esteem, cognitive (creativity, critical skills, problem solution skills). (Nordhaug, 1985).

It is important to emphasize that organization and individual are two dimensions which

are closely connected with each other and training benefits for both dimensions can be connected. *Economical* training benefits for individuals can be closely related with the work place and organizational dimension. Training is considered as an investment with positive economical outcomes in the future. And it cannot really be separated from the *career-oriented* training benefits. Career improvement is usually connected with better economical conditions at the job (work satisfaction factors are not excluded too, but they are more relevant in other individual benefits categories). But these benefits cannot be realized only by individual efforts. There should be opportunities for their realization in the organization and it should be supported and encouraged by it. Justification and reward benefits at organizational dimension can be connected with these two individual benefits. If organizational benefits are actual because of the training and organization is supporting individual employees, then individual benefits can be realized in practice in these organizations. But there is another side of it: the individual job change aspect, which might become a dysfunction of training at organizational level (these training aspects of Norwegian context where discussed in the previous chapter). This shows that individual and organizational training benefits are very different even if they are closely connected with each other and even depend from each other.

*Work-oriented* and *organizational* training benefits at individual level are directly connected with a certain work place. They indicate the importance of on-the-job training or work-related training. These benefits might be really helpful for good working and learning environment at the work place and encourage individuals to increase their expectations from training. For example, to move to the first two mentioned individual benefits. It also indicates the importance of individuality in Norwegian culture. Of course the goals of organization are coming first, but individual aspect at the work place should be realized too according to the extent of these two training benefits. Improvement at the work place is also a personal development. Active participation of both sides at the work place helps to create that necessary positive working and learning environment. The only thing that should be indicated is that these two individual benefits are directly connected with one work place and is not leaving the frame of certain organization. The first two

benefits have bigger potential to be useful outside the same organization and work place.

*Social* and *psychological* training benefits at individual level are the last two benefits. These benefits can be very various in the sense that they can easily be connected with various aspects of life and be realized outside work place. Yet, they can also be connected with organizational dimension and its benefits. They depend a lot from individual situation, for example age, expectations, educational and social background, etc. But the organizational part has the role of influence to these benefits, because a certain encouraging environment at the work place has affect on individuals. In general, all training benefits concerns both dimensions and are influencing each other.

#### **4.1.4 Individual and training: Japanese context**

According to Nonaka Japanese approach to the new knowledge creation is not including only institution and objective information, but is also relying on individual employees and subjective insights. The co-operation of both dimensions is important. (Nonaka, 1991). He points out that: “The key to this process is personal commitment, the employees’ sense of identity with the enterprise and its mission.” (Nonaka, 1991:246). The role of management is important in order to mobilize such commitment and to unite and realize the different ideas. He emphasizes: “It is an approach that puts knowledge creation exactly where it belongs: at the very center of a company’s human resource strategy.”. (Nonaka, 1991:247). This theoretical point of view complements organizational theoretical approach, where individual and organization actually cannot be separated. It acknowledges the place and importance of individual dimension in Japanese organizational context. All training aspects are united for the knowledge creation factor in the organization, where individual has a key-role, even though group/team-orientation is the main working strategy. Individuals are the part of organization in Japan, then they are formed into the teams followed by communication at all levels and creating innovative knowledge organization.



Nonaka presents scheme of knowledge creation in organization. The structure of knowledge creation starts at the individual level. Personal knowledge becomes available to others and is the continuous process in such company. Then there is team which is developing that individual knowledge and then it moves in the whole organization. (Nonaka, 1991). Of course such system should encourage individual training. The feeling of doing an important job, being part of the team/group and the possibility of personal benefits is good motivational background for training given by organization to individual. But this also implies that individual training is not leaving the frames of that particular organization. And this is just the same theory of training benefits for both dimensions which are influencing each other.

The competitive education system in Japan and the importance of academic education certification emphasized by the companies makes individual situation more complex. Inoue determines the importance of education in Japanese society which can be described as an ‘academic qualification society’. Education is important for individual, because it has affects on salary, status and promotion. There is strong pressure to succeed in education, because this can determine the success in professional life. (Inoue, 1985). The pressure and requirements to individual start at the general education levels in Japanese society. But group-orientated organizational culture is supporting specific personal and professional development and training.

## **4.2 Empirical approach**

This part of the chapter presents empirical data about the topic of organizational and individual dimensions. The data for Norway and Japan are presented separately with some additional comparative information. The basis for empirical approach is various training participation related aspects concerning both dimensions and uniting the main factors.

### **4.2.1 Norway**

Three main sources of empirical data are used to present the situation of training at

organizational and individual levels in Norway. The data which is analyzed in Nordhaugs' research is based on questionnaire research done by "Statistisk Sentralbyrå" for Norwegian adult education institute in 1983. 4.338 respondents enter were chosen. 810 of them were taking part in various forms of adult education during the 1982/83 school year. Almost half of the research participants were a part of company training. Only the participants who were in the payed job as employees where chosen for data analysis. (Nordhaug, 1985).

Some information can be found in Larsen et al report. Important notice is that information there is based only on formal training activities. Empirical information is realized by MMI (Markeds-og media institute) in 1996. The topic of research was tertiary education. (Larsen et al, 1997). A very big part of information is taken from "MOBA" project, a comparative study of adult education in Great Britain, Norway and Spain. Of course only information about Norway is relevant there. The main purpose of this project was the research of adults participation in education. Norwegian part of this research was organized with the co-operation of VOX. It is also important to emphasize that the term adult education is limited to the organized adult education concept in this survey. The sample of the survey is adults between 18- 79 years old and it is 1836 total participant in Norwegian survey. The method of this research was personal interview. The field work was done in 1999. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001).The empirical approach of Norwegian context is divided into the aspects of participation; motivation/expectations; benefits; organizational expenditure; barrier factors.

### ***Participation aspect***

The information from 1996 provides the results that there were 75% of employees who had formal education in the past five years. (Larsen et al, 1997). So there is probability of the strong tendency in training participation. As participation in training includes variety of aspects, it is good to look into some of them separately. One aspect of participation has an important role. It is initiators of training. Empirical data from Larsen et al shows percent of participation at the last formal organized course by the initiative of

individuals or employers. (Larsen et al, 1997). Information in table 4.2 shows that individual initiative (29%) is bigger than only employers initiative (16%). This might indicate that individual dimension reacts faster to changes in the world and work life, because the competition is harder for individuals and their adaptation in the work life. Individuals might have stronger motivation and the need for training. It also brings us back to the concept of strong individuality levels in Norwegian society. But it is really interesting to see that initiative from both sides (individual and employers) have the biggest percent (55%). This proves that there is a connection of both dimensions, organizational and individual and that both sides are co-operating in reaching their goals.

Table 4.2: Who wished and initiated course participation? Norway. (1996). (Larsen et al, 1997:114)

Initiated by	Percent
Own wish	29
Employers wish	16
Both	55

This Norwegian situation in the work life has the connection with legal frame presented in the previous chapter. The Work Environment Law includes paragraph 4-2 with the demand for employees adaptation, cooperation and development. This means that employees have to be informed about the work system. The necessary training to get started should be provided and be based on co-operation. Employees should also be provided with the possibilities for professional and personal development through work and the information about necessary training. This training is defined as the development needed to perform work tasks when the changes in the work life occur. It is employers duty to take care if provided information and development processes are fulfilled according to the law. (Lovdata, 2005a). This theoretical background for specific interaction is realized in practice by the appraisal interviews [medarbeidersamtaler] in Norwegian work life. Aslaug Mikkelsen presents this aspect defining it as: “ ...well

prepared, systematic, and personal development and planning-related interview between leader and co-worker once a year or more often.” (Mikkelsen, 2002:7)<sup>2</sup>. She emphasizes that the goal of the appraisal interviews for the company is training in organization. Employees goals might be to get the best possibilities for the comfort, training and career at the work place. This aspect is practical tool for the development at the job. (Mikkelsen, 2002). This is the co-operation of organizational and individual dimensions in practice. Also this can be the most important reason why co-operative training initiative is leading (see: table 4.2).

