Adult Education

Tsartsarakis Antonios[1], Kyriakidou Rodopi[2]

[1]*(Primary Education, Greece)*
[2]*(Primary Education, Greece)*

Abstract:
Adult education has been in the spotlight in recent years and many teachers choose to engage in it, mainly for personal, social and professional purposes. Adults, trying to cope with constant growth, acquire more and more qualifications, either for personal pleasure or to achieve goals and ambitions. The acquisition of qualifications in Greece is done through various training programs, which are now also done with the help of modern technological means, such as digital platforms and online courses. In addition to the above, adult education can help educate immigrants for their faster integration into society. As the characteristics of adult learners differ from those of children, adult education offers more flexibility and the individual needs and aspirations of each learner are taken into account.
Key Word: education; adult; development.

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I. Introduction

In recent years, adult education has been the main focus of many teachers and educational institutions, whether we are talking about schools and educational institutions, but also in political and cultural contexts. This trend is spreading rapidly and in large percentages of adults. Adults or teachers seem to wish to become learners for a variety of reasons, at a variety of levels and subjects. These reasons are mainly personal, social or even professional. At the same time, educational developments and ever-increasing educational programs give more and more options and opportunities to adults who are willing or need to learn. Thus, training can be aimed at personal pleasure, as a way to achieve goals and individual ambitions. Be that as it may, in today's era education opens up many avenues, not only for the personal fulfillment of the individual, but it influences and plays an essential role in the economy in general.

Also, in the 21st century, where technology is developing at lightning speeds, labor market demands and social challenges are increasing more and more. In this climate of constant change and demand, the individual has no choice but to keep up with the facts and events. Adults in order to cope with the continuous development, globalization and social mandate, need to resort to the acquisition of further specialized knowledge. Thus, it is observed that large percentages of adults, whether working or not, are increasingly enrolling in new educational programs and seminars with the aim of improving their status. This status can respond to personal, professional, social contexts and be a point of recognition of the individual. Furthermore, there is no shortage of conducting various researches that confirm that lifelong learning is a tool for creating the edifice called development. This is also the driving force for educational development in a knowledge and skills demanding society. The competition is getting tougher and adults, like in a gym, must equip themselves with the right weapons for best performance and survival. Also important is the personal journey of each adult towards their individual ambitions and achievements (Sideri, 2020).

II. Adult Education In Greece

Adult education in Greece is promising, fraught with many challenges and opportunities. Political responsibility and assistance in the field of education and its institutions seems to have made significant progress in recent years. Despite everything, it is judged that there is still enough room for change and improvement. First of all, the diagram of the Greek adult education system includes various levels and subjects of learning, such as vocational training, but also higher education. However, despite all the efforts to preserve and promote these possibilities, many problems are also encountered, such as the lack of resources and funds, as well as the low participation of stakeholders. Another complicated issue is that many vocational training programs, while offered by registered educational institutions, training organizations and a multitude of businesses, are out of step with the real needs and demands of the outside world. In more detail, it is found that through these programs, proper preparation and the necessary practical training for meeting and connecting with

the labor market are not provided. One progress that could be noted is that in recent years programs have been developed to train the unemployed and increase employment opportunities. Also, part of the progress is the provision of assistance for their reintegration into the professional sector. Also, development of the field of lifelong learning is monitored, through initiatives to promote continuous education and professional improvement. Finally, it is important to mention that Greece has also made significant progress in the use of technologies in adult learning processes. More specifically, many technological means of teaching have been adopted, such as digital platforms and online courses, which provide opportunities and access to adults from anywhere and at any time. In the above ways, absolute flexibility and continuous provision of educational resources is ensured (Mouzakis, 2006).

The education of immigrants in Greece

The education of immigrants in Greece is a broad field. Indeed, Greece welcomes an ever-increasing population of immigrants and refugees. The education of these groups needs importance and attention, so that their integration into Greek society is achieved and they can communicate and dialogue with the locals.

In Greece, the education of immigrants takes place in various forms. For example, there are plenty of Greek language courses available to immigrants from charities and government agencies. These courses have as their core the learning of the Greek language and there are not a few times that they also transmit cultural elements of Greece, as well as information on their integration.

Of course, one of the biggest problems that immigrants face is the initial opportunity to access these types of education. Very often it happens that they themselves lack basic knowledge, but also social skills. More specifically, most of immigrants do not speak Greek at all, nor English, which is considered the world's common language, and find it difficult to establish social relations with foreigners. Thus, their access to the offered education meets obstacles from the beginning. In addition, another important issue is that there is no properly trained staff, or more specifically, not enough, making equal adult learning more difficult.

During the last years and with the continuous geopolitical developments, it seems that greater efforts are being made by international and local organizations to combat the above challenges. Another element that could be developed is the inclusion of multiculturalism in the educational sector of adult learners, so that there is greater security and comfort for immigrants to follow certain patterns of education that will give them many opportunities and supplies (Theodorakopoulou, Redifis, 2016).

