Factors Triggering Adult Learning and Education Needs

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Abstract

In adult learning and education the need is defined as the discrepancy between the current stage of development of professional competences, as well as those of general culture, and the desired (possible to be achieved) stage. The need reflects the existence of a problem that requires intervention, a problem that needs to be dealt with, but also a motivational drive for lifelong learning. As a rule, the learning and education needs of adults are determined from the perspective of the appearance of some changes, the dynamics of developing the areas of adults' interest. In the given study we will try to establish the learning and education needs of adults from the perspective of internal and external factors: a) pandemics, conflicts and violence, polarization and division of society, economic inequality, misinformation and propaganda; b) psychological, social and andragogic. The focus is on the systemic analysis of the learning and education needs of adults, which is followed by several further processes: data collection using methods and tools; identifying priorities and establishing mechanisms for solving problems; needs satisfaction actions; establishing needs assessment criteria and tools. Identifying the learning and education needs of adults is a two-dimensional process: assessment of needs by service providers and assessment/self-assessment of needs by adult learners. Each of the above-mentioned factors generates different needs for learning and formal, non-formal or informal education of adults, including on the professional, social and individual dimensions. Addressing complex factors from the perspective of adult learning and education will essentially contribute to their more efficient integration into society, but will also contribute to reducing the influence of these factors by meeting the learning and education needs of adults.

Keywords: Adults, learning and education of adults, education need, challenges of contemporary world.

1. **Introduction**

Adult education has as subject and object the individuals in a concrete phase of the life cycle, characterized by autonomy, independence, experience. Adult education aims at them in their multiple statuses, roles, generated by contexts, needs and responsibilities, which

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they assume or must assume. Adults are constantly forced to make decisions, propose solutions, develop action strategies and, above all, act. Adult education involves the formation of personality, first of all, through self-instruction and self-education, which requires the ability to work independently and decide autonomously. Self-knowledge, creative spirit, self-control are features of the adult that have their origin (diligence) at this stage of life.

Adult learning is self-directed, self-tracked, and represents a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others (Knowles, 1980).

In the view of researcher Simona Sava (2001, p.48), adult education is "higher education at the pre- and post-graduation level, as a continual professional development and as any other form of knowledge renewal during life in alternation with other activities, mainly with work, but also with recreational activities...".

Adult education, on the one hand, is a process that contributes to the change and development of society, on the other hand, it is a process determined by societal changes, with the priority being those on the labor market. Through adult education, thinking and behavior techniques necessary for adults in various professional and non-professional situations are transmitted.

Adult education opens up new opportunities for solving life problems, acquiring new knowledge about the world, about oneself.

The concept of "learning to learn" remains a dominant one even at this age: acquiring and valorizing on the means of fast and efficient search for information, the ability to verify information and its use in the educational process, but also in professional activity; the ability to work in a team and individually.

Another aspect of adult learning and education relates to the rapid change in factors that generate new needs for learning and education, training and self-training for adults: *computerization* of all spheres of society; *internationalization; disinformation; propaganda,* etc.

In other words, adults need to orient themselves correctly and show their resilience to the challenges of contemporary world.

In this context, the problem of identifying the learning needs of adults becomes a priority. Namely, the cognition and awareness of own learning needs guides the adult towards choosing one or another type of education. As a rule, most adults do not have mechanisms to identify their own learning needs. Very often adults make decisions to attend one or another educational activity, intuitively or strictly contextually.

2. **System of Factors Triggering Adult Learning and Education Needs: Variable and Invariable**

In the specialized literature, we do not find a unique approach and a unique classification of

the factors that generate the emergence of learning needs in adults. We believe that the cause of this situation is related to the complexity of the problem: a great diversity of the respective factors; the dynamics of factors, generated by permanent changes in society; individual manifestations of adult learning and education needs, etc.

In this context, we try to argue and build a taxonomy of the factors that trigger the emergence of adult learning and education needs: internal and external factors; psychological, social and andragogic factors; invariable and variable factors; objective and subjective factors (see Fig.1.).
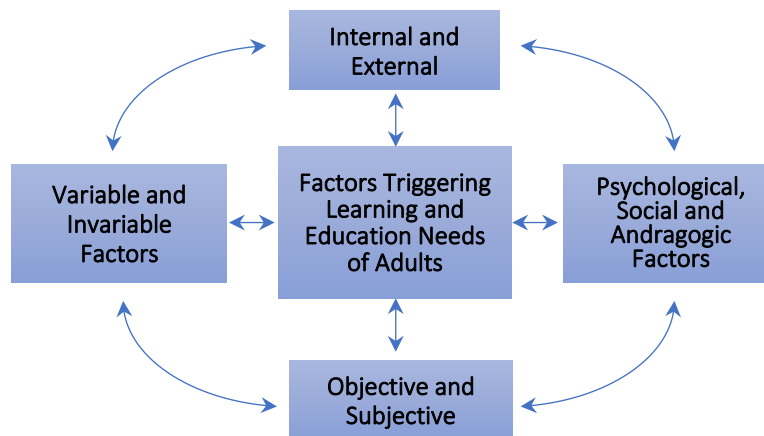

Figure 1. Factors Triggering Adult Learning and Education Needs
(elaborated by the author)

It should be noted that among the listed factors there are a lot of interactions, interconnections, which generate the emergence of learning needs in concrete adults. At the same time, only one factor, which can be dominant, can influence the emergence of learning needs of adults. Knowing and characterizing these factors creates contextual conditions for establishing the learning and education needs of adults, as well as a mechanism for self-assessment of own learning needs (see Table 1.)

