

EDU WORLD 2022**Edu World International Conference Education Facing Contemporary World Issues****THE ADULT EDUCATION ROLE IN THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN AGES CATEGORIES**

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Abstract

From the need for educational improvement and completion to professional reorientation or meeting the new standards imposed for keeping the job or the position already acquired, we witness during the process of adult education to a series of effects of socialization, materialized in new forms of emotional integration between different age categories. As can be seen, following the study, it was found that teaching activities and relationships within the bachelor's degree level, the form of distance learning, as well as the master's degree level - where student groups contain a high degree of heterogeneity in terms of age-, determines the appearance of a climate of understanding and tolerance. The differences of opinion and values do not disappear, they continue to acting, but contrary to the distancing effect that these differences determine in society, this time we see the integration into the group of individuals who is at significant distances in terms of age. This integration, seen as a approach, leads to the establishment of a beneficial organizational climate, based on warm human relations and last but not least, we can see the establishment of long-term relationships, which go beyond the institutional relationship on the basis of which they were born.

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary language of education sciences, the construct called adult education entered after 1960, when the research on this issue have expanded.

The idea of adult education, especially related to the need for advanced training, vocational reorientation, universities for the elderly, is gaining more and more ground in the field of sociology of education and more. The adult education is already a concept that encompasses a complex process from a psychological, social, cultural and economic perspective.

From an etymological point of view, is accepted the idea that the word adult (adultus - lat; adule-fr) he refers to an organism that has completed its growth and has reached the stage of reproduction, and regarding the human individual, a person who has reached maturity, as a stage of life.

From a psycho-sociological point of view, this stage-maturity- includes the maturation of physical, intellectual, moral, social and emotional development, all of which required a reporting to two open systems: work and life, as reference indicators.

Based on these two indicators we can measure the education, a process based on which the individual reaches to the stage of adult - he matures. Hence result the need for the capacity to integrating of education through lifelong learning, in the social need of the adult to respond to the challenges of social change.

2. Problem Statement

The science of adult education was expressed at a certain point in history through the concept of andragogy (gr. Andros - man; ago - lead), as an alternative to the phrase "adult pedagogy". Later, there were criticisms of the term "andragogy" because it is arbitrated only in the education of men, not also of women. Thus, a consensus has been reached on the use of the phrase "adult education", because this covers the issues related the process of the adult education (Rathner & Schier, 2020).

For a long time it was considered that the education of the human individual is achieved/finalized during childhood. Then it was found that the industrialization, through the changes it has triggered on human life, has led to the extension of his education beyond the age of childhood (Wozniak, 2020).

The university education, as a process, since the last part of the 19th century has undergone an unprecedented development, and it is in line with the changes brought about by industrialization, demonstrating the need to continue the educational process in adulthood.

The definition of education today can be seen as: "transformation of the psychological consciousness of the individual"; "to complete and promote changes in human behavioural organization"; "changing the meaning of human experience"; "changing the positive value in human rational behaviour"; "process of assimilation and practice of information, values and actions specific to man" (Vințanu, 1998). The definition of education today can be approached from the aspect of the transformation of the individual's consciousness, its contribution to the organization of socio-human behavior, its involvement with regard to the meaning of human experience, the change in positive valences of rational human behavior, as well as the process of internalizing information, values and actions specifically human (Vințanu, 1998).

There are four "founding currents" in adult pedagogy:

- 1) Behaviorist, focused on the behavior of the individual, as a source of pedagogy of objectives and cult of tools and methods of controlling progress;
- 2) Humanist and personalist, based on the trainer-format relationship;
- 3) Critical, aiming at the function of an instrument of the formation of social and political criticism;
- 4) Constructivist, having as its core the learning processs (Sacaliuc, 2012).

2.1. The objectives of adult education

The objectives pursued with priority in adult education can be systematized as follows (Patterson, 2018):

a. Awareness that the concept called adult education is the set of organized processes of education, content, training methods with a role in prolonging or completing the initial education.

Finality:

- Developing skills, enriching knowledge, and getting used to new guidelines;
- Human assistance for reintegration.

b. Capturing the global character of the whole educational process of adults, as a component part of the permanent global education.

Finality:

- Restructuring and improving existing education systems.

c. Identifying the symbiosis of the continuous interaction between the action and the reflection of the adult individual.

Finality:

- Approaching the adult individual in double aspect: object/subject of one's own education.

At the International Conference in Paris (1985) it was concluded that adult education has a dual purpose, this idea being developed in specialized studies, completed in 2020 (Țurcanu & Guțu, 2020):

- Personality development;
- Promoting integration into social, economic and cultural life.

