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A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION: THE CONCEPT OF AN ADAPTIVE EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEM

Problem Statement. Globalization, digital transformation, and the increasing complexity of legal regulation present unprecedented challenges to the legal profession. A lawyer's ability to continuously learn and adapt has ceased to be a desirable trait and has become a key condition for professional fitness. In response, most countries with developed legal systems have introduced some form of mandatory Continuing Legal Education (CLE) or Continuing Professional Development (CPD). However, despite the noble goal of maintaining a high level of professional competence, the existing system is increasingly subject to justified criticism.

In practice, the process of professional development often turns into a mechanistic "point-hunting" exercise [1], where the main goal is to meet the regulator's formal requirement rather than to genuinely acquire knowledge and skills. The educational content offered is generalized, failing to consider the narrow specialization, level of experience, and, most importantly, the individual career ambitions of the lawyer. This leads to low engagement and a waste of time and financial resources for both individual specialists and law firms. The current system, based on passive learning methods (mainly lectures), ignores the fundamental principles of adult learning (andragogy), which emphasize the need for self-direction and a practical orientation in the educational process [2].

Thus, a deep chasm emerges between the formal obligation and the real need for strategic, personalized, and measurable professional development.

Purpose of the Article. The purpose of this article is to develop and substantiate a conceptual model for an innovative educational ecosystem, "Legal Compass," which, leveraging the capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) and modern educational technologies, can transform the system of continuing legal education. The task is to propose a model that will allow a shift from a reactive, formalized paradigm to a proactive, career-oriented one, where learning becomes a personalized, high-quality, and measurable tool for achieving the strategic goals of every lawyer and law firm.

Analysis of Recent Studies and Publications. The ineffectiveness of traditional CLE/CPD models is a subject of lively debate in academic and professional circles. Researchers such as Schein point out that many MCLE (Mandatory CLE) programs are pedagogically outdated and lack a proven empirical correlation with an increase in professional competence [3]. Comparisons are often drawn with the Continuing Medical Education (CME) system, which is considered more flexible, practice-oriented, and based on evidence-based data [4]. This underscores the need for reform in the legal education paradigm.

In parallel, the field of educational technology (EdTech) is actively developing. Platforms like Lawline and the Practising Law Institute (PLI) have offered the market

a "Netflix for lawyers" model, providing access to a vast library of courses by subscription. Their advantage is accessibility and flexibility, but they create a "paradox of choice" and do not solve the problem of deep personalization of the learning trajectory [5].

Moreover, research in adjacent labor markets confirms that the shift towards valuing practical skills over formal education is a global trend; as M. Bone, E. G. Ehlinger, and F. Stephany demonstrate in their work, the market for high-tech professions is already witnessing a clear transition to 'skill-based hiring, where tangible AI competencies command a significantly higher wage premium than university degrees, indicating a fundamental re-evaluation of professional value in favor of measurable capabilities [6]. However, these models are closed corporate systems, not adapted to the specifics and regulatory requirements of the open legal market.

The theoretical basis for rethinking approaches to lawyer training is provided by the works of Malcolm Knowles, the founder of the modern theory of andragogy. His principles emphasize that adult learners are self-directed, oriented towards solving specific tasks, and need to understand the rationale for learning [2]. The existing CLE/CPD system directly contradicts these principles. At the same time, Donald Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model, which includes four levels (reaction, learning, behavior, results), provides a methodological framework for measuring the real impact of educational programs, going beyond a simple count of hours [7].

Thus, despite the criticism of the existing system and the emergence of separate technological solutions, the problem of creating a comprehensive, open ecosystem for the legal profession that synergistically combines deep AI personalization, guaranteed content quality, and a measurable impact on careers remains unsolved. This article is dedicated to addressing this very problem.

Main Results. To solve the outlined problems, a conceptual model of the educational ecosystem "Legal Compass" is proposed, based on three key principles: hyper-personalization, guaranteed quality, and measurable results. This is not just a course aggregator, but an intelligent partner that accompanies a lawyer throughout their career. Let's examine its structure in more detail.

1. The System's Core: The AI-Powered "Career Navigator". The technological heart of the platform is an intelligent system that solves the problems of the "paradox of choice," low engagement, and proving ROI. Its operation consists of several stages.

The first stage is the creation of the lawyer's "digital twin". During registration, the user undergoes an interactive interview with a chatbot, where they specify not only formal data (specialization, experience) but also long-term career ambitions ("become a firm partner," "lead an intellectual property practice," "move to an in-house sector," "qualify for work in international arbitration"). With the user's consent, the system can analyze their public digital footprint (Linkedin profile, scientific publications, conference presentations) to objectively assess their current skill level (hard & soft skills).