Table 1. Factors Triggering Adult Learning and Education Needs Versus Learning Needs
(elaborated by the author)

Triggers of Adult Learning and Education	Typology of Adult Learning and Education Needs
Global External Factors	• The need to know and orient oneself in the essence of global challenges: *globalization, computerization, internationalization, europeanization, etc.*
National External Factors	• The need to know and properly orient oneself in state policies and policies in the field of activity and involvement in various processes in this regard.
External Institutional Factors	• The need to know and understand institutional policies and involvement in institutional development processes.
Intrinsic Factors	• The need to acquire new knowledge, experiences and competences. • The need to obtain new qualifications. • The need for career growth. • The need for personal development: *skills, interests*, etc.
Psychological Factors	• The need for self-development, self-realization. • The need to realize own motives. • The need to realize own potential. • The need to form resilience skills and appropriate behavior in crisis situations, etc.
Social Factors	• The need to develop and valorize social experiences. • The need to strengthen social status. • The need to participate in various social actions and the realization of social functions. • The need to know and promote social and cultural values, etc.
Andragogic Factors	• The need to know and use knowledge in a practical way. • The need to possess and apply adult-specific learning tools. • The need to engage in cognitive activity. • The need to design own career path. • The need to collaborate with others in the andragogic process, etc.
Objective Factors (Psychological, Social, Andragogic)	• The need for lifelong professional training. • The need for lifelong non-professional/social development.
Subjective Factors (Psychological, Social, Andragogic)	• The need for self-training/self-development. • The need to develop own skills in different fields.
Invariable Factors	• The need to learn to learn throughout life. • The need to grow in the career during the professional activity. • The need for self-training and self-development, etc.
Variable Factors	• The need to obtain a new qualification. • The need to obtain higher degrees in professional activity. • The need to develop some specific skills (e.g.: in arts, sports).

The influence of these factors on the identification of adult learning and education needs largely depends on the category of adults: adults involved in professional activity, adults temporarily not involved in professional activity, unemployed adults, adults in the risk group, retired adults (involved and not involved in professional activity). In other words, the status of these categories of adults also determines the specificity of learning needs in the context of respective factors.

3. **Concept of "Need" Regarding Adult Learning And Education**

The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (DEX, 2016) explains the notion of "need", as what is required, must be done; need, necessity, requirement; issue, situation, business, the solution of which has an urgent, pressing character. The need reflects the existence of a problem that requires intervention, a problem that needs to be treated/ solved, an impediment in carrying out a process, a professional/ non-professional activity. The "need" can also be explained from the perspective of motivational theory and self-actualization by Abraham Maslow, who proposed a hierarchy of needs, which goes from primary biological needs to complex psychological motivations, such as the need for self-actualization and valorization of own potential (Guțu, 2022).
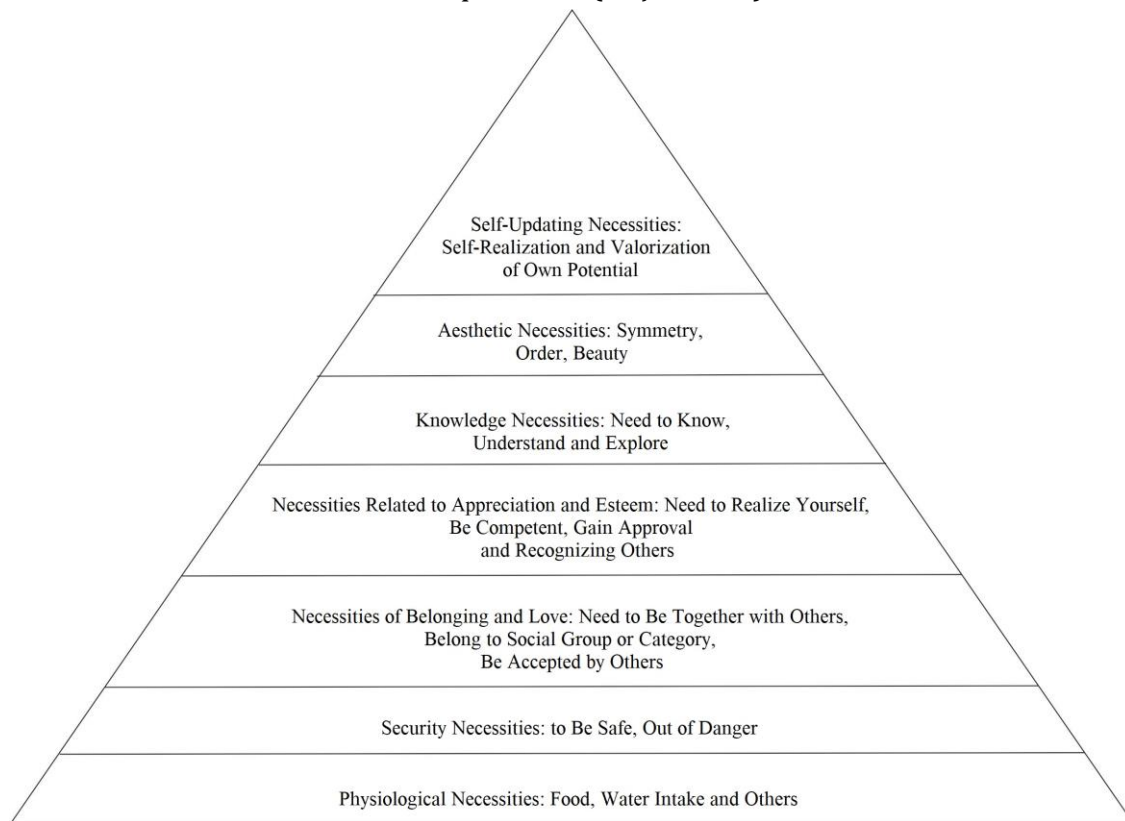

Figure 2. Pyramid of Needs - According to A. Maslow (2007)

Approaching needs according to A. Maslow (2007) assumes an order of priority; the needs of one level must be at least partially satisfied, so that those from the next level can manifest and become important motivational factors of the individual's actions.

