

**"Alexandru Ioan Cuza University", Iasi,
Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences**

**ADULT EDUCATION IN ROMANIA.
BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

Scientific coordinator:

Phd. Professor Laurențiu ȘOITU

Phd Student:

Magda-Elena BUTNARU SAMOILĂ

Iasi, 2012

ARGUMENT

It has often been said that adult education is a field with a long-standing past, but with a far too short history. Beyond the restrictive character of this assertion, we notice the obviousness of this state of things, relying on our own research endeavours. At a first glance, the theory can easily be refuted. It would be enough to think of Plato's *Laws* or the pedagogy of our Christian forefathers in order to establish the roots of a differentiated education. And if we are to continue presenting the arguments which invalidate the existence of a *short history* of adult education, we can speak of Comenius, who identifies successions of stages in individual development, or Gabriel Compayre, the French historian who differentiates child education from adult education, the first resource when reaching maturity.

What would be the result of a synthetic analysis of the manifestations of this field in Romania? Historic research validates the existence of an interest in adult education, registering the activities of some Romanian scholars starting with the 16th and 17th centuries. Many works of Romanian pedagogical historiography mention the formalised actions of adult education, more or less institutionalised or systematised, but these concerns are rather isolated, belonging exclusively to this field. Nowadays, talking about the adult education in Romania represents a necessary yet laborious undertaking, and the assertion becomes certainty as the studies in the field are advancing. We believe the ideas, theories and practices that we identified in the Romanian educational literature, starting with the 16th century and continuing until recently, contribute to the *establishment of the field's identity* and especially favour the *contextualised significance of contemporary approaches*.

The present state of things did not lead to the systematisation of these contributions, as the ample bibliography does not include monographs dealing with the evolution of adult education in Romania, in spite of the great number of works treating aspects that are specific to the field. Also, there are no studies underlining the importance of the works of synthesis or highlighting the changes of approach in the theory and practice of adult education, in a diachronic manner. Under these circumstances, such a thesis, with the main goal of *registering and systemising Romanian works, in relation to the major research and thematic fields considered to be relevant for adult education*, represents a just act of recovery for the status of the field in Romania.

In our study, we made use of two types of sources in order to bring out the contribution of literature to the development of adult education:

1. *Primary sources* – works of authors who offer directly the measure of the undertakings regarding adult education, in different temporal contexts;

2. *Secondary sources* – works of pedagogical historiography or lexicographic writings which specify the preoccupation for adult education and interpret the works and the activity of some institutions interested in the field.

The elements of adult education identified in *the Romanian folk culture* are also highly significant, folklore being an important source of knowledge and evolution in the field, due to the virtues of parenetic discourse. This is the argument that supports the election of this topic in a separate subchapter of the present thesis.

Adult education in Romania. Bibliographic references follows an analytical method and contains a selection of the most important Romanian publications (books and magazines) in this field. The particularity of this selection can be explained as follows: it is more drastic and exact for the old period, which is a completed phase of literature, and ampler and non-exhaustive as it progresses towards the contemporary era.

This is the reason why the selection that generally comprised volumes from completed periods of Romanian educational literature (works of authors, monographs, histories of the educational phenomenon, dictionaries) has been replaced with a more comprehensive list containing articles from specialty journals (in the case of contemporary authors), and virtual resources.

The study followed these *stages*:

1. *Identifying the corpus of texts*, starting with those published in Romania during the 16th century and finishing with contemporary works;

2. *Highlighting the distinctive particularities of the field in relation to the characteristics of the analysed contents*;

3. *Compiling the bibliographic lists containing the identified works, which were chronologically and alphabetically arranged*. Beyond these aspects, we believe that the chronological and alphabetical approaches do not comply with the requirement of a pertinent presentation of the topic included in the Romanian adult education texts. This is why we considered necessary to delineate the following stage of synthesis:

4. *Systematising the corpus of texts taking into account the directions of research, through the thematic arrangement of the works*, following these criteria: particularities of adult education in Romania in different political and historical contexts and the relation between contents and objectives.