Table 4.3: Employees who had formal training in the last 5 years according to the type of training %. Norway. (1996). (Larsen et al, 1997:104).

Type of training	All	Men	Women
Internal courses: increase qualification in a present job	61	59	64
Internal courses: increase qualification in other jobs of same business	21	23	18
External courses: increase qualification in a present job	45	46	45
External courses: increase qualification in other jobs of same business	15	16	15
External courses outside the job in the business	22	22	23
Letter courses or evening courses	22	23	22

The discussion about training functions and dysfunctions at organizational and individual level suggest an ambiguous situation when motivation for training can be opposite in two dimensions. Co-operative training initiative is leading in the Norwegian context. The detailed look into training types and participation rates is showing the exact intentions. The numbers from table 4.3 indicates the interpretation that the biggest number of employees had training which was directly connected with their current work place. Both, internal (61%) and external (45%) courses for the increase of qualifications at the present

<sup>2</sup> ”En medarbeidersamtale er en godt forberedt, systematisk og personlig utviklings- og planleggingssamtale mellom leder og medarbeider en gang per år eller oftere.” (Mikkelsen, 2002:7).

job are connected directly with organizational and individual dimensions and their benefits. It emphasizes the need of connection between two dimensions, because training should benefit both and not to become a dysfunction. Internal training has highest percent of participation which indicates the priorities of organizations and shows the active encouragement from this side to individual. All the other types of training have almost the same participation numbers, much lower than training for the current job. It can be concluded that the result of theoretical legal frame, training initiative and appraisal interviews is the leading internal training for the current job.

The gender equality issue at the work place can also be interpreted according to the given data in table 4.3. There are no big differences between men and women participation in various formal courses related with work situation. The only bigger difference is participation in internal courses for the present job, men- 59 % and women- 64%. This implies that gender equality can be an issue to some level at the Norwegian work place as it was questioned in education system chapter. There is tendency of bigger women participation in higher education too (see: picture 3.1). Is there a requirement for women to be more active in training?

What is influencing participation in training? Gender, age, position, educational levels, work time, business type can be an important factors. The information about gender, age, educational background and employment status relation with participation in training is presented in the table 4.4.

Higher educational level equals higher numbers of participation in Norway. But what are the reasons for that? The hypotheses and general view would be that those individuals who have lower levels of education are in bigger need to develop and compete in the work life. Authors of the survey are suggesting possible reasons for this surprising situation. Their study indicated that there is possible relation between level of education and opportunities to get time off work for educational reasons (higher level of education is leading to bigger possibility). (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001). This confirms the importance of co-operation of two dimensions. Not only individual motives are

Table 4.4: Percentage participation in courses during the last 3 years. Norway. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:18).

Total	70
Gender:	
Men	70
Women	70
Age:	
18-29	88
30-45	76
46-59	73
60-79	28
Level of education:	
Primary/lower secondary	40
Upper secondary	72
College/university	83
Employment status:	
Employed	80
Unemployed	63
Retired	23
Not seeking work	43
Student	97

important, but also environment and attitudes at the organization. On one side there is the point of stronger educational influence to continue the learning process, on the other side there can be the point of over education and no space for development.

It is not just educational level that is interesting in characterization of Norwegian situation of adult education. Men and women have the same number of participation in adult education in general (see: table 4.4). This is connected with equality concept in Norwegian society and increasing equal gender status at the work place. Yet, as it was mentioned several times before, there are some gender equality issues in Norwegian society and work life. The aspect of age influence to participation in adult education is not surprising. The number of participation is decreasing with the age of individual. This situation is in the relation with expectations for training benefits.

The numbers of participation according to the employment status are surprising (see: table 4.4). Employed individuals have 80 % percent of participation, while unemployed have 63 %. This data confirms the strong connection between current work life and training. This is another prove that organizational and individual levels in Norwegian context are co-operating in the case of adult education and training for the work life. But it is surprising that unemployed individuals have lower participation rates in adult education. Does this indicate that there is stronger educational encouragement at organizational levels than actual individual initiative in Norway? Or is it influenced by the legal context and its practical expressions which unite training, organization and individual?

An important finding from the “MOBA” project is that: “...the groups who are in employment participate most on vocational and work-related courses. We find the same picture among the respondents who are unemployed.” (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:20). The other part of this finding is the duration of the courses. And Norway emerged as the country with the shortest training courses because work-related training dominates there. Also it is more common in Norway to take courses during work hours, especially for the shorter vocational courses where: “... Around two of three participants who were in employment had taken their most recent course during working hours...”. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:23). This information confirms that organizational dimension has affect to individual training. There is created a certain learning environment and encouragement at organizations. There is co-operation of both dimensions, training and education system in Norwegian context. The data indicates that individual training is hardly leaving the organizational frame, but there is a variety in the supply of work-related educational opportunities.

### ***Motivation/expectations aspect***

Motivation is a crucial term for adult education and individual participation. It is the most important aspect in the case of adults participation in education. Motivation does not

stand alone, it depend from many other aspects like, organizational work and learning environment, expected training benefits for individuals and organizations, etc. And of course it has influence on participation rates.

Table 4.5: Employees views on what they will achieve by participating in organized training %. Norway. (1996). (Larsen et al, 1997:116).

Motives of participation	Percent
To get better professional security at the job	57
To reduce a risk of losing the job	5
To be more respected by employer and colleagues	4
To increase opportunity of promotion	15
To get bigger salary	12
To enrich the job content	10

The information from Larsen et al presented before showed that individuals separately have bigger percent of initiative for training than employers alone. And it was clear that combined initiative has the biggest number (see: table 4.2). There was also determined that the biggest percent of individual participation is in the case of training for the present job (see: table 4.3). All these facts are connected with the motivational aspect. There is only one motive from that research which has the lead in individual adult education participation (see: table 4.5). This motive is better professional security at the job (57%). In general the leading motives of adults to participate in adult education are current work-related. It can also be discussed that already presented practical implementation of adult education- related laws in organizations creates motivational training environment for individuals. Personal communications expressed by the appraisal interviews at the work place should increase the motivation.

The “MOBA” project has separate analysis of motivational aspects which have some quite alike motives of adults participation as it is in Larsen et al information. This will help to reveal Norwegian situation much better. Information from the project categorizes



motives of participation into five groups (see: table 4.6). *Personal development* includes

Table 4.6: Distribution of categories of main reasons for participating in training. Norway. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:29).

Categories of reasons	Percent
Personal development	20
New work situation	15
Carrying out one's work better	49
Had no choice	8
Other reasons	8

such motives as development of the person, improvement of self confidence, enjoyment of learning and interest in subject. *New work situation* category includes such motives as job with another employer, getting a job, change of the work type, promotion. The category of *carrying out work better* includes motives like better work performance and getting of qualification. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001). The category of carrying out the work better has the biggest percent as the main reason for participation. Personal development motives (20 %) gets the second place in this survey. The third place in “MOBA” project survey is new work situation category (15%).