This approach has specific implications in the education system and, in particular, in the adult learning and education system. If in the process of educating students, it should be known that the higher needs of the educables, such as those of knowledge and understanding, cannot be activated, if the lower needs in the hierarchy of needs have not

been satisfied, then in the process of learning and education of adults, for the most part, this condition disappears, because the basic needs of adults are met. In this sense, higher needs (developmental, the adult's desire to be successful, to know, to valorize their cognitive, aesthetic and self-actualization skills and capacities) are dominant in adult learning and education. Without resorting to criticism of A. Maslow's theory (2007), it is certain that there are numerous individual differences regarding the order of appearance and satisfaction of needs.

However, the methodology proposed by A. Maslow (2007) remains an effective mechanism for organizing the learning environment in a way that stimulates the active participation of adults in the learning process, satisfying their needs.

In this context, we note that there are several studies and research on the issue of learning needs, including adults (Knowles, 1980; Hinzen, 2018; Văiculescu, 2004; Bertea, 2020).

M. Knowles (1980) structures the learning and education needs of adults into several types: *the need to know; previous experience; willingness to learn; learning orientation and motivation to learn*.

Andragogues can value the learning and education of adults by causing them to become aware of their need to know and develop themselves. At the same time, the andragogue's function is to create learning environments where adults will develop their general social and personal competences. Orientation towards learning constitutes the fact that adults are focused on solving the problems they face in different contexts. M. Knowles (1980) believes that the dominant need of adults for learning is to solve various tasks related to real life.

Adults' willingness to learn as a motivational approach is generated by their ability to learn to learn, to produce new knowledge and experiences, which is the most effective source of learning. The learning motivation of adults is a processual-situational one, determined by experiences and social-professional requirements, by external factors (professional growth, higher salaries, etc.) and internal factors (job satisfaction, improvement of self-esteem, etc.).

Therefore, the motivation of adults for learning is formed during the whole life by virtue of the person's development regularities, the ontological stages and the psychosocial processes of forming the motives of human activity, including the learning activity. And the structure of motivation in pedagogical situations includes, at the same time, actualized and latent factors.
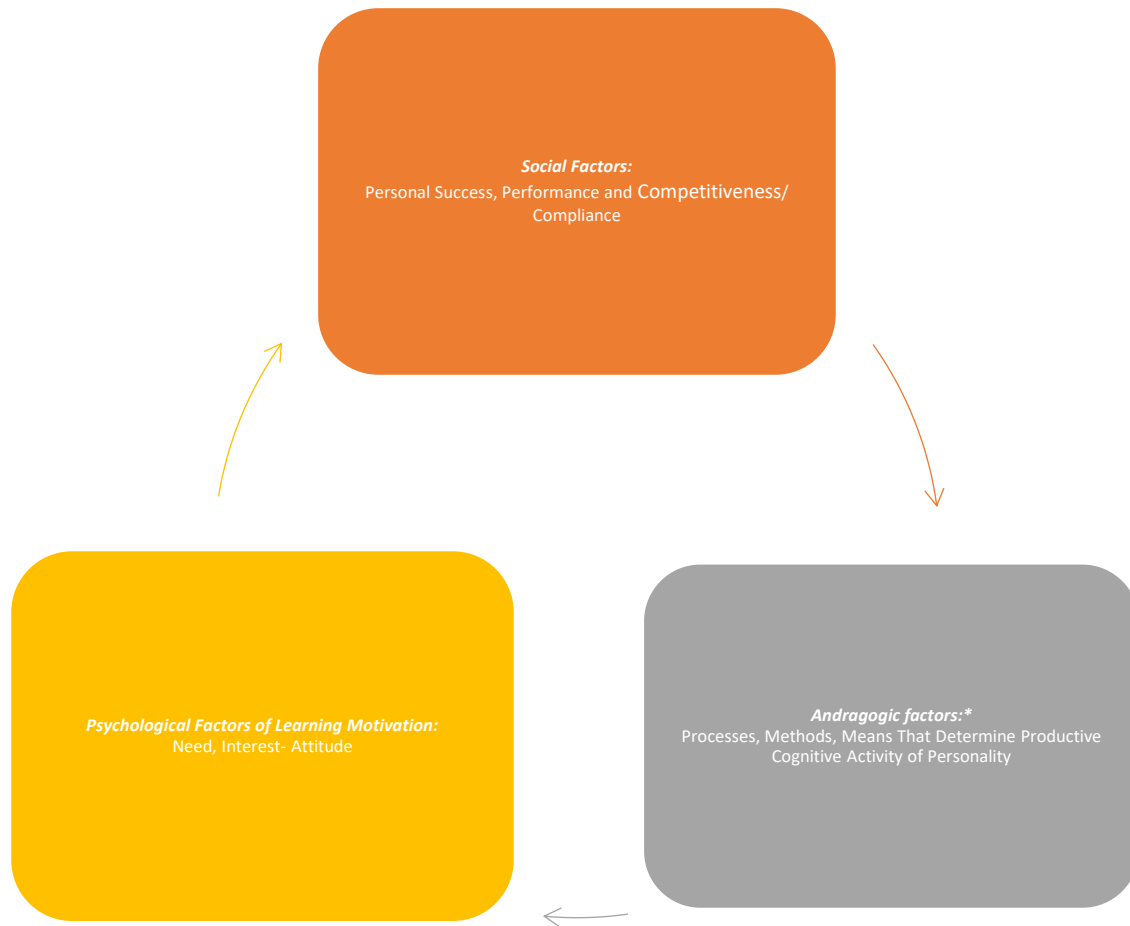
Figure 3. Factors of Adult Learning Motivation (elaborated by the author)