In order to achieve this dual purpose, it is necessary to achieve objectives such as:

- Professional development / retraining;
- Developing creative capacity and capitalizing on opportunities to participate in cultural life.

The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Education (1997) in the article of Șoitu (2017), aims to:

- The support given to individuals in their effort to give a higher meaning to their life; this support refers to an educational system that relates to factors such as: age, gender equality, language, culture, economic differences, etc.;

- Creating and perfecting a set of formal/non-formal learning processes, in which the adult individual develops his skills, completes his knowledge and improves professionally or reorients himself according to personal and societal needs;

- Training of informed, specialized citizens who have the ability to contribute to the economic and social development of the society to which they belong, the aim being both to alleviate poverty and to preserve the environment;

- The development of autonomy and a sense of responsibility is an objective that aims to promote coexistence and tolerance as participatory models in social life.

In recent decades, adult education has evolved and diversified in both every day and professional life.

The social change, the evolution of society on multiple levels, has led to the emergence of new demands. These new requirements require the individual to update their previously internalized knowledge, which calls for the acquisition of new skills and the improvement of existing ones. Beyond pedagogy and andragogy, heutagogy comes into play. Heutagogy refers to the study of self-determined learning. Under these conditions, the role of the state as well as other types of civil society organizations is amplified (Glassner & Back, 2020).

In the last decades, the advancement of the Internet and the continuous progress of information technologies have made it possible for people to engage in online learning as well, which is oftentimes preferred to traditional face-to-face education (Bîrsanu, 2020).

Given that basic education for all individuals presents itself as an opportunity to realize its potential both individually and collectively, we can say that the new concept of adult education integrates existing practices in the functioning of formal and non-formal systems (Davydova, 2020).

The aim is to develop the creativity and flexibility of each social actor, the ultimate goal being the expression of the general good.

2.2. The normativity of the concept of adult education

The concept of adult education has certain normative characteristics, presented by the author Morgan (2019):

- i. The globalism together with continuity, with reference to the fact that adult education and not only, act on it throughout life, permanently; phrases such as "continuing, recurrent education" or "second chance" education appear in use; at the same time, with regard to a number of purposes, conceptual constructs such as "community development" and "community education" appear, promoting the principle that education is in the best interests of the community;
- ii. The bare minimum: all human beings need a minimum of education in order to understand their needs and social responsibility in order to integrate into community life;
- iii. The structural freedom: the opportunities to be educated outside the traditional educational institutions as well;
- iv. The utility: provides the functionality of the educational act, with reference to the baggage of information on which the individual can rely to identify optimal solutions in solving individual and collective problems;
- v. The equity: refers to the fact that the educational offer is mandatory to be addressed equally to all individuals.

Given the fact that adults are engaged in the effort of continuity of the educational process, the question of motivating this effort is raised. A survey realized in 1983 survey by Boshier and Collins (1983) found six motivating factors:

- i. The need to establish new social contacts, in order to conquer a higher social status;
- ii. Desire or need to progress professionally;
- iii. The need to get out of the routine, even in order to develop new concerns;
- iv. The desire to be involved in community activities;
- v. The need to rise to higher social expectations, both in the formal and informal organizational environment;
- vi. Intrinsic motivation related to curiosity and spiritual enrichment.

3. Research Questions

The research question that is the object of the present material refers to the identification and description of the motivating factor/factors of the activity of continuing the educational process in adult life, to the persons from Romania, who study in state and private faculties, to the bachelor's degree level-the form of distance learning, as well as the master's degree level.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose goal is to demonstrate that the bachelor's degree level-the form of distance learning, as well as the master's degree level in education offers new opportunities for socialization between age categories.

The hypothesis from which it was based is that age-related heterogeneity offers a wide range of interesting aspects, which pave the way for a series of socialization paths between generations (in to bachelor's degree level- the form of distance learning and master's degree level, students with significant differences in age, come to relate on multiple levels, a situation that we encounter exclusively in these forms of the educational process; of course, we can address this issue in the workplace in the organization, but the number of participants is significantly lower).