The conclusion of motivational aspects of individual participation in adult education is that the main motives are current work related. This situation is beneficial and for individual and for organization in most of the cases. Of course from organizational point of view the main motives cannot be related with work life outside that certain organization and work places, while individual motives can go outside that frame. But according to the empirical data of Norwegian employees, the main motivational reasons are staying inside the organization and are enriched by expectations for personal development and job security.

### ***Benefits***

The next participation in adult education aspect is benefits. Do they meet individual

expectations and motives presented before? There was presented the classification of individual training benefits by Nordhaug in the theoretical approach of this chapter. Table 4.7 presents information which is based on empirical data from respondents chosen by this author. It shows personal valuations of certain classified training benefits according to earlier presented typology. (Nordhaug, 1985).

Table 4.7: Benefits of the participant from the training. Norway. (Nordhaug, 1985:55).

Types of benefits	Percent
Career: Started in a new job Promotion at workplace	5 12
Job-oriented: Got more interesting work tasks Got more independent work	28 18
Psychological/Motivational: Wish to get more training Wish to read and learn more Became more interested in course subjects	57 51 72
Psychological/Self-esteem: Self-development Higher self-confidence	65 42
Political/ Organizational. Got better in participation of organizational life Got a better position in organizations	12 2
Social: Got new friends	40

Psychological group of benefits is strongest in this case and work related benefits are weaker. This would imply that the main motives discussed earlier are different from actual benefits. But such conclusion cannot be drawn right now, because of the time and differences of the surveys. Nordhaugs' information is from 1980<sup>th</sup>, a decade earlier than other surveys used in this chapter. But it is interesting to look into the empirical part of his theoretical approach. Such benefits as bigger interest in the subject (72%), self-

development (65%), wish to get more training (57%) got the best scores from the survey participants (see: table 4.7). New job and promotion aspect scored low, as well as in motivational aspect of participation. But on the other hand such job related aspects like more interesting work tasks (28%) and more independent work (18%) scored better than other work related aspects. They can be connected with motivational work-related aspects which scored a bit higher. Social and organizational motives also were quite weak or were not mentioned at all. In this case it is interesting to see that social aspect of getting new friends (40%) is stronger than work-related aspects. Organizational benefits for individual are weakest in this survey.

Table 4.8: Usefulness of most recent course. Percentage of participants who responded “very useful” or “useful” to the given statements. Base= all participants who had completed a course during the last 3 years. Norway. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:37)

The course was useful...	Percent
<i>Personal development:</i>	
To develop myself as a person	44
To improve my self-confidence	38
I really enjoyed reading and learning	41
My interest in the subject or topic was stimulated	79
<i>New work situation:</i>	
To get a job with another employer	16
To get a job	22
To change the type of work I do	24
To be promoted	9
<i>Carrying out one's work better:</i>	
To get a (recognized) qualification	76
To perform my work better	68
<i>Other</i>	
To help me get on a future course	35
To meet (new) people	34
To have something to do	11

In the case of information from “MOBA” project (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001) it can be

directly compared if the level of different motives is the same as the benefits aspect. The categories of benefits are quite similar as in Nordhaugs' data, so it is also possible to compare the difference and similarity of data from 1983 and 1999. Information of benefits from participation in adult education courses shows that individual benefits are meeting the level of expectations in the same survey (see: table 4.6 and table 4.8). The category of carrying out the work better gets the first place, the same as at motivational level. Then the categories of personal development and new work situation are taking their places too.

The benefits of qualification and better work performance indicate better job security and show that beneficial level of participation is uniting individual and organizational dimensions. Even if personal development benefits can be considered as second place aspects, the benefit of interest in subject (79%) got the highest number of all benefits in general. The data from the third place benefits indicates that Norwegians are not that interested in other jobs (16%). And promotion benefits has the lowest number of all- 9%. Can it be that promotional system in organization is not related with education and training and other aspects of individual work performance are more important?

Compared to the benefits data from Nordhaugs' research with the "MOBA" project data there are interesting similarities and some differences. Main difference is that data from Nordhaugs' book has less work-related categories and bigger variety of psychological benefits. So the main work-related aspect cannot be compared. But there are similarities at work-related benefits which can be compared in this Norwegian context. The aspects of career, new job and promotion are one of the weakest benefits in both surveys. Social aspects haven't changed much. Personal development category (see: table 4.8) can be compared as quite similar to psychological aspects (see: table 4.7). Information indicated that personal development benefits are strong, but became weaker in 1999 when work-related benefits became stronger and more important.

Skaalvik and Liv Finbak are also discussing some conclusions about educational benefits for adults. They point out that Norway is in the situation when the most adults are in

some way involved in formal learning at the workplace. They emphasize the relation of adult education and work life as the common situation. They are questioning if the increasing demand for this type of education has negative influence to the quality? (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001). The conclusion is that individual training benefits are connected with work life. In general all aspects of formal adult training are mainly work-related in the Norwegian context. All this indicates the strong relation of all factors: education system is providing various opportunities, organization and individual are co-operating for training, and all this is framed in the context of the legal aspects.

### *Organizational expenditure*

There is some information from Norwegian industrial association [Norges Industriforbund] from 1986 about the investments of the Norwegian organizations which can be divided into material and immaterial investments (research, development, company training, investment into new markets). The immaterial investment aspects can be treated as competence resources and connected with competence development at the organization. The results indicate that immaterial investment increased during the years quite fast. The part of it in companies business was 1.9 % in 1983 and 5.7% in 1986. There are differences of this investment in the different types of the companies. The total part of investment in 1986 was 5.7% and these industrial organizations can be considered as those who had the strongest immaterial investment priority: chemical industry- 8.87%; textile and clothing- 6.76%; engineering industry- 6.24%. Other industry type organizations had lower indexes of immaterial investment: wood- 2.01%; metal- 0.83%; minerals- 0.79%; food- 0.60%; construction-0.12%. (Nordhaug, 1987:20-21). The numbers of investment indicates which industry type organizations reacted to the changes and challenges and probably was in bigger need to keep up with the competition. It would be interesting to find data indicating more recent situation in the organizational immaterial investment.

### ***Barrier factors***

Till now only participation sample information was discussed confirming the relation among the main aspects. But there is part of people, employees who are not participating in any kind of adult education. So it is important to take a look into this aspect. It can reveal some problematic issues of adult education system, such as miscommunication between demand and provision, the suitable forms of learning, etc.

Categories of participation obstacles and their results are presented in table 4.9. *Low mastery expectations* barrier includes lack of skills (reading and writing too), language difficulties, not believing in him/herself. The *social insecurity* barrier includes worries about going out alone, unencouragement by the family. The *work commitment* barrier includes problems of leaving the job, difficulties getting time off work. The *lack of energy* barrier includes such reasons as too exhausting, too far to travel, feeling too

Table 4.9: Main barrier factors. Percentage of respondents who indicate each of the factors as the main barrier factor. Base= all non-participants in courses. Norway. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001: 43).

Barrier	Percent
Low mastery expectations	3
Social insecurity	1
Work commitments	4
Lack of energy	23
Lack of time	24
Lack of motivation	28
High costs	5
No suitable course	12
Total	100

old/health reasons. The *lack of time* barrier includes care obligations, time issues in general. The *lack of motivation* barrier includes such issues as no need to learn and no

interest. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001). The main barriers of non-participation in training are the lack of energy, time and motivation. Other barriers are not very strong and this means that cost, work and expectations situation is not very problematic issue in general. But psychological issues are leading in this case raising the question if the aspect of suitable course is connected with this situation and the ability for lifelong learning. 12% of respondents named no suitable course as the reason of their non-participation in training.

