

Abstract

The present study will review the following problems: the adult and the young adult, the adult's motivation between the complicity of definitions and the perspective of major directions, the logic of substantial definitions, the major orientations in explaining the motivated adult conduct, the indicators with significant power in the motivation of the adult, and also the adults' motivations – reverberations in the young people's options and conduct – transfer and value interferences.

1. The Adult and the Young Adult: Who are they Today?

The history of psychological studies, especially that concerning the psychoeducational studies of adults is a relatively newer one. Among the pioneers of the domain a mention should be given to the American Malcolm Knowles (1913 – 1997), considered the champion of andragogy, one of the most influential personalities in the field of the modern directions, mostly informal ones, of the approach to the autonomous adult personality.

The revisitation of the great authors in the area of the “adult pedagogy and psychology” specialization (Knowles, Lieb, Thorpe, Riegel, Kidd and others) is conducive to pointing out several important ideas recurring across their personalized options, and to which the quality of constructive signposts can be attached, with a view to understanding the personality and conduct of the mature adult.

Among these ideas which have the value of characteristic features, we mention the ones defining the adults as follows [4; 10; 11; 17]:

- autonomous and self-directed, i.e. they have the freedom to get engaged according to their will and wishes, to assume the responsibilities of a leader, guide, negotiator, deciding factor etc;
- bearers of fundamental life experiences, of knowledge and relationships, including here the profession, family, education and others;
 - goal-oriented, with some of them hierarchically structured and others not, but with many of them having relevant direction (ideas, reflections, projects, conceptions);
 - focused on practices of success, on useful “lessons” for their work and life, family, children, friends and even the community;
 - sensitive in being shown respect, equal and personalized treatment, the right to express their opinion, to act as voices in self-educational contexts;
 - attentive evaluators of specific motivational marks, including social relationships, expectations and values of the social welfare, want for a high professional status, of professional safety in a competitive environment, of stimulation, as opposed to the home or working place “routine”, for accepting alternatives to certain mental, emotional, spiritual searches and so on;
 - open to critical psychological elements bearing strongly over the adult life quality;
 - motivation (affective states, difficulty of tasks, feedback to rewards and punishments and so forth);
 - reinforcement (positive or negative);
 - logical retention of things (understanding, interpreting, applying, contextual originality);
 - transfer (positive, negative, depending on associative situations, simulative critical attributes and so on);
- mature and global people, aware of life aspects, a conduct which is explained by means of the holistic mental map of the variety of experiences and resolute strategies (Budd, 2004; Buzan and Buzan, 1993; Becker, 1995; Herz, 1998; Wycoff, 1991);
- tolerant when faced with solving problems which are poorly structured and open to solving up creative problems (Holobrink-Engels, Merrienboer, 1990);
- actors who build up and adapt the environment of life, family, study, social relations, making valuable use of the mathemagenic/interrogative-orienting models);
- people able to think in contrasts, in terms of comparison, having the capabilities to take on certain contradictions seen not as personal failures or incomplete personal development, but as a quality of their mature, innovative, transforming conscience;
- attentive appraisers of the concrete reality by means of experience, context, action and “contingent methods” (Kogan, 1976), of predictions, procedures/routines, roles, of the efficiency values of marketing (Kotler, 2005), the optimization of the relationships among the life cycles they are passing through (Deldime, Demoulin, 1994), the educational acquisitions (Thorpe, Edwards, Hanson, 1993), the growing/developing potential according to the dialectic operations relevance, consistency and quality (Riegel, 1979);
- mature and objective actors in understanding the Self, the needs, interests, capacities and goals, with a developed attitude of acceptance and love towards other people, with empathy and sincere desire to help the others, making a clear-cut distinction between people and ideas;
- people with a dynamic attitude towards life and the changes due to experience seen as an opportunity to learn how to become more skillful, more open to continuous learning, to react mainly to causes and less to symptoms, to aim to the decision upon and the channeling of social changes, of the changes within one's own conscience (Merriam și Caffarella, 1991);
- autonomous efficient actors in shaping up the necessary skills in view of implementing the (self)- achievement of the multiple potential of the personality – vocational, social, family-connected, leisure-connected, civic, artistically and technically creative, spiritual, motive, cognitive- professional and so on.