There is a belief that learning abilities in adults decline with age. But the results of several researchers (Knowles, 1980; Hinzen, 2018; Văiculescu, 2004; Bertea, 2020) dispute this opinion. Adults are not inferior to other ages in terms of learning ability, also having individual manifestations.

Crețu (2009, p.341-342) compared the way of adult learning with that of younger people and formulated the following postulates: the adult can often more easily realize the unity between the more abstract and the concrete analysis of some problems, he/she can move more easily between these planes, having a more varied and extensive professional experience; often manages to extract more quickly what is important and meaningful from a material to be learned; those with a longer schooling manage to orient themselves successfully in various sources of information; distinguish more quickly the applicative aspects of the knowledge they acquire; tend to take advantage, within the learning program, of those sequences that help them acquire new methods and procedures to face the demands of the profession; more emphasisingly than others demand rigor and precision in what they are asked to learn and tend to refuse what is not too clear.

On the other hand, there are also some peculiarities of the involvement of adults in the learning program that is proposed to them and which must always be taken into account, in order not to prevent the achievement of the expected results, namely:

- those with less education can enter new learning programs without having formed some necessary skills, and in this case this aspect must be solved first. Even during the activities, forms of support must be found for the development of learning processes;

- there are enough people who hesitate to enter these learning programs, if they have to interrupt their work for a while, and are even tempted to minimize their importance. Therefore, the advantage of going through the learning stages must be revealed to them more insistently;

- after getting involved in learning activities, the latters may seem to them too difficult and too long and, thus, block their active participation;

- if the learning periods involve evaluation of the results, they can be very stressed because of this and obtain results below the expected ones;

- in the face of new knowledge, they can resort to stereotyped and poorly suited thinking strategies and, thus, greatly reduce the gains of completing these new learning stages. Many of the reported shortcomings can be overcome even by discussing them directly with the beneficiaries of the learning programs. Also, they must be taken into account in establishing the content of training for adults (Crețu, 2009).

It is important for the construction of adult learning and education to know the manifestation of affectivity, the rates of which are higher than for young people.

In this sense, the adult is characterized by: greater richness and diversification of affective experiences; stabilization of professional attachment; professional satisfaction/ dissatisfaction; self acceptance; the manifestation of personal feelings, etc.