#### 4.2.2 Japan

Inoues book about Japanese organization and training is the working paper published informally by the World Bank. This author is analyzing the formation of manpower for economic development in Japan. There is direct connection of his view to contemporary situation in Japan supported with some interesting empirical data from 1980<sup>th</sup>. The information concerns both dimensions, organizational and individual at the same time.

Table 4.10: Index Of Expenditure Per Worker For Education and Training. Japan. (1979). (Inoue, 1985:36)

Size of Company	30-99	100-299	300-999	1,000-4,999	5,000
Index ( % )	20.4	31.2	52.5	61.0	100

The first aspect to present empirical side of the connection between training and two dimensions is related with some financial issues. Information about financial expenditure on training in large and small companies is the first example which shows the differences in providing training opportunities for individuals/employees. (see: table 4.10). There is proportional progress in training expenditure according to the size of the company. Larger companies tend to invest more into education. Of course the situation is like that, because large companies have much better resources for training outside and inside the company.

Information in table 4.11 shows that large and small companies also have tendencies for

different types of training. Large companies have the biggest percent in regular and systematic training types which of course require more resources. Small companies have

Table 4.11: Education and Training Performance In Manufacturing Companies. Japan. (1979). (Inoue, 1985:35).

Type of training	Large company %	Small & Medium %
Regular and systematic	42.0	6.3
Systematic training as necessary	47.8	39.0
Support for individual training	5.6	28.5
Not systematic, obtain by experience in job	3.5	25.3

quite big percent for necessary systematic training and are more supportive for individual training. This might tell that large companies are really aimed towards companies goals and are trying to encourage the training of employees only according to the company needs. An interesting aspect of small companies is much bigger focus on experience at the job than large companies have. This can be explained by financial aspects too. Small companies probably have the tradition to train employees right at the work place while working. This type of training does not require the expenditure of additional resources. It is effective and suitable for small companies.

There also is some information about the methods of training and which of them companies prioritize. Inoue points out that training in the company is not just exact on-the-job training and courses. All activities in the company can be seen as training, like formal and informal meetings, company communications, special magazines, private counseling or even parties and trips organized by the company, etc. (Inoue, 1985). The example of self-development methods for management manpower demonstrates this variety. (see: table 4.12). Non systematic and informal training is important at the self-development of management aspect. Both, small and large companies have the biggest number in these types of methods. Of course small companies have lower percent of participation, but have the same priority of methods as the large ones. Informal training



activities are considered as important to this level of companies manpower and indicate consciousness of self-development in everyday life. The method of educational institutions is scored low in the case of individual level for self-development.

Table 4.12: Methods Of Self-Development for The Management. Japan. (Inoue, 1985 :37)

Methods	Large %	Small& Medium %
Reading special newspapers & magazines, watching TV, etc.	72.2	59.0
Attending various study seminars	78.1	58.0
Having study meeting with other employers in the same business	38.0	36.5
Taking consultations from specialists	32.4	31.9
Attending special educational institutions	10.2	6.5
Others	4.3	2.6
Do not do anything	5.6	11.8

Table 4.13: Methods Of Education And Training For Employees. Japan. (Inoue, 1985:37).

Method	Large%	Small & Medium%
On-the-job education and training	87.0	82.8
Attending study seminar in public training institutions	53.9	41.1
Attending seminar in company	73.5	36.5
Attending study seminar in private training institutions	64.8	28.3
Having study seminar with other companies in the same business	8.4	17.9
Working temporarily in the related companies	15.7	16.2
Attending formal schools (university, special training schools)	29.8	4.6
Others	2.7	0.6
Do not do anything	0.6	1.0

Table 4.13 presents information and gives good overview about the formal training for employees in Japanese companies. This information determines differences of training

possibilities at large and small companies and proves the tendency of on-the-job training. Both types of companies have the biggest number for on-the-job training method. Small companies base this training on experience, while large companies can afford more variety of on-the-job training. One of the examples of on-the-job training is by moving the employees through different parts of large organization, expecting them to train managerial and technical skills. Employees in Japanese companies are expected to have different skills of management and technical aspects, the combination of these is the best for employees and companies productivity. Gospel and Okayama are discussing this example of training inside the company and point out that this system is meant for employees to acquire new skills and is the part of promotion system in the companies. During the organizational and industrial development the system of training emerged. Engineers and technicians were expected to work with technical aspects, production and management, to be able to improve quality and to reduce the cost. (Gospel and Okayama, 1991).

Large companies have stronger focus on companies seminars and training in private institutions. This is probably the financial issue for small companies and that is why they have much lower percent for these methods. Small companies have very low number of formal schools methods: large companies have almost 30% , while small companies just 4.6%. This is the case of training dysfunctions discussed by Nordhaug. Formal education requires employees to leave their work place for a certain period of times. Small companies just cannot afford that, because of the number of employees and recourses. But they are more intended to co-operate in training with other companies in the same business than large companies do.

Japanese training situation at organizational and individual level is mainly connected with on-the-job training. Individuals are encouraged by organization to participate in company-related training and self-development. Of course this is the empirical confirmation that the main skills development is going inside the work life, while education is providing strong general education. This relates to the new organizational learning paradigm presented by Cole and discussed in theoretical part of these

dimensions. The variety of training types, including self-development show that individuals are treated as the important part for organizational success. There is created learning environment in Japanese organizations. But such situation is more in favor to be successful in large organizations.

### **4.2.3 Comparative aspect**

IMD is Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland which publishes a yearly book with the goal to analyze and rank the countries according to their abilities to create and maintain competitiveness of enterprises. In the year 2007 edition 55 countries are included (developing and industrialized). Norway and Japan are among them. I chose some relevant factors from statistical tables to compare two countries in the context of work, education and competition. The information is presented giving the rank and the calculated index of both countries for each factor. The economies are ranked by individual criterion and all criteria are grouped by Competitiveness Factor and Sub-factor. The index represents the evaluation of the factor in each country. The rankings are the standardized value for all criteria, which is called STD value. In most cases the higher value is better and countries are ranked starting with the highest standardized value. In statistical tables the countries are ranked on the global basis from the most competitive to the least competitive. (IMD, 2007). The information from IDM gives the possibility directly to compare some aspects of the situation in Norway and Japan. It also allows to present a certain picture of the countries in the international context. The chosen aspects and data are presented in table 4.14.

According to the indexes and ranks, Norway has strong workers motivation at the companies in the international context as it got ranked in the place 5. Employee training priority is the second strongest index from the chosen aspects (rank 10, index-7.02) indicating that it is an important part of Norwegian work life. Flexibility and adaptability of people facing new challenges aspect can be considered as the weakest in this country from all the chosen aspects (place- 23 and index- 6.75 in the whole 55 countries list). All the other aspects are almost at the same level between the ranked 14-16 places in the list.

So the Norwegian results from this data can be considered as strong and above the average considering the ranked places of the aspects.

Table 4.14: Competitiveness factors in Norway and Japan. 2007. (IMD, 2007).