Valorification of tradition does not represent a process of a priori and total takeover, by assuming the risk of conservatorism; on the contrary, above all, it implies positive dissociation. Although the selection criteria for the corpus of texts was based on pedagogical rigour and exigency, our study *categorises the works in accordance with the classification that the authors presented in forewords, epilogues and structural aspects of their texts*. Value judgements, comparisons, rankings, other than specified, do not represent the object of our endeavours.

STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

In the field of adult education, considered to be a research domain with a separate identity, belonging to the extensive area of education sciences, various questions have been formulated along the years, which lead to the analysis of epistemic aspects and of concrete modalities of objectifying practices. Faced with the diversity of approaches, in **CHAPTER I, entitled ADULT EDUCATION. IDENTITY AND SEMANTIC STATUS**, we have chosen to *explain the concepts associated with adult education*, starting with the clarification of the scientific status of this field. We have also analysed a series of conceptualisations of adult education systems, from the point of view of philosophy and learning theories, specifying the concrete modalities of valorising them in adult education practice in Romania. Equally, we have highlighted the polysemantic character of the concept of *adult education*, with a role in outlining the disciplinary identity of the field and in identifying the main directions of evolution, in different temporal and social contexts.

After having analysed the semantic relations established between **adult education** and **permanent education (lifelong learning), continuing education, andragogy, popular education, social pedagogy, mass culturalization, adult didactic, adult pedagogy and recurrent education**, we have concluded that the successive terminology changes represent the consequence of the multiple approaches chosen by education theoreticians and policy makers, above all. Nowadays, there is a *tendency towards adopting a common terminology in the field*, which is materialised in the publication of various regulatory documents, in Europe and in Romania also.

Identifying the *distinctive particularities* of a field of study represents a conceptualisation process of the most important *stages* in its evolution, in view of highlighting the defining treats, individualising it in connection with related fields. The main goal of **CHAPTER II, PARTICULARITIES OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ROMANIA**, was the establishment and the detailed analysis of the development stages in adult education in Romania, following the *criterion of purposefulness*.

Mention must be made that our approach did not apply the exhaustivity principle; instead, we opted for *establishing the most significant moments* that can be viewed as landmarks in the field. The main objective of this chapter was to highlight the development stages of adult education in Romania; therefore, *the content was presented in relation to two fundamental principles: the content characteristics of the educational literature, during various evolution stages of the field and the specifics of the historical and cultural context of the Romanian society, as it was reflected in the analysed texts.*

Taking this into account, we have established the following *particularities: the moral - religious dimension of adult education; the affirmation of humanist conception in adult education; Adult education from the perspective of the promotion of national values; the socio – cultural dimension of adult education; the ideological character of adult education; the systematic approaches to adult education from a pedagogical perspective.*

We also have to point out that, although they have been established by following the reference criterion of their predominance in the analysed literature during various periods of time, the identified particularities can be also related to other temporal contexts, this being another defining trait of the field. For instance, even though the moral – religious contents predominate in the literature of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, we have also identified significant contemporary religious texts which are of great importance, because of the *informal dimension* of their contribution to the development of the field's visibility. In a similar manner, although the national – patriotic literature dominates the end of the 19th century, the materials belonging to the Communist regime or the first decade of the 21st century also treat the issue of knowing and respecting the national identity.

1. In the case of the first particularity, ***the moral – religious dimension of adult education***, we have mainly analysed *religious works that predominated between the 15th and the 18th centuries* and identified two distinct stages: the first refers to the works of the 15th and 16th centuries and follows the eastern cultural model in Slavonic, while the second one, with writings from the 17th century, opts for western humanist culture and the development of culture and education in Romanian. The particularity of the 18th century consists of the appearance and diversification of the didactic literature and the elaboration of the first schoolbooks in Romanian, with clearly formulated objectives in the direction of scientific knowledge.

2. ***The affirmation of humanist conception in adult education*** represents that stage in the development of the field which marks the transition from the particularities of the religious contents to the ones of the secular knowledge, by means of texts inspired from the daily life of contemporary people. It is the period of the preoccupations for *the historic argumentation of Romanian people's origins* (in the works of the Wallachian and Moldavian chroniclers), the first *differentiated approach to education in accordance with age particularities*, and *incipient manifestations in teacher training*. At the same time, this period is also characterised by the *elaboration of the first schoolbooks and methodology works for teacher training*.