The second stage is the generation of a personalized learning trajectory. Based on the "digital twin," the AI compares the user's profile with benchmark profiles of specialists who have already achieved the user's stated goal. Machine learning algorithms

identify specific "gaps" in knowledge and skills. For example, for a lawyer aspiring to become a partner, the system might identify a lack of skills in business development, financial management, or leadership. Based on this analysis, the system generates not a static list of courses, but a flexible, dynamic "career playlist." This playlist consists of different content formats (micro-modules, video lectures, interactive simulators, workshops, articles) from various providers. Each recommendation is accompanied by an explanation of which specific gap it closes and how it brings the user closer to their career goal, which is fully consistent with the principles of andragogy [2].

The third stage is the visualization of progress and measurement of impact. The user has access to a "Career Impact Dashboard." This tool visualizes progress in filling "skill circles" in real time. It allows for anonymous comparison of one's competence level with the market average for their current or desired position. For corporate clients (law firms), the dashboard aggregates team data, allowing HR and L&D departments to see how employee training affects the achievement of business goals, for example, by increasing the win rate in a particular practice or improving client feedback. This is a direct implementation of the third and fourth levels of the Kirkpatrick model [7], shifting the conversation from "hours spent" to "results obtained".

2. The Content Universe: A Three-Tiered System of Quality and Relevance. The value of the ecosystem is determined not only by technology but also by the quality of the educational content. "Legal Compass" addresses the problems of quality control and competition with free content through a three-tiered model.

Level 1: Aggregation with Premium Partners. The platform operator conducts a rigorous selection of educational providers (universities, training centers, leading law firms). Only those whose quality, methodology, and reputation are confirmed are admitted to the platform.

Level 2: Proactive Trend Creation. Unlike passive aggregators, the ecosystem has its own analytical department that uses predictive analytics to forecast future "hot" topics in jurisprudence (e.g., legal regulation of AI, space law, cybersecurity). Based on these forecasts, the platform operator holds open competitions and engages top experts to create exclusive "Compass Originals" content, which becomes the platform's flagship and stays ahead of market demand [8]

Level 3: Multi-Layered Quality Assurance Protocol. Every educational product undergoes verification. This includes a transparent system of ratings and reviews from the community based on clear criteria (practicality, relevance, quality of delivery). The best courses receive a "seal of quality" from an independent expert council composed of recognized specialists in the relevant fields of law. A dynamic monitoring system automatically tracks courses with outdated information or low ratings, sending them for updates or removing them from the platform. Thus, the platform's value lies not in the information itself (which is often free), but in its structuring, verification, personalization, and automatic tracking for CLE/CPD purposes.

3. User Experience: Gamification, Community, and Coaching. To overcome market inertia and maximize user engagement, the ecosystem uses modern approaches to interaction. This includes interactive and flexible formats: microlearning (short 5-15 minute modules, ideal for busy professionals), practical simulators (virtual court

hearings or negotiations where an AI acts as an opponent and provides instant feedback), as well as elements of gamification (points, badges for mastering skills, leaderboards) to increase motivation.

An important element is the formation of elite professional communities. Users get access to closed groups to discuss learning materials with course authors and colleagues, which promotes networking and deeper knowledge acquisition. For premium users and corporate clients, sessions with professional career coaches are available to help adjust the learning trajectory and achieve goals faster.

Scientific Novelty. The scientific novelty of the proposed model lies not in the application of individual technologies, but in its conceptual and systemic uniqueness for the field of legal education. The novelty is formulated in the following aspects:

1. Substantiation of a paradigm shift in continuing legal education: from a reactive, mandatory model ("must earn N points") to a proactive, career-oriented model ("I want to develop Y skills to achieve goal Z"), based on the principles of andragogy

2. Development of a comprehensive ecosystem model that synergistically combines:

- AI for deep individualization of learning trajectories based on an analysis of career goals, not just subject interests.

- Predictive analytics for the proactive formation of educational content that anticipates market demand

- A multi-layered quality verification system that solves the problem of trust in a decentralized educational environment.

3. Introduction of the "measurable result" concept (Measurable ROI) into legal education through the "Career Impact Dashboard". This allows for the empirical evaluation of the effectiveness of training for the lawyer and the law firm, relying on recognized methodologies like the Kirkpatrick model, and shifting the discourse from the plane of "time spent" to the plane of "competencies acquired and their impact on business".

At the same time, the implementation of such a system carries certain risks that require attention. First and foremost is the problem of algorithmic bias. An AI trained on historical career path data may reproduce existing gender or social stereotypes [9]. To minimize this risk, mechanisms for continuous auditing and correction of algorithms must be implemented. A second challenge is data privacy. The system will collect a significant amount of sensitive information about users' career plans and skills, which requires the highest standards of cybersecurity and a transparent data management policy [10]

Conclusions. The conducted research has demonstrated that the existing system of continuing legal education is largely outdated, formalized, and ineffective. It meets neither the modern demands of the market nor the principles of adult learning, turning an important process of professional development into a burdensome obligation.