Factors	Norway-rank	Norway-index	Japan-rank	Japan-index
Worker motivation (in companies is low in your economy/ high in your economy).	5	7.42	10	7.15
Employee training (is not a high priority in companies/is a high priority in companies).	10	7.02	4	7.45
Attracting and retaining talents (is not a priority in the companies/ is a priority in the companies).	14	7.51	22	7.26
Adaptability of companies to market change is low/high.	14	6.82	29	6.11
Flexibility and adaptability of people are low/high when faced with new challenges.	23	6.75	49	5.53
Educational system does not/meets the needs of competitive economy.	15	5.92	26	4.79
University education does not/meets the needs of competitive economy.	16	6.37	43	4.41
Knowledge transfer lacking /highly developed between companies and universities.	15	5.75	23	5.30

Japan has very strong index for employee training priority (7.45) and ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the list. Workers motivation gets lower, but still strong index in the international picture (rank-10, index-7.15). Three aspects are not that strong as two first mentioned, but still can be considered as above the average according to the ranking places- these aspects are attracting and retaining talents (rank-22), knowledge transfer between companies and universities (rank-23), educational system meeting the needs of competitive economy

(rank- 26). The last three aspects can be considered as weak in Japan. The adaptability of companies to the changes (rank-29) is much stronger than flexibility and adaptability of individuals (rank- 49). University education meeting the needs of competitive economy is also surprisingly low (rank- 43), but can be explained by special Japanese view to education and special skills training on-the-job. Yet, in this case companies' adaptability index would be expected to be stronger.

The aspects which directly concern individual dimension are workers motivation and people flexibility/adaptability. Norway has stronger indexes for these aspects than Japan, It is possible to assume that employees of both countries are highly motivated at their work place, because the difference is not that big. But Norwegian society has stronger tendency to cope with the changes. Is there a connection with strong tradition and group-orientation in Japan which keeps the balance between two aspects? Lower level of flexibility, and strong following of traditions and rules? What about adaptability of companies to market changes? Norway has stronger index for this aspect and Japan has lower.

The other aspects concern organizational dimension directly, but of course has influence to individuals too. The aspect of the priority for employee training can be expected to be connected with workers motivation indexes. There is difference inside each country between these two aspects. Stronger workers motivation and lower employee training priority in Norway, while Japans situation is contrary. But both countries are in the general list of these aspects and general conclusion can be considered as strong work motivation and training priority.

The aspect of attracting and retaining talents in the company can be related with the training and financial issues. This can be considered as positive aspect for organization, its productivity and level of competitiveness. Also this can be related with individual dimension because of the possible promotion and rewards system. But both countries have average indexes in the list of this aspect. Japan has stronger index for employee training priority and lower in the talent retainment aspect than Norway. Is there a

connection? Is Japan a little bit more concerned in training the employees on the job than employing “complete” individuals.

The last three aspects are very important in uniting organization and education. These aspects are: education system meeting the needs of competitive economy, university education meeting the needs of competitive economy and knowledge transfer between companies and universities. Norway has almost equal indexes in all these aspects and all are stronger than Japanese indexes. Norwegian situation among education, work life and organization relation is really strong. Japan has an average index in two aspects, except at the university meeting the needs of competitive economy where it has quite low index in the general list. There is wondering if this situation can be connected with presented situation of educational systems in both countries where Norway obviously has stronger foundations and legal frame for adult education. Especially considering strong relation of adult education with the work life in this country? Have these educational foundations led to stronger and more developed relation among work life, education and organization? Can it be considered as the situation more in favor for individual lifelong learning? Or is it just the different work life training strategies in two countries?

### **4.3 Comparative approach**

What comparative aspects can be drawn about organizational and individual dimensions in Norway and Japan? What is the connection of various aspects in these two dimensions which cannot actually be separated. Organization, individual, education and work life are in connection, but is it the same in the context of two different countries? It is important to note that the data used in this chapter do not allow to draw comparative aspects as direct and actual facts. But it helps to describe the situation in these two countries and to reveal the specifics of the interaction.

The theoretical approach of both dimensions showed stronger individual position in the Norwegian context and stronger organizational influence in Japanese context. But the

connection of two dimensions is the fact in both countries. From this point of view training, work life, individual and organization are in the relation in both countries. Just the aspects have different levels of importance. Industrial revolution and organizational development was important period in the history of both countries. The foundations of contemporary organizations and traditions were laid at that period. Positive training outcomes are possible only when all aspects are co-operating. Otherwise training becomes a dysfunction for both dimensions as it was discussed by Nordhaug. His presented organizational and individual benefits depend from both dimensions and concern various aspects, like motivation, learning environment, rewards, etc. (Nordhaug, 1985).

Organization comes before individual in theoretical Japanese context. Training aspects are emerging in organizational dimension first and in general are connected with certain work life. Quality orientation system is developing in the country with the basis of employee training in the frames of organization. This situation was presented by Coles' new quality improvement paradigm in Japanese organizations. (Cole, 1994). The benefits of training are the goals, productivity and efficiency for organization and beneficial system for individual employees (promotion and wage system influenced by training). The part of individual in organization is very important in knowledge creation. So it is really hard to separate two dimensions in this Japanese context.

Educational certification is important for individuals, but it has different meaning for employers. In Japanese context certification signals general knowledge, in Norwegian context it combines general and specific knowledge. It can be even claimed that Japanese employment system emerged with certain traditions for formal general education and specific education in the company. Does the company need own training traditions and definitions? Organizations should make right decisions and choices from the variety of training opportunities and definitions. The orientation of training in the company is the investment with many benefits for organization and individuals. Such benefits like stability, security, flexibility, encouragement of potential, participation are reinforced with this direction and is important in the context of both countries.

Empirical data from both countries about training is mainly connected with the work life and concerns both dimensions in most cases. Empirical approach in the Norwegian context is prioritizing individual dimension, while Japanese context- organizational. The data shows that training in both countries is mainly connected with the current job in a certain organization. Co-operation of individuals and organization is the basis for actual and possible training.

It is not possible directly to compare organizational investment and expenditure on training in both countries because of the data limitations. But empirical information indicates that there is tendency of investment. Training at organizations is important, but there are some differences inside. Japanese companies have the tendency for bigger expenditure on training according to the company size: larger companies- bigger expenditure (see: table 4.10). Norwegian industrial organizations had increased immaterial investment during the 1980<sup>th</sup>, but there are big differences among different types of industries (see: p.101). This situation implies that various organizations have different training and development needs in both countries and leaves open interest to find out the facts about the current situation of this aspect.

Norwegian research information indicates that training to improve qualifications for the current job initiated by employees and employers co-operation is leading in the cases of internal and external courses. But internal training has the highest percent of participation. Training in Norway is influenced by age and educational factors. It is decreasing with the growing age, but increasing together with higher educational level of individual. Motivation and expectations also have the highest percent of work-related answers and even more current-work related. Individuals are much more concerned to perform their work better, than to be promoted. Interesting to see that the main barriers of training participation are psychological and not work-related. (see: table 4.2; table 4.3; table 4.6; table 4.8; table 4.9). This Norwegian situation presents clear difference of aspects interaction from Japanese organization which has on-the-job training and promotion influence as the most important.



The Japanese empirical data has different way starting with organization and moving to individual. Both, organizational and individual dimensions are important in the case of training, both have the chance for decisions and almost all aspects are current work-related as it is in Norwegian context too. Japanese tendency is towards systematic, regular on-the-job training (see: table 4.11). Even if organizations and individuals cooperation is the area of interaction in both countries, Norway appears to have stronger and clearer foundations there. Japanese work life does not have such influential legal frame to implement training. There a lot depends from internal organizational policies and traditions which are not expressed in the same way in Norway. The active interaction context is more visible and implemented in Norway.

All dimensions are connected in Norwegian example. Cultural equality foundations, education system and legal aspects of adult education created this active context. Organizational and individual dimensions are framed by the legal aspects. The Adult Education Law and The Work Environment Law provide the rights for employees training and responsibilities of the employer. The employees' need to keep up with the changes at the work place is defined as the demand and the right by the laws. The practical implementation of these aspects is the appraisal interviews in Norwegian companies which directly concerns employees training and development. This active work life context defined by the legal frame is influencing the participation aspects and presents specific connection between individual and organization. Leading combined training initiative, internal courses priority, current work related motives and benefits are influenced by theoretical and practical frame of Norwegian adult education. The individual needs come first and organization should provide the opportunities for necessary employees development.