Recent research in adult psychology (Reiss, 2005) has shown the fact that the spectrum of personality changes is manifested more strongly after 55-65 years of age, and the values which become relevant for the adult, and which can be found within the motivation picture are: honor, family and family heritage – with powerful connections in the sphere of the children's needs, in their turn young adults, parents (Dix, 2004), the idealism with certain significant associations with the community/society,

expectations and opportunities having a real impact over the level of motivation (McDermott – see 9).

2. The adult's motivation between the complicity of definitions and the perspective of major directions

2.1. The logic of substantial definitions

Without a substantive understanding of what the game of motivation and motives means within the personality of the adult, the references will run the risk of receiving not only severe criticism, but also a superficial understanding of the nature of the changing phenomenon.

For the conception of this study certain essential statements should be remembered [1; 17; 18]: Statement **a**: The motivation of the adult is a complex structure, poly-functional, having the status of:

vital condition of anticipating their success;

energy source necessary in order to attain the established goals;

significant vector for the yielding and ensuring of quality in an organization;

useful premise in saving and/or avoiding useless, in excess, or minimal efforts;

mechanism that empowers the rational-organizational model of efficient and effective work;

device that orients actions towards the interaction with other energies specific to the human psychism (Frankin, 1994);

process oriented and supported from the inside (Pintvich și Shunk, 2002);

channel discreetly directing behaviour options (Bjorklund, 2001);

determiner of the confluences between the variables of social cognition (e.g. interpersonal constructions) and the adults' strategies of producing/inducing/sensitizing to comfort, their synergy yielding what Brant R. Burleson (professor with the Department of Communication of the Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA) called the "empathic motivation" [3].

Statement **b**: The semantic repertoire of key-concepts is characterized by a slight translation of stress from the paradigm of unique and polarized motivation (e.g. extrinsic-intrinsic) towards particular forms with various weighting on the continuum between the two poles: stimulation – restrictiveness, encouragement-discouragement, the reactions of the conduct being the expression of certain idiosyncrasies specific to the life of an adult facing several roles.

Statement **c**: At the level of measurable effects, the normative direction towards the standardized/accepted optimum seems profitable (see the requirements and targets of certain EU directives concerning higher education and the freedoms in other countries, such as the USA). Hence the question: can we talk about an effective framework for the dissemination of successful experiences evaluated by methods of statistical and descriptive analysis, variance or regression analysis, correlation indices etc.), and to what extent are they ecologically valid?

Statement **d**: In examining the motivation of the adult, scientists take on the problem of cultural differences/disparities, of self-management, of social context and dynamics of the progressive passage, or by means of a shock, from youth to the adult age, by the highly evaluative filter of the formal education/higher education studies.

Example: The case of today's universities seems clarifying. The color and diversity of their motivation is a difficult to define one, with, for Romania, a dominant refreshing note, despite certain turbulence connected with a certain state, hopefully a transitory one: the unemployment spectrum in some vulnerable areas, the abrupt entry in the zone of decision autonomy without the corresponding material and financial support, vulnerability in terms of too deep or too unbalanced specializations in certain professional field, the professional uncertainty of graduating the first three study years (What will do the over 50% of the bachelor's degree graduates who will not attend master courses? – this is a question which has no answer within the current legislation); the passage to the paid studies within the state higher education, the numerical (and not qualitative) growth of open and long distance education graduates, the increased offer to simultaneously attend several specializations, the giving up of the standards ensured by the selection operated by means of an entrance examination for higher education studies, the increase of the students' age interval (over 35-45 years of age), a relatively significant involvement in attending a second faculty (both with consequences over the multiplication of roles – student, employee, parent), the increase of the European interuniversity mobility, new perceptions over the value of the university diploma etc.