In order to achieve the general objective imposed by the research question, we consider the following approach to be representative (Hoggan & Kloubert, 2020):

- i. The first objective pursued with priority in adult education: the overall action of the organized processes of education, contents, training methods, with a role in prolonging or completing the initial education, which aims at developing skills, enriching knowledge, adapting to new orientations, in order to reintegrate into society, in accordance with the new requirements imposed by the new statute, to which the individual aspires;
- ii. Professional development/retraining - an objective set at the 1985 Paris Conference, which leads and promotes the integration into social, economic and cultural life.
- iii. At the same time, it is necessary to refer to one of the aims of adult education, contained in the Hamburg Declaration in 1997 (<https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/confintea/adult-education-hamburg-declaration-agenda-future>):
- iv. The creation and/or improvement of a set of formal/non-formal learning processes, in which the adult individual develops his/her skills, complete his / her knowledge and improves professionally or reorients according to his/her personal and societal needs.

In Romania, the form of the bachelor's degree level- the form of distance learning, and the master's degree level education was born in response to:

- i. The need to enrich the knowledge specific to a field of activity already acquired in the educational process, but which requires an adaptation to the new situations that appear continuously in the society;
- ii. The individual who holds a position on the basis of graduating from a faculty, needs to add new information related to the progress made in science and technology in that field, to be up to date with modernization and development, and to be able to occupy a new status in that field, or even within the organization in which it operates; for this, the mature individual, even over 50 years old, attends master's degree courses on the profile of the field of activity; completing the knowledge in adult education, is one of the first objectives pursued with priority in adult education;
- iii. The need for professional retraining, imposed by the new occupations on the labor market, which is an objective that is the foundation of integration in the social, economic and cultural life; vocational retraining involves, in most cases, a reorientation towards a different field of activity than the previous one, or even more, a reorientation towards a new profession, depending on the socio-economic requirements of the labor market - many people who have worked a certain profession, they have to change their occupational profile, because we are dealing with job restructuring, the profession has narrowed its area, or due to technical progress it has disappeared; of course, this appears to be a major change in the life of the individual, the efforts related to time, energy and accumulation of new knowledge are significant, so the society is obliged to give him full support to complete the action, especially since the results do not they will have exclusive effect at the individual level, but will extend to the whole society, in response to its global demands;
- iv. The need for the development of a set of learning processes as well as the improvement of the existing one, within which the adult individual has the opportunity to develop the skills used previously and on the basis of undergraduate courses in the form of bachelor 'degree to distance learning or master's degree, to complete them with others us, in order to improve professionally or, as mentioned above, in order to orient themselves in the career (Khadka, 2020).

A first cause specific to Romanian society is the fact that most of these individuals who choose voluntarily or by coercion (for fear of not losing their job) to pursue a course of study at an advanced age, make a significant effort because they are employed or is constantly looking for a job, for the need to be paid; it should be noted that the Romanian state does not provide financial support: studies in the form of distance learning education are not funded by the state, so bachelor's students or master's students (it should be noted that master's students benefit, in small numbers, from the tuition subsidy) pay the tuition fee, an action that in Romania, compared to the average salary and the cost of living, is difficult to bear.

Another cause that is not negligible and that determines adults to start a study cycle is the fact that certain professions that in the past did not require higher education, in this context require such an educational level: we are talking here about the professions of educators, teachers, or accountants. The pedagogues who worked in the past in the 1st cycle of the gymnasium, grades 1-4, but also those from the

nurseries and kindergartens, were employed on the basis of graduating from the specialized high school, with a baccalaureate diploma. Currently, in order to hold these positions, but especially in order to stay in office, these people, generally over 40 or 50 years old, have had to enroll in college, in the form of education by distance learning, where the program of two tutorials/semester, both in onsite and online format, allows them to cope with the work schedule. Of course, we are also talking about continuing your studies at master's degree level, in order to complete your university studies. The second example mentioned above, the accountants, who in the past, after completing high school, were required to take a three-month profile school, now have to follow the same path as pedagogues, educators and teachers, of course within the accounting profile. They are in the same situation, in terms of time and effort, being also employed in the field of profile positions.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that these students have an impressive experiential background, which makes the debates particularly interesting, rich and prolific. Between the experience gained and the new knowledge in the field, a unit is created that acts as a link between the need to integrate students and the social need.

Another characteristic of the study at bachelor's degree of distance learning and master's degree is related to age, especially attitude, experience, cognitive emotional behavior (Kara et al., 2019).

5. Research Methods

The method applied in researching the behaviour manifested in the educational process of the adult population focused in this paper on direct and participatory scientific observation (the researcher being a teacher and having assigned disciplines during each year of study in each of the two groups), on the background holistic observation.

Area:

- Students of the Faculty of International Relations and Administration of UNIVNT:
 - o Public administration – bachelor's students of distance learning
 - o MOSP – master's students

In the research method, the techniques used consisted of:

- Presentation of course information;
- Debate within the seminar topics;
- conducting holistic observation on multistage sampling over a period of three or two years, as appropriate, of each of the 15 cohorts (8 to master's degrees level and 7 to bachelor degrees level) depending on the study cycle.