In Japan training is the part of organization which is encouraging formal training and self-development by informal learning method to their employees, especially at managerial level. All employees in the Japanese company are expected to have various skills, both managerial and technical. Individuals are important with their knowledge and ideas creation for organization and its success. Training is the key for this and the method

of co-operation. According to the comparative information about Japan in competitive world context these ideas can be supported. (see: table 4.14). Japan has very high priority for employees training in the organization, but lower level of individual motivation in the work life context. Both, companies and individuals have much lower index of adaptability to the challenges that Norwegian society. And Japan has worse developed communication between education system, universities and organization. Norwegian work life and training context are encouraged by practical work of legal aspects which defined a co-operation of individuals and organizations. But this just proves that the background of the aspects is quite alike in both countries, only the levels of importance are different.

The aspect that more employed than unemployed people are participating in work-related training (see: table 4.4) shows that organizational dimension has strong influence for individual decisions. Individual training for work life orientation depends on organizational dimension, because the main training stream is not leaving the current company. The other surprising moment from Norwegian data was the tendency that people with higher education levels have higher percent of participation in adult education. This raises the question about motivation and suitable training methods which helps to combine training and work? It would be interesting to find out what is the situation according to these aspects in Japan, because this seems to be the possible international tendency.

## **Summary**

The strong connection of training, work life, organization and individual was revealed from theoretical and empirical point view in Norway and Japan. The importance of co-operation between these factors is becoming an actual issue in the current situation of both countries. Participation in training is mainly current-work related in both countries and is important for both dimensions. The need to improve various competences and skills is challenging the communication between organizations and education, and the

individual is the one who needs equal opportunities the most. The co-operation of all factors is considered as beneficial for organization and for individual in both countries, but only as long as it concerns current work life and individuals relation to a certain organization.

Most of the empirical information and theoretical discussions concerns formal training showing the importance for education to meet the challenges, demands and to be in communication with other training related factors. Training in both countries is encouraged by organizations giving the main individual training motivations, expectations and benefits which are work-related.

The main difference between Norway and Japan is the priority of organization and individual. Individual goes first in the Norwegian context of training, while organization is in lead in the Japanese context. But this does not diminish the importance of the dimensions, only the tendency of first influence.

## **V. COMPARATIVE DIMENSION**

### ***Topic and competitiveness aspect***

Various aspects to reveal the interaction between adult education and work life in Norway and Japan were presented and discussed in this paper. The final comparative discussion is affected by the limitations of this paper. The literature analysis based research and choices provided limited relevant, recent and directly comparative data material. That is why this discussion should be treated as descriptive and the conclusive aspects are not claimed as actual facts. But discovered aspects of the interaction in the comparative perspective are really interesting and reflects the part of actual situation. Both countries appeared being similar (problems, important issues) and different (solutions, priorities) in the theoretical background of the topic, in the general picture, in the national dimension (culture and education system), and in organizational-individual

dimensions. Hofstede's idea about different minds and common problems seems to be proved in this case. Modern society is dealing with the same international issues and problems facing the process of globalization, but it is done in different ways at national level (more or less effective) and the intensity of these issues differs.

Norway and Japan being strong in international competition are in different industrial positions. As it was presented in general picture of the countries, both are quite alike in the percentage of GNP from the industries, Norway- 37.5%, Japan- 32.2%. Norway appeared as more depended from the import of goods, at the same time having very high part of the national export of goods (mainly natural resources). Japan depends more on invention and high technologies export. (see: table 2.1). What are general competitive abilities of these two developed countries? The picture of the countries expressed by empirical data and Hofstede's research (Hofstede, 2005) suggests that Norwegian industry can be more directed towards adaptability and Japanese towards innovation. This can be caused by the nature of different leading industries and can imply the different nature of training for the work life. But these aspects might be getting the same increasing importance in the context of globalization and changes. Direct comparative data related with competitiveness aspects showed that Norway in general has stronger competitiveness indexes in the training and work life related aspects, like adaptability of companies and individuals, education system and universities meeting the needs of competitive economy, knowledge transfer development between companies and universities. But Japan has stronger indexes for employees training and lower in workers motivation. (see: table 4.14). This is interesting facts concerning the conclusions that competition is the characteristics of Japanese culture, society, education system and work life. Norwegian context has a lot less visible competition and has very strong equality value and equality-based social system.

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

The theoretical background and chosen aspects are important in both countries and have strong influences, but the definitions and understandings are not that similar. Lifelong

learning is the policy of national education systems. But in Norway it is directly related with the work life and personal development, while in Japan the emphasis is given to individual development including various social aspects. Adult education concept is clearly defined in Norway. It is included into education system, national legal frame and has work life needs as one of the main goals. Japanese adult education concept in education system concerns social education and mainly the informal learning aspects. Work life- related adult education has the foundations in the organizational dimension and the leading on-the-job training form in Japan. But the main practical frame of adult education in both countries is the co-operation of individual and organizational dimensions.

### ***Individual and group in cultural perspective***

Culture is the part of spiritual and material human evolution. It is the creation of human which is reflected in the national contexts. The main cultural aspects are the same in various countries, but they are expressed in unique ways which define certain national culture. Individual, group and their interaction are very important cultural factors which can define individualism and collectivism levels, orientations in the societies. Norway and Japan represents two different cultural poles, Western and Eastern. This implies the different thinking structures, traditions, norms, etc. which are important in the international competition. What are these two societies like in the perspective of cultural aspects? This part of national context is important, because it lays certain foundations for the interaction between main aspects.

Norwegian culture is more individual- oriented and has less visible competition inside the society as it was revealed in Hofstede's research (Hofstede, 2005). The equality concept is the foundation for all social aspects there and is not losing its value according to Hellevik's findings (Hellevik, 1996). Even if the new generation is turning more to materialistic value structure, the equality is still stable as the value, but is diminishing in the practical reality expressions. Japan has group-orientation in its culture, but that does not diminish the importance of individual. Some authors indicated that only the definition

of individualism, not the importance is different in Japanese society. Group-orientation makes individual important part of certain groups and creates the safe environment to reach own goals with the group.

There is the pressure on individuals in both countries. Stressful Japanese competition and requirements for individuals to be successful in education in order to get the best start at the work life create the tough environment. But it gets an easier path in the work life and organization-individual-education/training interaction. Can it be that the situation in Norway is that individuals are in bigger competition in society than Japanese, because they are on their own? The answer might be that there probably are only different priorities in two countries. Competition is the part of both societies, education is important and there is an interaction of adult education and work life. The priority in Japan is group first and in Norway- individual first. But both dimensions in two countries are collaborating. This cultural perspective creates the basis for the interaction of all factors and signals certain directions and priorities of the national contexts.

### ***Education system in the context of national and work life related aspects***

Education and the importance of educational certification are international aspects expressed differently in the national contexts. Adult education is the part of general education system from theoretical point of view. Educational aspects are one more important part (as culture) which creates a certain national foundations for the interaction of the main factors.