To conclude here, we note major changes, out of which some are innovative, in the expectations of the young adults, in their life and activity styles, in their key competences, in the motivational spectrum of the adults, but there are others which seem quite rushed by decisions which have not been pondered on enough.

The possible explanations can be included within some new reference frameworks, namely (i) by the socio-cognitive model (Bandura, 1986; Shunk, 1989; Zimmerman, 1990; Pintrich and Shrauben, 1992 and other.); (ii) the complexity of the environment/context in which the activity is taking place; (iii) the determining value of the synergy of cognition, conation (see the metacognitive learning styles) and of the affective emotionality (anxiety, stress, motivation and so forth).

Hence the increasing interest towards modeling the adult's motivational variables (Dunkin and Biddle, 1974; Knoff and Batsche, 1991), the frame values pertinent to [16, p.9 și p. 18]: o family (values, financial situation, culture, expectations and so on); o institution in which the person works (laws, values, organizational culture, political and ideological elements, social projects and so forth); o the social group and the community in which the person lives (mandate, goals, missions, values, culture, relationships, human resources, financial resources etc.); o educational space: educators, the school culture, training programs, motivations, participatory values, attitudes, experiences, conceptions and so on); o the personality of the adults themselves (age, sex, social reference milieu, intellectual and spiritual capacities, attitudes, values, previous experience and culture, defined expectations or less definable aspirations and so forth).

3. Major orientations in explaining the motivated adult conduct

3.1. The classical model and orientations in the domain of the motivation of the adults frequently tell us that these are motivated by the elements of rationality – economic, social, psychobiological, by learning and social cognition needs, with, as

organizing mechanisms, the social normativity, the group, the impulses, the rewarding stimuli (rewards and punishments), the maps and styles of social cognition, the effective communication and so on.

3.2. The factorial model subject-work-social group introduces the concept of positive feedback of the interaction among the three factors, the significance of the flows being explained by the American expert J. O'Tool (1973) as follows: the activity (physical, mental) --> (generates a value added (product, creation) --> for other people (it configures sociality) for the group). Hence the possible explanation why, in various countries, differences appear among managerial styles (see the differences between the Japanese and the American ones), among the motivational styles of social activity (for instance, in Japan, the social element is simultaneously a cultural, procedural and mental one, more articulated and more consistent, being attentively communicated and received by the proximal social milieu of managers), and between the level and the life styles (connected to values such as money, work, social commitment, creation, sociality (sharing of joys or sorrows -E.E.Nishibori, 1971).

3.3. The model of continuous/permanent education introduces the frame-idea according to which 'anyone wishing to create a plan for instructing and learning needs some planning of motivations, has to create a dimensional flow of the relationships/connections between the instructor and the learner in order to promote the best and possible educational route/experience, as well as the potentialities of resources in order to stimulate the interest of adults in relationship with the balance of their motivations (needs, attitudes, stimulations, effects, competences, reinforcement, expectations, roles)'. On such grounds Wlodkowski [17] considers the following as noticeable/detectable indicators for the motivation of the adult: A motivated adult surpasses in performances and results (added values) an unmotivated adult;

- If we feel that an adult who is learning is not motivated, then we can say that there is not deep learning taking place;
- Instructing adults can be a pleasure and a joy, therefore it is stimulating for the two actors of education;
- The adults who leave the educational environment feel motivation more clearly if they have an interest connected with their future, to which the fact whether they learn how to use whatever they have learned can be added;
- The adults' efforts in excess as to learning can be limited if they have developed/practiced study skills, or if the instruction is a qualitative one;
- The adults' perseverance is an indicator that measures motivation, its presence being noticeable in the time allotted to work and in the intensity per study unit that they have planned to have.