Stage I: two distinct lots - lot no. 1 (number of undergraduate bachelor's students of distance learning) and lot no. 2 (number of master's students), each at the beginning of the series (year I).

The study was conducted on a number of 700 people, over a period of 9 years, between 2011-2020, at the "Nicolae Titulescu" University of Bucharest, in the specializations mentioned, the series being observed each for a period of three years – bachelor's degree level and 2 years – master's degree level. The observation took place before the Covid pandemic 19.

The group of 700 persons who were the subject of the research method was divided into two samples according to age group category, characterized as follows:

Age: 19-45, 46-55 and over

Sex: M / F

Environment: urban / rural

Marital status: married, unmarried, divorced, widowed, cohabiting

Religion: believer / atheist

Employment situation: employed, without a job

Children: with children, without children

Political affiliation: yes, no

Separatists depending on age:

19-45 / 45-≤56

Stage II: highlighting the results in two distinct groups, compared to the situation existing at time A (beginning of the study cycle) and B (end of the study cycle), on the initial age categories (19-45, 45-≤56), merged and centralized.

The aim of the research in question was to identify the differences in the type of relationship between age categories, with reference to two defining moments: A- the beginning of the study cycle (semester I, first year of bachelor's degree at distance learning level and first year of master's degree level) and B - end of the cycle of studies (third year of bachelor's degree at distance learning level and second year of master's degree level).

It should be mentioned that each generation of graduates was evaluated according to the number of those who completed their studies, up to the graduation diploma. Those who dropped out during their studies were eliminated from the calculation (at the end of each academic year), because at the beginning A was part of the staff.

At the beginning/end of each study cycle, the results were merged with the previous ones, and finally the situation is presented according to the Table 1.

Table 1. The difference in the type of relationship between the reference moments

A - the beginning of the study cycle				B - the end of the study cycle			
19-45		45-≤56		19-45		45-≤56	
Close to those aged between 45-≤56	Distant from those aged between 45-≤56	Close to those aged between 19-45	Distant from those aged between 19-45	Close to those aged between 45-≤56	Distant from those aged between 45-≤56	Close to those aged between 19-45	Distant from those aged between 19-45
140	560	250	450	486	214	650	50

This qualitative study, based on participatory scientific observation, consisted in its own way in monitoring the reactions to the challenges launched in the debates, on the background of the disciplines Sociology, Demography, Communication, public relations and protocol. The topics discussed involved, among other things, the domestic aspect, such as family, couple, friendship, values, traditions, etc. These very topics were the link that allowed a deeper knowledge of the students between them and, implicitly, an acceptance based on common elements of each category age group from the other, which ended

closely between people of different ages, mutual aid on different levels and establishing long-term relationships.

6. Findings

First of all, it should be noted that according to the hypothesis from which it was started (which is explained in the present study) and which consists in the idea that age-related heterogeneity offers a wide range of interesting aspects, which paves the way for a series of ways of socialization between generations, this is confirmed at the end of the study.

Regarding the first objective mentioned in this paper, it has been met. It should be noted that this first objective aimed at the overall action of organized education processes through adapted methods of vocational training, with a role in extending or completing the initial education, in order to meet the requirements of the new statute, to which the individual aspires.

The second objective proposed to be achieved and mentioned in the present study refers to the need for professional development/retraining, in order to integrate into social, economic and cultural life, an action which, as explained above, is in fact the motivation to basis of adult education. Therefore, we can conclude that this goal has also been achieved.

We can say that the research hypothesis was validated, and the purpose of the research was achieved: between moment A and moment B, the differences in the type of relationship were confirmed: the reserved attitude, sometimes even rejection, was replaced by warm, close relationships. The phenomenon born after a period of group socialization, it was materialized in acceptance, mutual aid and long-term communication.

It is very important to mention that the decision of the adult individual to continue his studies in order to improve himself, as well as the idea of reorienting himself professionally, appears suddenly not only as a need for new social requirements or as a need of accumulation and deepening of new information in the specialized field, but also as a socialization solution, with the demonstrated purpose of solidarity between individuals, which in this research leads us to new possible collaboration solutions on multiple levels.

7. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study and described above, it can be concluded that adult education, as part of the whole educational process, is not only beneficial but also necessary. The need for professional reorientation, as well as the need for improvement, complement the need for socialization between generations that occupy the same social space and more.

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