In response to this challenge, a conceptual model of the educational ecosystem "Legal Compass" was developed and substantiated. This model, unlike existing solutions, offers a comprehensive approach that synergistically combines technological, methodological, and organizational innovations. The use of artificial intelligence to create hyper-personalized career trajectories, proactive content formation based on predictive analytics, a multi-layered quality assurance system, and the introduction of tools to measure the real impact of learning allow for a fundamental shift in

the approach to continuing professional development. The model shifts the focus from the formal accumulation of points to the achievement of strategic career goals, turning learning into a lawyer's main competitive advantage.

The implementation of such an ecosystem has significant practical potential. For lawyers, it means accelerated career growth and increased competitiveness in the market. For law firms, it means transforming training costs into a transparent and measurable investment in human capital. For regulatory bodies, it means ensuring not formal, but real compliance with standards of professional competence, which will ultimately contribute to improving the quality of justice and legal services as a whole.

Prospects for further research include developing a methodology for detecting and minimizing algorithmic bias recommendation systems for lawyers, conducting empirical studies on the effectiveness of personalized learning trajectories compared to traditional methods, and analyzing the possibilities of adapting the proposed model to different national legal and educational systems.

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Summary

Shamov O. A. A competency-based approach in continuing legal education: The concept of an adaptive educational ecosystem. – Article.

Introduction. The mandatory continuing legal education system in many jurisdictions is facing a crisis of legitimacy and effectiveness, having devolved into a formal "point-gathering" process that fails to meet

both the dynamic demands of the market and the individual career needs of professionals. Existing models, from traditional seminars to "Netflix for lawyers" online platforms, suffer from a lack of personalization, an absence of quality assurance, and an inability to measure the real impact of training on professional competence. **Purpose.** The purpose of this article is to substantiate and develop a conceptual model for an innovative educational ecosystem, "Legal Compass," which utilizes artificial intelligence technologies to transform the process of professional development from an obligation into a proactive tool for strategic career growth. **Methods.** The research is based on a systematic analysis of scientific publications, a comparative analysis of existing educational models (CLE/CPD, corporate platforms), and modeling methods to construct the proposed ecosystem. The theoretical framework is supported by the principles of andragogy and Donald Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model. **Results.** A comprehensive ecosystem model is presented, the core of which is an AI-powered "Career Navigator" that creates hyper-personalized learning trajectories based on an analysis of a lawyer's career goals and existing skills. The model includes a three-tiered content quality assurance system and a "Career Impact Dashboard" for measuring the ROI of training. **Conclusion.** The proposed ecosystem model enables a paradigm shift from reactive "learning for points" to proactive "learning for a career." The implementation of such a system can enhance the competitiveness of lawyers, transform law firm expenditures into strategic investments, and ensure a genuine, rather than formal, improvement in the quality of legal services.

Key words: continuing legal education (CLE), continuing professional development (CPD), legal education, artificial intelligence (AI), educational technology (EdTech), personalized learning, ecosystem approach, career development.

Анотація

Шамов О. А. Компетентнісний підхід у безперервній юридичній освіті: концепція адаптивної освітньої екосистеми. – Стаття.

Вступ. Система обов'язкового підвищення кваліфікації юристів у багатьох юрисдикціях переживає кризу легітимності та ефективності, перетворившись на формальний процес «накопичення балів», що не відповідає ані динамічним вимогам ринку, ані індивідуальним кар'єрним потребам фахівців. Існуючі моделі, від традиційних семінарів до онлайн-платформ за принципом «Netflix для юристів», страждають від браку персоналізації, відсутності гарантій якості та неможливості виміряти реальний вплив навчання на професійну компетентність. **Мета.** Метою статті є обґрунтування та розробка концептуальної моделі інноваційної освітньої екосистеми «Юридичний Компас», яка використовує технології штучного інтелекту для трансформації процесу підвищення кваліфікації з обов'язку на проактивний інструмент стратегічного кар'єрного зростання. **Методи.** Дослідження ґрунтується на системному аналізі наукових публікацій, порівняльному аналізі існуючих освітніх моделей (CLE/CPD, корпоративні платформи), а також на методах моделювання для побудови запропонованої екосистеми. Теоретичною основою слугували принципи андрагогіки та модель оцінки ефективності навчання Дональда Кіркпатрика. **Результати.** Представлено комплексну модель екосистеми, ядром якої є «Кар'єрний навігатор» на базі ШІ, що створює гіперперсоналізовані навчальні траєкторії на основі аналізу кар'єрних цілей та наявних навичок юриста. Модель включає трирівневу систему гарантій якості контенту та «Панель кар'єрного впливу» для вимірювання ROI навчання. **Висновки.** Запропонована екосистемна модель дозволяє здійснити парадигмальний зсув від реактивного «навчання заради балів» до проактивного «навчання заради кар'єри». Впровадження такої системи здатне підвищити конкурентоспроможність юристів, перетворити витрати юридичних фірм на стратегічні інвестиції та забезпечити реальне, а не формальне, підвищення якості правових послуг.

Ключові слова: підвищення кваліфікації юристів, безперервний професійний розвиток, юридична освіта, штучний інтелект, освітні технології (EdTech), персоналізоване навчання, екосистемний підхід, кар'єрний розвиток.

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