3. The transition to ***national – patriotic literature*** represents the consequence of the wide-ranging actions of national emancipation that took place in Europe at the end of the 18th century. The French Revolution and *Condorcet's Report* mark the beginning of *people's education in the direction of national identity awareness and respect*. In Romania, the representatives of the Transylvanian School initiate the promotion of national culture and history, establishing the basis for a new trend in education, supported by Nicolae Iorga, Constantin Rădulescu – Motru or Onisifor Ghibu, until the first half of the 20th century.

4. ***The socio – cultural character of adult education*** is predominantly identified in the literature of the beginning of the 20th century, marking a shift of perspective in educational approaches. The objectives are changed, *the awareness and promotion of national particularities* being replaced with *social emancipation*, by means of ample actions of mass education, in view of diminishing the social disparity. This principle is being respected in the legal provisions promoted by Spiru Haret, Constantin Angelescu, or Dimitrie Gusti, great personalities of the Romanian culture who took extensive actions of urban and rural population culturalization during the first half of the 20th century.

5. ***The ideological character of adult education*** is reflected in the literature of the second half of the 20th century, between 1948 and 1989. During this period, we frequently identified the association of adult education with the syntagm of *mass culturalization*, an extensive process that took place at national level and was a consequence of the stipulations of the first regulatory document in education under Communism, the *Law of Education from 1948*. Viewed from the perspective of the present study, the initiatives in the field of adult education during the Communist regime acquire significance in relation to the following coordinates:

a. During this period of time, important representatives of the Romanian pedagogy establish, for the first time from an epistemological perspective, the necessity of the *adult*

education science, in view of adapting and connecting the *education sciences* to the new requirements determined by political, economic and social factors. We are especially referring to the significant contributions of Ștefan Bârsănescu, who outlines and completes the complexity of education sciences by establishing the need for a *pedagogy of branches*, where he includes *adult pedagogy*; the conceptualisations presented by George Văideanu, in the direction of *integrating adult pedagogy into the system of permanent education* is also highlighted. We consider that the activity of these pedagogues represents the premises for the constant development of adult education during the first decade of the 21st century, beyond a series of attributes of the Communist regime, such as the *lingering education project* that lead to actions which proved to be a failure for the entire Romanian educational system on the long run, or the isolation from everything that meant evolution of the field abroad – see the UNESCO – CONFINTEA series of actions, with effects that were barely felt in Romania.

b. Another significant coordinate of this period is represented by the organisation of the first scientific manifestation in the field, entitled *Adult education. Scientific research and cultural action* (1968), that had as main purpose the highlighting and valorification of adult education traditions in Romania. Leaving aside the explicit ideological character of the symposium presentations, we consider them of value, as they mentioned, from a historical perspective, the contributions of personalities like Spiru Haret, Nicolae Iorga, Dimitrie Gusti, and institutions such as ASTRA, the House of Schools (Casa Școalelor), to the establishment of a different system of practices in the field.

6. **Nowadays**, the diversity of the actions initiated by different international organisations (UNESCO, the European Commission, ESREA and so on), based on dialogue and dissemination of institutional practices results at international level, represents the premise for the *professionalisation stage of adult education*. In our country, this period is characterised by *systematic approaches*, the activity developed by Romanian theoreticians and practitioners, who organise scientific manifestations and coordinate specialised publications, favouring the diversity of approaches to the problems of adult education (which has become a course subject in Romanian universities). This is the time when the results of research, international conferences and symposiums are imported, adapted and used in Romania, in conformity with the European legal and normative stipulations.

Our option for a different approach to the **DIMENSIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ROMANIA** in **CHAPTER III**, derives from the explicit preoccupations of different Romanian authors with the *differentiated treatment* of problems, such as *teacher*

training, parents training, agricultural education, technical education, military education, and so on.

This proves an increased interest in the education of adults, preparing them for assuming well-defined social roles. In the third chapter we systemised this kind of approaches, taking into account the characteristics of the above-mentioned types of training and education and we elaborated a chronological systematisation of the bibliography that treats these aspects.