Understanding training needs in andragogy prepares facilitators to create successful programs for adult learners. In order to develop the quality of adult education and to facilitate socio-professional integration, emphasis will be placed on the training and development for learners of a set of competences with general and specific functions. Determining a need for education, in the opinion of Voiculescu (2004, p.13-14), means answering the question "why and for whom we organize a certain educational process or system and why we organize it this way and not otherwise". In other words, the identification of educational needs is the action by which we determine what are the requirements, needs, necessities that justify the design and support of a process, a program, an educational structure or action. Also, the author insists on the idea that organizing an educational process or system without explicitly orienting it towards satisfying certain needs means placing it in the sphere of voluntarism, random subjective projection and, obviously, lacking rationality and social utility. Even if an educational action is based on strictly determined objectives, this, the author states, does not mean that the action is necessary. While the goal is a
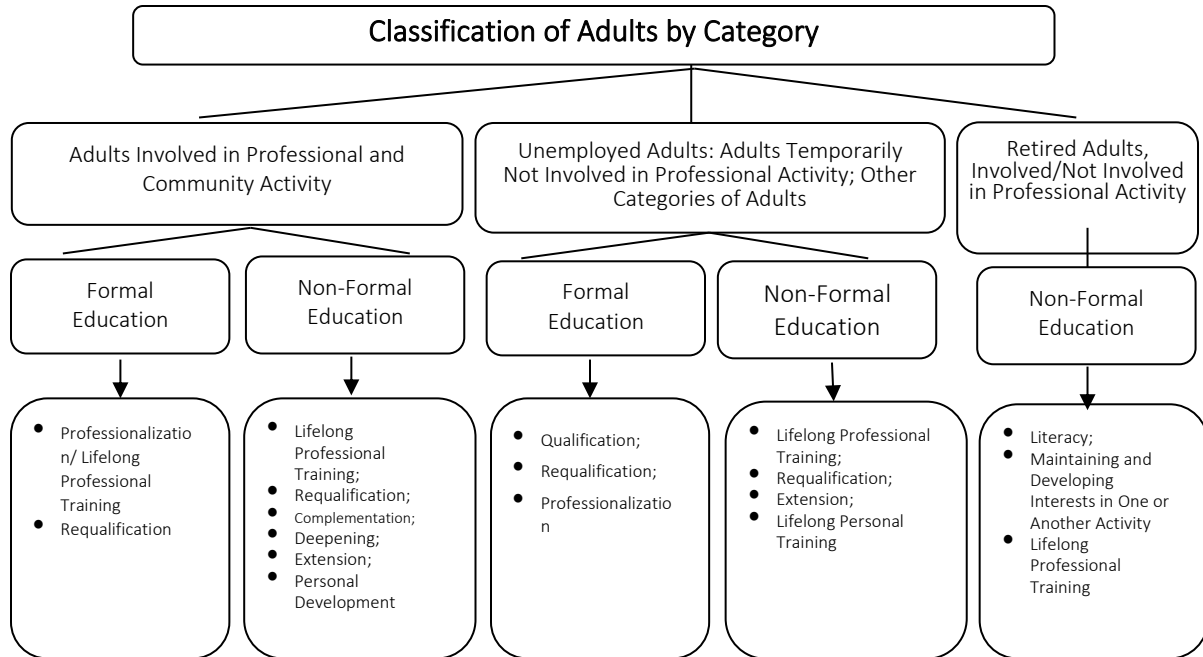
Figure 4. Categories of Adults in Relation to Their Learning and Education Needs
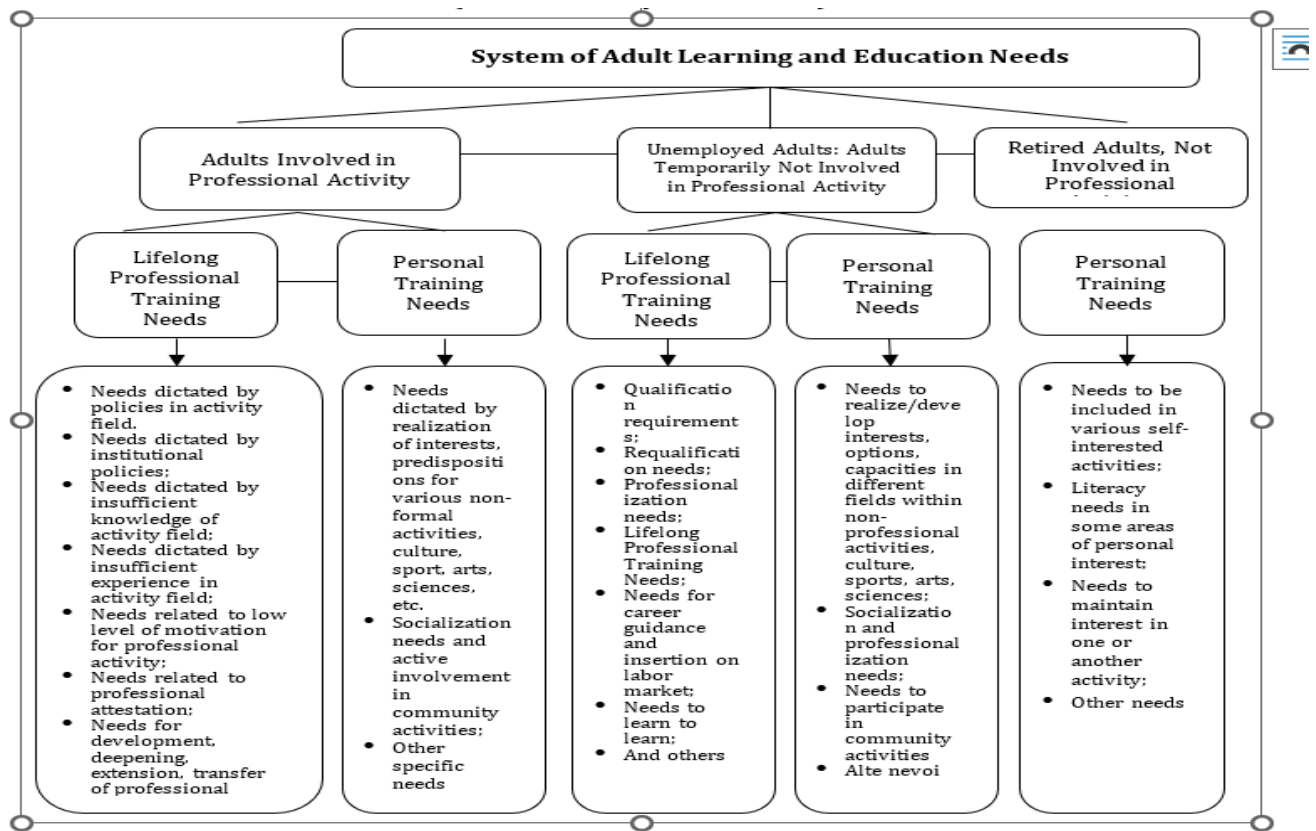(elaborated by the author)

Figure 5. System of Adult Learning and Education Needs (elaborated by the author)

prediction, a projection or a pre-figuration that always involves a part of subjective construction, including the risk of error, the need for education is a reality, it acts as a fact, as a given situation that imposes itself with a a certain intensity and a certain urgency.One of the key aspects of adult learning and education is to know their training needs in relation to different factors: social, professional, personal.

In relation to the learning needs of adults, categories of adults can also be established. It is worth noting that there may be a large number of needs and a large number of categories of adults arising from the complexity of phenomena (*see* Figures 4 and 5).