Japan has very big population number, especially compared with Norway. It is the country of ageing population and low birthrate as it was determined by empirical data in the general picture presentation (see: table 2.1). In general, economical situation seems to be better in Norway, especially when it concerns education (bigger financial state support to education). These aspects might be connected with each other, as lower population number requires smaller division of finances to separate educational factors and individuals. The question is how much this is influencing equality for education in the

society? Can all these mentioned aspects be connected with the difference of public and private education in two countries? The lower levels of education in both countries are in the same position with the leading public education and state support. Starting with upper secondary level and higher education institutions the difference is obvious with the leading private education in Japan and strong public education in Norway. (see: table 3.3; table 3.5). Are these educational traditions influenced and/or are influencing the aspects of population and educational choices, state financing and equality? It is possible to say that everyone in both countries is able to get an equal educational start.

Tertiary education at universities and colleges is the most popular and important according to participation rates in both societies presented by empirical data in the education system chapter(see: table 3.4; table 3.6). It is closely related with the work life and is considered as the preparation for it. This education has great value, but different meanings in the national contexts. The certification from higher education is one of the important references to get started in the work life. It signals certain knowledge and abilities of individual to employer. In the Norwegian context this level of education can be considered as direct preparation for the work life and is getting more practical meaning in the society emphasizing the need of co-operation. There was already mentioned that Norway has stronger index in the case of the knowledge transfer between universities and companies; university education meeting the need of competitive economy (see: table 4.14). Japanese society has specific view on higher education which defines the relation of adult education and work life. Rosenbaum and Takehiko point out that: “The Japanese system is also interesting because it delegates occupational screening to schools, so youths’ competition for jobs occurs primarily inside high schools. Academic achievements are crucial determinants of Japanese youths’ job attainments, both among and within high schools. This makes school-work transitions smooth, stable, and highly predictable.” (Rosenbaum and Takehiko, 1989:115). This creates the special higher education and work life connection in Japanese context which is different from the Norwegian. Higher education is considered as general education which helps to develop general knowledge, skills and learning abilities of individual in Japanese context. Specific knowledge and skills are meant to be trained and learned in the organization, at

the job.

Rosenbaum and Takehiko conclude that it is hard to discuss the selection criteria of employees, especially for comparison of different countries. Employers are using criteria, but what actual aspects are chosen? Educational certificates are the usual part of this criterion in most of the countries. But are the grades, schools, subjects used as important aspects? Grades are very important in Japan, but not in USA for example. So they conclude that different societies can differ in the criteria selection. (Rosenbaum and Takehiko, 1989). So there definitely are different minds, but similar issues. Education, higher education is important in both countries. Educational certification is the reference in work life. But it is crucially important for Japanese individual as it can be seen from theoretical picture of the society. It defines the area of adult education which practically starts at other dimension than educational.

### ***Legal frame and active work life context***

The differences in education system and different education importance imply that interaction of the aspects might be based on different importance of various dimensions. The legal frame is the main theoretical aspect for the interaction and its practical fulfillment in Norwegian context. This factor defines Norway as an example country and expresses adult education and work life connection where laws are used as the tools of practical influence.

The aspects of adult education in Norwegian legal frame are directly connected with the work life, and in general became the main goal now in theory and in practice. The main education laws are including adult education and its importance for work life defining the theoretical background for practical fulfillment of the main goal: equality in education and society. The Adult Education Law and the Competence reform makes Norway as an important example country to reveal the interaction of the main factors. The legal frame defines certain state and its units responsibilities for adult education, individual and organizational rights, and financial aspects. The outcomes of theoretical legal aspects are



the right to get education at all educational levels, educational leave right, the competence documentation possibility. All these aspects concern work life emphasizing the importance of education to continue or go back there. The organizations VOX and NAV are working according to the laws and take care of practical implementation of adult education in society. The main goals are work life concerned. This shows that individual orientation does not mean that individuals are left on their own. The state and the social systems encourage adults and provide various opportunities. This is the reactions expressed theoretically and practically to the changes in the work life and education. This is the context of successful and active adult education and work life interaction.

The financial state responsibilities for the adult education are also defined in the Norwegian laws. The Adult Education Law (Lovdata, 1976) guarantees free compulsory level adult education and financial help to other tertiary education, training and courses. The law is separating the company training, which is defined in the Working Environment Law (Lovdata, 2005a) with the right for education leave. State provides financial help for company- and current work- related adult education too. This company training aspect presented in the laws is showing the connection of education system and work life, because this kind of training usually is organized by educational institutions. In general, Norwegian legal frame concerns two important sides, personal development/social aspects and work life. In practice work life-related goals became the most important, and are defining and influencing the interaction of main factors.

The basic ideas of legal educational aspects are the same in both countries: lifelong learning policies, equality, individual orientation, personal development which include social aspects where work life is one of them. Norwegian context is separating and emphasizing the work life aspects. Japanese legal educational context is not doing that and emphasizes general social role, needs and encouragement. The Fundamental Law of Education (MEXT, no date d) expresses all Japanese educational ideals and goals, which are not very different from the Norwegian. The main concerns of reforms are implementation of lifelong learning concept, educational improvement and

encouragement. There is no such separate part of adult education and work life as it is in the legal Norwegian context. Adult education is the part of the Social Education Law (MEXT, no date f) in Japan, which concerns a lot of social aspects and mainly informal education in the context of lifelong learning. So laws are social encouragement and influence tools. But some examples from different authors suggest that in practice education system in Japan is getting closer with work life in the same sense as it is in Norwegian context (even if it is not directly expressed in Japanese legal frame). For example, higher education institutions are offering variety of courses suitable for adults (which might be caused by the need to attract different educational groups, because of the lower number of younger population). Also it is possible to discuss that lifelong learning concept and policies create more active educational environment for adults in practice. So lifelong learning has an important influence to adult education in Japan too.

### ***Organization and individual***

Organizational and individual dimensions are the main area for practical adult education and work life interaction. It is not possible to separate them in this case, because the co-operation between them is the basis for successful and beneficial work- related training. The legal frame was the main dimension to define Norwegian context. These two factors are the main for Japanese presentation.

The empirical information from organizational and individual dimensions in both countries show that in practice both dimensions are co-operating, because adult education connected with the work life can be beneficial and dysfunctional. The co-operation of individual and organizational dimension helps to create the motivational learning and working environment. But the interaction of adult education and work life should be beneficial for both dimensions. That is why it is hardly leaving the frames of certain organization and current job. Japanese organizations are encouraging on-the-job training; Norwegian context is more in favor for formal adult education in institutions. Traditional long-term education is not the most suitable and prioritized form in the interaction of all factors. It is very important for organizations and individuals to have various training

opportunities which help to combine education and work.

So what is that specific Japanese context in this case? Higher education institutions have certain role and expectations from employers as it was revealed earlier in this discussion. Individuals have to compete and develop all the time, but at organizational level he/she is not left alone as they become part of organizational family which is taking care of the training and encouragement. This is Japanese education system where adult education and work interaction is getting the practical fulfillment at organizational levels in the active work life context. Traditional education is expected to provide high quality general knowledge. Specific training continues in certain organization on-the-job. This indicates certain Japanese organizations culture where training is important part not only for professional development, but personal development and relations inside the organization too. Cole defined it as the new quality improvement paradigm, which emerged in Japanese companies as the reaction to strong international competition (Cole, 1994). Japanese employees are expected to have various skills and the system of interaction is providing educational context for that. Japanese training is connected with the rewards system and promotions more obviously than Norwegian. This is the way of encouragement from organizational side and the way to express the importance of individual.

But this concrete system is different in large and small Japanese companies. Small companies prioritize direct on-the-job training based on experience and less on formal education possibilities. Large organizations can afford more widespread on-the-job and outside-the-job training provided by educational institutions. Yet the main ideas of training at organization in general are important for all types of companies. These ideas are training of specific skills and attitudes of employees to understand and accept certain traditions and goals of that particular organization. This context of the aspects interaction in Japan has the direction towards innovation importance for the industries. The cooperation of individuals and organizations based on group-orientation and training is leading towards innovative ideas and their realization.