3.4. The metatheoretical model of motivation (Barbuto and Schooll, 1998, 2000) turns operational and makes the inventory of motivational sources, creating a list of 30 items (Motivational Sources Inventory – MSI), connecting the behavioral tactics of the adult with what the quoted authors call as 'transformational behaviors'. Thus, five big sources for the motivation of the adult are listed [2]:

- intrinsic processes (existential, physiological, intrinsic sensorial, the pleasure of approaching tasks and so forth);
- instrumental processes (of security, satisfaction, extrinsic, calculative, opportunistic, of power, inductive and so on);
- the external self-concept (relational, love, satisfaction, belonging to a group, social-moral, interpersonal, conformism, and so forth);
- the internal self-concept (development, self-esteem, personal standards, behavioral roles, change, awareness, achievement, aspirations and so on);
- internalized goals (self-fulfillment, internalization of values, morality, inter-individuality, autonomy etc.).

It is worth mentioning that such an applied dynamic, specific to the motivational approaches of the adult in the rural American environment replicates the above-examined model (see 2), being empirically carried out by the University of Nebraska, USA specialists.

3.5. The model of motivational barriers (AHL, 2006) has an operational explanatory value for the failures of the adult. Essential in terms of allotting a real or a virtual explanation are the following barriers [1]: insufficient self-esteem, insufficient trust in the efficiency of the negative professional experience (the school-connected one included); expectations repeatedly unfulfilled, identifying oneself with a social group characterized by poor education; the lack of time-focused interests; the postponement of solving out emergencies and so on.

As far as continuous education is concerned, the following can be identified: the absence of opportunities; irrelevant information; inadequacy of arrangements meant for the children; uncertainty concerning their education financing; timetable problems; poor pedagogical approach of his self-informing as an adult; non-stimulating social norms in view of self-development; precarious organization of activity and so on.

3.6. The motivational – transactional-economic model

According to one of the prestigious international marketing experts, Prof. Philip Kotler, PhD (The Kellogg Management Faculty, Northwestern University), five big categories of socio-economic motives/needs can be noticed with an adult: 'expressed, real, unexpressed, secret, of delight (psychologically oversized), and which are connected with their personal dignity' [6, p.29]. All this indicates a new orientation of the conduct, namely the strong personalization of the motivational spectrum. Starting from needs – social wants – preferences (see especially those regarding the media), successful experiences, psychographic ones, fidelity, potential values of the 'client' status (salary, social position and so on), behaviors having economic explanations can be detected, explaining the wide variation in terms of the expectations levels, on the one hand, and the satisfaction of the various adult groups, on the other. This motivational variation is generated and explained by the following [6]:

- a) searching costs sizing (time, money, effort, insistence);
- b) area of knowledge opportunities (direct, indirect, mediated);
- c) mobility of the adults as to the product (range, brand competition);
- d) probability of the repetition of the product buying action;
- e) satisfaction previously produced by a product (real, declared, potential), defining the value perceived by the client (VPC) and the total value for the client (VTC).

Other authors (Rayport and Jarowski, 2001) discuss the presence of the transactional conduct motivations, their force on the relationships market being given by the perceived synergy of at least seven elements/the model of the seven C factors: "context, content, communication, community, connection and the client" [6, p.9].

4. Indicators with significant power in the motivation of the adult

The analysis of today adult's motivation, especially that of the young one, raises rather serious problems. In support of this statement we can resort to some key points, some of them having critical mass values, others expressing trends, some being able to generate new approaches, and others configuring, by identifying mechanisms, behaviors involving risk, difficult to manage intelligently. We mention only some of the inventory items [see 5, p. 135]:

4.1. Explicit or implicit motivational conflict among the job, career, family/home and each person's self, these reflecting different roles, various capacities of control over the personal life, balancing times difficult to anticipate, changes of priorities, variable indices of security/safety (firstly financial ones), conflict developments, mental answers with or without assuming action responsibilities, in function also of the maturing of the contextual values or of the adults themselves (for instance, in the USA significant changes in the nature of motivational conflicts have taken place after the events on September 11, 2001).