Further, we present the classification of learning and education needs on the dimension of professionalization according to the typological groups of adults.
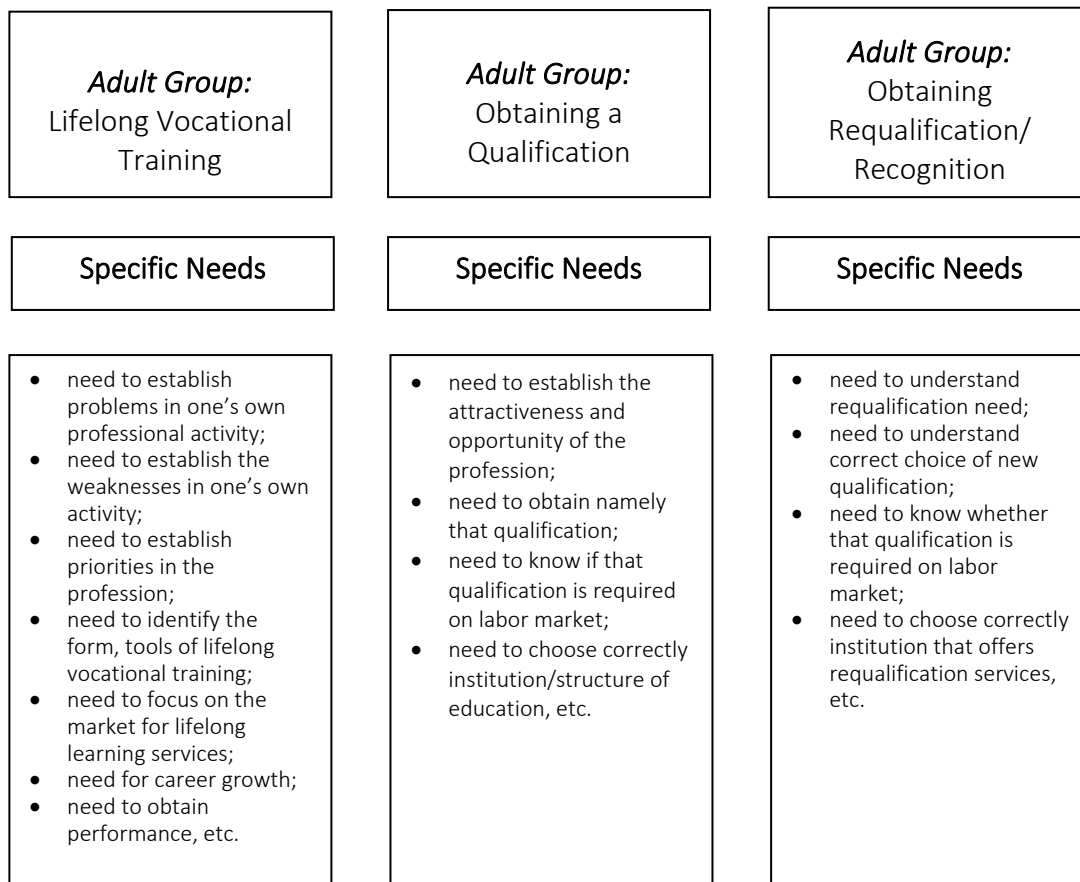
Adult Group: Lifelong Vocational Training	*Adult Group:* Obtaining a Qualification	*Adult Group:* Obtaining Requalification/ Recognition
Specific Needs	**Specific Needs**	**Specific Needs**
• need to establish problems in one's own professional activity; • need to establish the weaknesses in one's own activity; • need to establish priorities in the profession; • need to identify the form, tools of lifelong vocational training; • need to focus on the market for lifelong learning services; • need for career growth; • need to obtain performance, etc.	• need to establish the attractiveness and opportunity of the profession; • need to obtain namely that qualification; • need to know if that qualification is required on labor market; • need to choose correctly institution/structure of education, etc.	• need to understand requalification need; • need to understand correct choice of new qualification; • need to know whether that qualification is required on labor market; • need to choose correctly institution that offers requalification services, etc.

Figure 6. Learning and Education Needs in Relation to Typological Categories of Adults (elaborated by the author)

Otherwise, the framework of adult learning and education needs is presented from the perspective of their personal development (general culture).

On the one hand, identifying the learning and education needs of this group of people is a simple procedure, because the basic criteria represent the skills and capacities that adults have formed and are aware of and that they want to develop (here comes the question of *where*? and *how*?). On the other hand, identifying the learning and education needs of this

group of people is a complicated procedure (practically unaddressed in theory and practice), if adults do not have a predisposition (attitude) for one or another field/activity profile, but they want to participate in non-professional trainings.

It should be noted that there are at least two aspects of identifying the learning and education needs of adults. The *first aspect* relates to external factors: andragogues, adult education service providers, experts, counselors, managers apply a respective tool to identify the learning and education needs of specific groups of adults. The *second aspect* is related to the internal factor: the adult can determine his/her own learning needs, having the respective tools at his/ her disposal, or identify his/her own needs strictly intuitively, contextually, motivationally.

The clear establishment of the adult learning and education needs is a condition and an essential factor in ensuring the quality of education and the satisfaction of these needs.

It should be noted that managing the process of identifying the learning and education needs of adults is a complex and complicated act.

In order to establish a methodology and tools for identifying the learning and education needs of adults, the vertical approach to needs is also of interest, first of all, with reference to formal and non-formal lifelong professional training. In this context, **four categories of needs** are established:

1. The needs that are generated by educational policies, by possible changes in the education system at the national level.
2. The needs that are generated by the regional/district policies, the possible changes in education at the district level.
3. The institutional needs related to the possible changes generated by educational institutions.
4. Individual/ personal needs generated by problems, gaps, weak parts on the professional dimension or generated by the desire to obtain a teaching degree or higher performances (Gutu, 2022, 2023).