Norwegian situation is realizing adult education defined in the legal frame at these two dimensions. The difference from Japan is individual orientation and more direct connection with education systems aspects and laws. Norwegian context emphasizes the rights of individual in the organizational system and relies more on personal motivation and adaptability. It is important to notice now that both countries have stronger indexes for individuals' flexibility and adaptability than the companies' adaptability to the changes (see: table 4.14). The main Norwegian frame of interaction is realized in practice in organization defining different specific situation. The rights of employees defined in the Working Environment Law lead to the appraisal interviews implementation in the work life. The law defines the duties of employers to inform employees about educational needs and opportunities related with the current job. The goal of appraisal interviews is planning of training and concerns its benefits for both sides. Empirical data confirms that initiative for training is strongest in combined employee and employer wishes. At the same time it is indicated that separate individual initiative is stronger than only employers. (see: table 4.2). Individual dimension is the main orientation in the Norwegian context. But co-operation of both dimensions is necessary as is actual as the main practical area of aspects interaction in both countries.

### *Gender equality issues*

The gender equality issues were approached in this paper, but were not in the main focus. Both countries are at very different equality levels in this case, so it is important to take a look to this aspect too. Japan is a highly masculine values oriented culture as it was determined in Hofstede's research. (Hofstede, 2005). Norway, as all Scandinavian countries, is known as strong feminism and gender equality implementation country. In general, gender equality is better in Norway than in Japan. But the results about this aspect in Hellevik's research presented in cultural dimension indicate that gender equality in the work life is still an issue. For example between 1993 and 1995 there was the increase in the view that women are still discriminated in Norwegian work life. The change was from 54% till 59%. (Hellevik, 1996). Women participation in education is increasing in both countries. Yet, Japan has very low indexes of gender equality in the

government and high status positions at the work place. (see: table 2.1). A big part of women in Japan are leaving work life when they have a family and young children, and are very often as part-time and irregular employees. (see: figure 2.2). This might be affecting their training at the job, because organizations are interested to invest into the training of long-term employees. The participation of women in higher education was increasing since 1980<sup>th</sup> in Norway and now it is much higher than participation of men. (see: picture 3.1). This might be the case of equality or the question if women are required more for entering and continuing in the work life. But the difference of women labor force participation in Norway is that it is not that different from men situation.

### *Conclusive comparative remarks*

The lifelong learning definition is uniting the formal and informal learning. This educational policy is one of the main in both countries. It is based on equality and the need for individual development. This is the uniting concept of the interaction of the factors in both countries. All factors of education, adult education, work life, organization and individual are co-operating in the context of lifelong learning in both countries

The authors of “MOBA” project are presenting the model of adult education participation. There are three important aspects in this model: individual motivation, stimulation or pressure from environment, different forms of barriers. And the result of these aspects is participation. (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001). So it can be concluded that there are many various aspects influencing each other in the case of adult education and work life. The interactions among the aspects are causing certain results. Many various frames of collaborations can be defined. One of them was analyzed in this paper revealing the importance of communication, co-operation to create and active interaction beneficial to all parts of the society.

## **Conclusion**

The hypothetical conclusion of this comparative study was clear already in the beginning. Hofstede's idea of different minds, but common problems suggested the pattern how the interaction of adult education and work life in the context of chosen aspects can be revealed. This situation is indicating the issues of the international level. But because of national differences various problems are of different intensity, priority and the ways of solutions.

The literature study was an interesting process to reveal the comparative perspective of two countries. The search for direct and recent available data to present chosen aspects was challenging and not easy. The data limitations directed the nature of comparative generalizations and conclusions defining the descriptive method of presentation. There are described the national contexts of adult education and work life interaction in the comparative perspective with certain indications of the actual situation.

It can be confirmed that adult education and work life is in the interaction in both countries. This co-operation is going on among many other aspects too, because it needs them all for beneficial results. Education and work life are getting closer and their co-operation is required by the changing world and information-oriented societies. Traditional education is definitely challenged by the emergence of lifelong learning in this context. The importance of this concept is the driving force for the interaction. Adult education covers many various social aspects, but empirical data and especially example of the Norwegian legal frame of education confirms that the main area of this education is the work life. Both countries emerged with concrete structure of active training in the work life which is going on mainly in the co-operation of organizational and individual dimensions. It is expressed with different dimensional priorities: the practical implementations of the legal frame in Norway and on-the-job training tradition in Japan.

The surprising results were the facts that adult education is mainly connected with the

current job. Even the motivational reasons of individuals can be acknowledged as more current job than new job related. There were certain expectations that mainly the people who are searching for new job would be interested in adult education. The fact that the new requirements emerging in the work life are skills development, fast adaptation and up-to-datedness can be considered as one of the reasons for that. There is much stronger need for co-operation between organizational and individual dimension than it was expected. The idea was that it probably would be the most important for education institutions and work life to co-operate. But it can be concluded that many different dimensions have to collaborate in the contexts of adult education and work life.

Very surprising aspect revealed in this context was the empirical data from Norway showing that people with higher education levels are in stronger tendency to continue in adult education for the work life. There is an expectation that people would want to raise their educational level and enter or re-enter work life with the help of it. Norway has very positive and active background for that, so empirical data provided surprising results. This concerns the role of traditional education in contemporary society and the necessity of lifelong learning. It implies that lifelong learning concept should enter traditional education from the lowest levels. There is the need for people to learn how to be able to learn during the whole lifespan. The educational policies and reforms are having lifelong learning as one of the main educational aspects in both countries reflecting the need for traditional education to change. The problems of adult education and work life interaction are the same in both countries.

This situation only confirms that adult education and work life interaction requires various learning and teaching methods. Traditional formal education is not enough to cover the variety of needs. It is important to be able to combine education and work, because now the main directions are current-work related. But is this enough for the contemporary individual in the fast changing world? It looks like there is the need for traditional academic and new practical education collaboration.

One method cannot be concluded as the best for adult education. Adults are in very

different situations and one model cannot suite all. Skaalvik and Liv Finbak in their comparative study are also questioning the teaching and working methods of adult education, the content and the way it meets expectations, the way how participants are using their increased competence. They conclude that: “A common challenge for all countries is to provide more equal opportunities to engage in learning at the workplace, irrespective of gender, age and level of education.” (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001:59). The authors of the survey are wondering how the employees with lower levels of education and low participation in adult education are improving their competence. What is done by employers in their cases? Are there alternative ways of learning provided? Is there a need to develop alternative ways of adult learning? (Skaalvik and Finbak, 2001).

There is the need for stronger co-operation of traditional education system and work-related adult education. What organizations and employers are expecting from traditional education and what are their requirements for individuals who are entering work life? Both, general and practical skills are required to be able to keep up with the changes in the work life. Individuals have to accept the lifelong learning concept, which should enter all levels and types of education. It is important to acknowledge the importance of informal learning, as it is done in Norway by the documentation of the competence. And the most important is co-operation of all factors in this changing world. The results of such collaboration should be various educational opportunities for adults in the work life and encouragement for personal and professional development.

There are some questions which emerged during the writing of this paper and analysis of the topic. What is the actual co-operation between universities and work life? What are the actual results of this co-operation? What type of skills work life is expecting more for traditional education to provide in the western culture, general or practical? How individuals are understanding and accepting the need for lifelong learning and continuous personal development, especially connected with the work life?



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