In CHAPTER IV, BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN ROMANIA. SYSTEMATISATION CRITERIA, the characteristics of each *particularity* detailed in the second and third chapter are presented, by underlining the contribution of some *authors* and the activity of different *institutions*. The following *categories of sources* were consulted:

- *exhaustive volumes*, presenting aspects in the field of adult education in a different manner; volumes that *tangentially* present the topic of adult education (this is the case of pedagogy works which implicitly approach aspects in this field);
- *studies, magazine articles* which *exhaustively* present aspects in the field of adult education; *studies, magazine articles* which *tangentially* present the topic of adult education;
- *volumes issued on the occasion of conferences and scientific manifestations*;
- Romanian and international *regulatory documents* (presented under the form of an analysis of the document or a reference to the consulted *web* source).

Setting ourselves to do a *qualitative and constative research, the data collection method being document analysis*, we used specific ways of organising and systemising the results obtained after studying the corpus of Romanian texts.

We consider that **the stage of knowledge in adult education in Romania** is determined by:

- a. *the contribution of different authors* to the establishment of a conceptual framework and the adoption of a different system of practices in the field; these contributions are materialised in works and articles published in specialty journals;
- b. *the activity of different institutions* with goals in adult education;
- c. *the specific of the national and international political context*.

In order to mark out *the contributions of the authors* (1.a.), *the activity of the institutions* (1.b.) and to establish the way in which the national and international *factors of the political context* (1.c.) have influenced the stage of knowledge in adult education in Romania, we made use of a corpus of texts considered by us to be *bibliographic references*, playing a significant

role in the development of the field. The option of adopting the *bibliographic references* syntagm relies on the following grounds:

1. The selection of the analysed texts (books or magazine articles) was based on a *fundamental principle*: their significant contribution to the establishment of a different theoretical and praxeological framework in the field of education sciences and adult education in particular.

2. From a temporal point of view, our analysis is based on an ample literature that dates back to the first Romanian texts in Slavonic – identified in *translated facsimiles* in *Old Romanian Bibliography (Bibliografie românească veche [BRV])*, by Ion Bianu and Nerva Hodoş (1910-1912) –, and continues with texts from the 19th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Due to this fact, the main *principle of selection* was the *representativity* of these texts for the field of adult education.

CONCLUSIONS:

The outlining of the stages in the diachronic evolution of adult education, by relating the elements identified in the Romanian specialty literature to the international context, can be justified as follows: *it points out the particularities of the field in different temporal and social contexts; it contributes to the epistemic foundation of the field and the establishment of the origin and internal organisation structure of knowledge in adult education.*

Two fundamental and interconnected objectives have been set:

- *the necessity of determining the identity status of adult education in Romania*, by highlighting the development particularities of the field, *which have been outlined in accordance with the characteristics of the analysed literary contents.*

- *the elaboration of a bibliographic foundation* that will allow integrative and holistic approaches for subsequent private endeavours in the field; this objective is materialised through *the thematic, alphabetic and chronological arrangement (in bibliographic lists 1, 2 and 3) of educational literature that treats specific aspects of adult education, starting with the first Romanian writings (16th century), and ending with contemporary works.*

Due to the fact that our endeavour is predominantly analytical, the highlighting of the most relevant moments in the evolution of the field was our constant concern throughout the thesis. In what **the development perspectives of the field** are concerned, we consider that the continuation of the efforts carried out by institutional structures (considered to be important at praxeological level and mentioned in subchapter II.7 *Systematic approaches to adult education in Romania*) and the diversification of the preoccupations of Romanian researchers

by making their current results more visible, represent the premises for the objective adaptation of Romanian directions of actions to the international provisions and epistemological evolutions. Another necessary requirement for the stage of adult education identity establishment in Romania consists of the formation of a *solid scientific community*, whose fundamental concerns should be the anticipation of the new trends, in view of elaborating coherent strategies to be applied at national and institutional level and the connection to the international directions of action.

Acknowledgement:

This work was supported by the the European Social Fund in Romania, under the responsibility of the Managing Authority for the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 [grant POSDRU/88/1.5/S/47646].