4.2. Motivation for competence has the status of a strongly noticeable signpost, it is obviously a successful one, it operates in an argumentative and persuasive manner, it has biosocioemotional consequences, it is controllable (Tardiff, 1992), it is subordinated to attributional perception (Weiner, 1992), it constantly utilizes self-regulating strategies – metacognitive and of socio-motivational management ones (Zimmerman, 1986), it induces autonomy in the self-evaluation of efficiency, it facilitates the acquisition of declarative and procedural knowledge, it significantly influences over performances, which become sources of quality, of maintaining self-confidence (A. Tesser, 1988), it produces jealousy (Clark and Bennett, 1992), it projects new personal aspirations (DeSteno and Salovey, 1996), it becomes an authentic explorative source for social psychology [see 10].

4.3. Life styles, the cognitive and learning ones provide powerful color and nuance to the conduct motivations due to their force and quality. Style characterizes the distinct manner which adults favor in order to: think, learn, understand and organize their experiences and knowledge; perceive and approach information; utilize in a preferential manner the perceptual structures, those of representation and the imaginative ones in solving up of the problems in a variety of situations (Legendre, 1993); make full use of their intelligence in a valuable manner (Sternberg, 1986), as well as of the cognitive processes, both in the strategies of approaching their profession, and also in the social learning (Weinstein and Mezer, 1986), in establishing and developing their emotional-affective states (Tomkins, 1984; Kironak, 1993), in the increase of their conscience prominence over the essential things worthiness; ensure a relevant dynamic and a consistency in motivation (Weiner, 1992) on the road of engagement, perseverance and performance within a certain context [16, p.36].

4.4. Motivation of continuous/lifelong learning, represents more than a key concept, namely it is a paradigm, with assumptions and re-assumptions (since the '70s). The way has been known since Paul Lengrand wrote his report "An introduction to lifelong learning" (1970), getting to the UNESCO report "The world of Education Today and Tomorrow" (1972), and then through the report "Recurrent education: a strategy for lifelong learning", to the Delors Report "Education, a hidden treasure", and from the White Book of the European Commission "To teach and to learn – for the knowledge society" up to the European Union document EURYDICE "Lifelong learning: the contribution of the education systems in the member states of the EU" (2000).

All these documents have as their main core the paradigm of the adults education in its various hypostases: education based on flexible timetable (and evening courses), professional reconversion/for social promotion, initial training in alternation, connection centers of work-education-training, long distance education and so on and so forth [see 7].

The variety of the sources of documentary inspiration oriented towards the study of adult learning have included at least three categories of basal statements (out of a set of 30), namely (i) concerning the motivation of learning (n=6); (ii) concerning the acquisition of knowledge/information (n=14) and concerning the maximization of the group learning experience (n=10).

The first category, of interest for us, has in its construction statements according to which the adults [see Zemke, 2006]:

- cannot be constrained to learn, but they can be organized, stimulated, made aware of the continuous learning qualities/values;
- receive learning experiences allowing them to cope with the events which change their life (marriage, schooling and so on);
- live events are cumulative and they get refined through the filter of will, priorities, commitment and dedication to innovative change;
- permanent learning/study is both a means and a way, the goal being the enrichment of life, promotion in one's profession, pleasure, love for knowledge, maintaining self-confidence, social success, the balance between aspirations/expectations and achievements.

5. The adults' motivations – reverberations in the young people's options and conduct – transfer and value interferences

The quality of the human capital represented by adults, especially as far as the relational - modeling line is concerned for the young generation, has nowadays got powerful impact values, not always of the positive type. For the argumentation, we resort to two primary sources from the Romanian empirical research.

What does empirical research tell us?

Case study A. Values of the empirical research resulting from a study carried out by a team of experts of the Institute of Education Sciences (coordinated by St. Popenici, PhD), published in 2005 [12].

The premises of the study:

a) the acquisition and positive valuation of the conduct, success and values expressed by adults can be considered as models of behavioral success, of consistent and relevant signposts, from the axiological and praxeological points of view, for the personal, professional, family and widely social motivational spectrum of a young person, a future adult;

b) the social presence of adult models in the existential motivations of a (young) subject or a group of young subjects covariates significantly with the presence of the adults within the public space (TV, press, sports, business) and only partially within the education one;

c) the motivations of the options, choices, taking-overs and transfers of values of the adults' conduct are more important than the "nominated character" (it is not a typical, but a generative type of profile).