4. **Methodology and Tools for Identifying Adult Learning and Education Needs**

The diversity of target groups of adults, the diversity of fields and profiles of adult education, the diversity of learning and education needs of adults create great obstacles in the development of a methodology and tools for identifying the needs of learning and education of adults. In what follows, we will try to substantiate a core methodology, regarding the identification of learning and education needs of adults that can be modified, adapted in relation to one or another context.

Therefore, the methodology for identifying the learning and education needs of adults represents a system of principles, methods, tools for establishing and analyzing needs, structuring needs, evaluating needs, processing the data obtained and predicting the

satisfaction of these needs.

The proposed methodology mainly focuses on formal and non-formal lifelong professional training of adults. In this context, the *need* represents the discrepancy between the current stage of professional development of one or more persons and the desired (possible to be achieved) stage. The *need* reflects the existence of a problem with reference to a person or a group of persons, generated by several factors, including national and institutional educational policies.

The methodology for identifying the learning and education needs of adults focuses on the following **principles** and **provisions**:

- Diagnosing the learning and education needs of adults must be systematic and systemic.
- Diagnosing the individual learning and education needs of adults must be autonomous and secure.
- Diagnosing the needs of a group of people must be transparent for making the right decisions.
- The analysis of learning and education needs of diagnosed adults must be cyclical with the involvement of stakeholders to establish priorities and how to satisfy them.
- Analysis of the sources that directly and indirectly generate the emergence of needs regarding adult learning and education: educational policy documents, curriculum documents, institutional development strategies and programs, etc.
- Identification of the mechanisms/tools for identifying the learning and education needs of adults in relation to individual, institutional, regional and national options.

Therefore, the needs for training/lifelong professional development are identified at different levels: individual, institutional, national, international. Through the analysis of these needs, individual, institutional, district, national lifelong professional development projects are developed.

It should be mentioned that the identification of needs of lifelong professional development of adults within different professional fields has its own specificity, determined by the particularities of these fields: structure, types of activities, etc. (Guțu, 2023).

In this context, we can present the needs of lifelong professional development of adults as follows (*see* Table 2).

Table 2. Possible Lifelong Professional Training Needs of Adults, Dictated by Real Contexts
(elaborated by the author)

Category of Needs			
At Individual Level	*At Institutional Level (in addition to individual ones)*	*At District Level (in addition to individual and institutional ones)*	*At National/International System Level*
• of conceptualization; • of designing; • of implementation; • of teaching; • of evaluation/ monitorization; • of communication; • of networking; • of research; etc.	• of creating new institutional experiences; • of valorizing institutional policies; • of promoting institution's specifics/educational orientations; • of group activity; • of communication with parents; • of activity in community; • of activity in institutional projects; etc.	• of promoting district policies; • of promoting teachers' experiences at district level; etc.	• of applying national/international educational policies; • of applying changes at system level; • of participation in national/international projects; • of obtaining teaching/managerial degrees; etc.

It is important to establish the ways and structures involved in the satisfaction of these needs. In this sense, the determinants become the categories of needs (*see* Table 3).

Table 3. Ways and Structures Involved in Meeting Needs of Lifelong Professional Training
of Adults (elaborated by the author)

Category of Needs			
At Individual Level	*At Institutional Level*	*At District Level*	*At National/International System Level*
• self-training; • institutional seminars; • individual projects, etc.	• institutional seminars; • round tables; • exchange of experiences; • presentation of open lessons; etc.	• district seminars; • round tables; • district conferences; • thematic district conferences; etc.	• long-term and short-term lifelong professional training courses (carried out by Lifelong Training Centers); • national/international conferences; • specialized lifelong training courses; • national/international projects; etc.

Another approach to identifying the learning and education needs of adults is related to their personal development/general culture development. In this regard, we highlight three important aspects:

1. The adult identifies his/her personal development needs in relation to the skills, interests, abilities already formed and acknowledged. The choice for one or another educational activity the adult chooses consciously, in order to satisfy these interests and in elderly age. Usually, this process is spontaneous and unmanaged from the outside.

2. The adult does not have concrete predispositions for one or another learning activity in a certain field, but he/she wants to participate in different training activities. In this case, the adult uses acquaintances, Internet sources, etc. The analysis of different

options, for example, can arouse interest for choreographic, musical, sports, etc. activities. In this case, we can talk about interests, hidden options.

3. Service providers in the field of adults' personal development come with offers for adults, using different forms: conversations, advertising of different activities, involvement of adults in pre-program activities, etc. (Guțu, 2022).

5. Tools for Identifying/Assessing Adult Learning and Education Needs

Different tools are used to identify/self-assess the learning and education needs of adults and, first of all, the needs of lifelong professional training, each one having advantages and disadvantages.

The determination of respective tools also depends on the category, the typology of adults, the way of manifesting the need (*see* Table 4.)

Table 4. Tools for Identifying Adult Learning and Education Needs in Relation to Their Category (regarding teachers) (elaborated by the author)

Category of Needs			
At Individual Level	*At Institutional Level*	*At Regional/District Level*	*At National/ System Level*
Self-assessment based on: • questionnaire; • needs assessment sheet; • opinion of colleagues, methodologists; etc.	Evaluation by administration: • questionnaires; • interview; • assessment form; • observation; • brainstorming; • case study; etc.	Assessment by education department: • questionnaires; • interview; • focus group; • assessment form; • brainstorming; • case study; etc.	Evaluation by MER [Ministry of Education and Research] or lifelong training institutions: • focus group; • questionnaires at national level; • analytical study; • study of policy documents; • study of reform documents; etc.