Sample: 2007 subjects, from the urban milieu (n=1834) and from the rural one (n=173), out of which boys – 46,2% and girls –

53,8%, all at post-middle school level, senior years (1452 high school students and 555 students from vocational schools). The results error margin was of + 2,2%.

Results (synthesis):

a) The students' preferences for the adults considered as models of success, visible and appreciated as 'critical' signposts of the anticipative socialization by means of the opinion leaders, of the public exposure on TV, of the power of attraction, of the projection of the desired image, of being famous, of the money, of competence.

Statistical data (decreasing ranks):

- Criterion A – model of success: TV stars – 36,5%; family members – 16,64%; sports people – 13,3%; business people – 11,2%; teachers – 7,5%; politicians – 5%; mates, friends; arts and culture people – 1,2%.

- Criterion B: The dominant feature of the motive which has filtered the option: professional fulfillment – 30,4%; being famous – 24,7%; money – 20,3%; intelligence – 16,8%; social-interpersonal competence – 15,9%; physical beauty – 10,4%; tenaciousness and personal success – 9,9%; power, independence, personality – 6,5%; family – 4,4%; credibility – 2,9%; education – 2,6%; goodness, altruism – 2,5%; religiousness – 1%.

Combination between Criterion A+B – The model + perceived qualities association:

- stars: being famous – 37,6%; professional fulfillment – 28,2%; physical beauty – 22,1%;
- family members: competence and interpersonal relationships – 28,3%; professional fulfillment – 22,2%; tenaciousness – 17,8%; intelligence – 15,5%.

- Sports: professional fulfillment – 44,5%; being famous – 38,7%; money – 30,3%;

- Business people: money – 53%; professional fulfillment – 31%; being famous – 26%;

- Teachers: professional and interpersonal competence – 50%; professional fulfillment – 27,6%; intelligence – 19,4%;

- Arts and humanities people: intelligence – 31,8%; professional fulfillment and being famous – 27,3%

- It is worth remembering that side of the balance of the model – extra-model polarity (items of the “I would not like to be like...” type) – which shows us that the Romanian young people are under the sign of maturity as well, of rejection of non-exemplary elements, of the perception of certain negative social or personal features. Here are some statistical excerpts: stars – 34,9%; politicians – 14,2%; neighbors – 7,6%; family members – 7,2%; teachers – 6,5%; friends – 6%; business people – 5,5% etc.

The reasons for the rejection were as follows: inadequate behavior (violence, arrogance, vulgarity) – 23,8%; negative psychical features (badness, stupidity, negative character) – 16,2%; lack of goal – 6,3%; low level of education and culture – 4,7%; disagreement between the personal potential and the social status – 4,2%; high-risk consumption – star-like behavior, lies, cheating – 13,4%.

Preliminary conclusions: what matters are the effects of the actions of success, and not the qualities generating success; the obvious external/which can be easily materialized qualities are appreciated, and not the intrinsic ones= culture/education; attention over character values escapes from the hard core of today's education.

Case study B. Values with motivational power in the field of young adults' life – poll research in 2006 – 200 teachers sitting for the permanent level or second degree examinations – (aged between 26 years and 35 years). Specializations: counselor teachers, psychologists, sociologists, pedagogues, foreign languages teachers, psycho-pedagogues, teachers of entrepreneurial education, human resources from the southern counties of the country: Bucharest, Brasov, Buzau, Arges, Dambovită, Gorj, Ialomița, Teleorman, Valcea, Prahova, Sibiu.

The picture of the first 30 values which were included in the inventory (partially not ranked): family; career/profession; freedom of thinking and action; self-fulfillment; conservation of one's own values; material comfort and money; free time; travels and hobbies; communication; making full use of each moment of one's life; health; love; luck; continuous development, social recognition; deep self-analysis; relationship with God.

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