It should be noted that the proposed tools are mainly focused on establishing the learning and education needs of adults in the field of lifelong professional training, in this case of managers and teachers. However, this tools can be adapted to other professional fields, as well as to the lifelong non-professional training of adults (professional development).

Regardless of the methods and tools selected in each individual case, it is important to obtain clear evidence to substantiate, justify the findings and formulate valid conclusions. (Guțu, 2022).

6. Express-Study of Learning and Education Needs of Different Adult Groups

The purpose of study was to identify the learning and education needs of different groups of adults. The target groups of adults were made up of adults who participated in continual education courses, including adults of the third age (the special group) in the university framework of the Moldova State University, but also from arbitrarily selected unemployed

adults. The study was carried out during the months of March-July 2023. The tools developed by the author were applied. It should be noted that the study does not claim to be exhaustive. Respondents were selected and grouped into the following categories: adults involved in professional activity; adults not involved in professional activity, including the unemployed; retired adults not involved in professional activity. In order to obtain some generalizing outcomes and to establish some trends regarding the option of different groups of adults, we grouped the possible learning needs into several categories: needs related to professionalization on the cognitive-social dimension and needs related to personal development on the cognitive, social, artistic dimension, sports, etc. From the list of possible needs, the respondents had to choose the dominant ones. Respondents could expand the list of needs with other characteristics of the person.

Table 5. Learning Needs of Different Groups of Adults: Study Results (elaborated by the author)

Nr. crt.	Categories of Needs	Categories of Adults		
		involved in professional activity	not involved in professional activity	retired
1.	Needs dictated by external factors/challenges: globalization, internationalization, computerization, crises, etc.	60 %	40 %	30 %
2.	Needs of obtaining new knowledge, new experiences	80 %	60 %	10 %
3.	Needs of professional growth, career growth	70 %	80 %	5 %
4.	Needs of obtaining new qualifications/requalifications	30 %	80 %	5 %
5.	Needs of socialization, effective communication	40 %	60 %	70 %
6.	Needs of extension and compensation of knowledge and skills	50 %	30 %	30 %
7.	Needs of valorization of own skills and interests in different fields (arts, sports, technologies)	20 %	10 %	40 %
8.	Needs to learn to learn	90 %	60 %	5 %
9.	Need to achieve performance	60 %	10 %	5 %

The results presented in Table 5 were obtained by questioning/interviewing the respective respondents, which were organized in different forms: face to face; online; by phone. About 120 respondents participated.

The analysis of the obtained results allows us to state the following:

- All groups of adults, including retirees not involved in professional activity, show the desire to learn, to develop in relation to the categories of needs, having different degrees of involvement.
- Adults involved in professional activity (in the given case, mainly teachers) showed a higher degree of learning needs in relation to other groups of adults. Specifically, this group of adults marked that they need new knowledge, new experiences (70%), they need professional growth (80%), they need the development of competences to learn to learn (90%). We also appreciate the interest of this group of adults towards external factors that directly or indirectly influence their lives. It is that they want to know more about global processes, the causes of crises, wars, etc. At the same time, the worrisome

factor concerns the attitude of respondents from this group of adults towards personal, non-professional development (art, sports, technologies, community, etc.).

- The results obtained by the group of adults temporarily not involved in professional activity, primarily the unemployed, deserve attention. This group of adults shows interest in learning related to insertion in the labor market (60%), obtaining a new qualification (80%), socializing (60%). Like adults involved in professional activity, this group of adults shows no interest in personal development (10%).

- The responses of the group of retired adults, who are not involved in professional activity, also deserve attention. On the one hand, they show interest in global issues, socialization, communication (70%), but also in realizing their own interests in different fields of activity. On the other hand, 90% of them identified that they no longer need to learn, they do not see the point of getting involved in this process.

- Following discussions with adults from various groups, we deduced some of their characteristics:
  - a large part of those who indicated that they have different learning needs, in reality do not plan to get involved in this process, both formally and non-formally;
  - a large part of those surveyed noted that they do not have opportunities to complete their studies, but they also indicated the lack of opportunities to learn and, first of all, on the dimension of non-formal personal training, some of the respondents noted that they do not know the existing options for learning and education;
  - it is important to mention that the adults in the group who are not involved in professional activity indicated that they urgently need to obtain a concrete qualification/job, because they have been offered a job; here we can talk about the existence of dominant learning needs in adults;
  - retired adults from the urban area indicated that they would like to learn the computer better, that they need to use social networks to communicate with relatives or use the Internet to pay for conveniences; others indicated that they would like to join various language study clubs, arts, sports, etc.

7. General Conclusions

Establishing a conceptual and methodological framework for identifying and assessing/ self-assessing the learning and education needs of adults and, where appropriate, teachers' lifelong education is part of the modern paradigm of lifelong learning. The proposed approach can be adapted and applied in order to establish the formal and non-formal learning and education needs of adults in different fields and professional profiles.

Therefore, identifying the learning and education needs of adults, prioritizing these needs is a frame of reference for ensuring the quality of formal and non-formal vocational

training of adults, but also for the elaboration of strategies for the development of this educational field.

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