Characteristics of adult learners

The key characteristics of adults in education differ from those of individuals in younger age groups. Of course, when it comes to education and teaching, diversity and the individual needs and aspirations of the individual should always be taken into account. However, groups of adults present some specific characteristics that are common that inform educational institutions and the learner more about the optimal outcome of the learning process. To begin with, adult learners are most often characterized by a greater degree of maturity, self-awareness and self-direction in contrast to children. Indeed, they seem to possess the ability to self-organize themselves in relation to their educational effort and course, but also to take personal responsibility for monitoring and optimally accomplishing its goals, while they also prefer active attendance of lessons. In addition, and based on the previous characteristic, adult students are often characterized by previous experiences and knowledge on educational topics and learning objects. This fact, it is possible to greatly affect their perceptive capacity under the acceptance and processing of new knowledge. Additionally, adult learners appear to have prescribed and specific achievement goals. This alone can make adult learners more focused and effective, as they often aim for their personal fulfillment, the development of their professional abilities or the acquisition of new knowledge for a generalized fulfillment of a social role or the further acquisition of prestige. Also, adults appear more settled in the type and method of learning they prefer and bear optimal fruition for those on the educational scale. For example, some decide to prefer theoretical practices, while on the contrary, others prefer a highly practical application, but there are also those who enjoy combined methods.

On the other hand, the learning and educational processes of adults are imbued with difficulties and difficulties, which need to be reviewed for the correct formation of their education programs. A key issue for adults is time and availability. Clearly, most children have the sole role of learner, while adults occupy multiple roles in their daily lives. Thus, adults often have limited time for education since they have their jobs, families and other obligations. In addition, adults are often faced with financial difficulties that directly and indirectly concern their participation in the educational ladder. Educational processes often involve significant financial costs, such as tuition fees, educational materials such as books and learning and practice tools. Travel costs are often included, as well as other costs that pertain to each individual case, e.g. nanny for the kids and more. Thus, many adults who do not possess financial flexibility seem to have difficulty in supporting and settling their educational obligations. We must add that many adults are characterized by a lack of confidence in their abilities in certain learning subjects. Their insecurity can hinder their participation and their appetite for "involvement" in

educational programs and seminars. Within these feelings of insecurity and personal deterrence are the shame and insecurity of lacking basic skills. These skills often have to do with reading, writing, numeracy and the use of technology or other more sophisticated means of learning. Finally, a very important issue that acts as a pendulum in the adult's decision about his education, is the social stigma. In many cases, the adult is possessed by the fear of the judgment of his social environment for this venture (Tsibouklis, Phillips, 2010).

In this climate, the inclusivity and adaptability of educational programs to the above characteristics, but also limitations, is of great importance.

Approaches to adult education

As mentioned, adult education is an imperative in today's society and can be done through multiple approaches/models. The different approaches that can be used to accomplish this can fall within and depend on a variety of factors. Perhaps they respond to personal interests, to a multitude of needs, but also to the capabilities and characteristics of adults.

Thus, adult education can have that individual-centered form and directly address the individual needs of each adult, their personal journey, their interests and their abilities and goals. So the teacher who uses the present method should take into account the cognitive level of the adult, his skills and inclinations, and clearly his social and cultural level. Based on all of the above, the content of teaching, as well as its objects and means, should be adapted. Also, training can take the form of a training and further training program within the framework of the educational sector. More and more large companies, groups and employers offer a wide range of training opportunities to their employees. In this way, adults have the opportunity to acquire new knowledge backgrounds or even further, being in contact with their immediate professional area. Another positive of this approach is that the newly acquired knowledge can be directly applied in the same environment from which it entered. Thus, there is a double benefit for both the employee and the employers. Also, as mentioned above, there is also the prevailing model of lifelong learning, where the individual has education and knowledge as a journey and perhaps an end in itself, not only as a destination. For the adult who chooses this model, that is, there are no borders for his desire for new information and learning. Learning, that is, does not respond to specific objects and specific phases and periods of life, but is a continuous, a life project. The reasons why adults are encouraged to continue their education can be varied and correspond to different needs. Primarily, the continuation of the acquisition of knowledge is done through programs, manuals, but also various activities. Another emerging approach is learning through the use of technology. Most of the population today are familiar with technology items such as smart phone, tablet and desktop computer. With these technology tools, adults have countless opportunities both in abundance and in media e.g. videos, texts, etc. that they could acquire and expand their knowledge. The internet also offers countless opportunities to find teachers with digital courses and capabilities, digital training and information platforms, and many more digital media and tools, just at the click of a few buttons and without the need for further travel or disruption.

All the above theoretical approaches to adult education also fall into some learning models based on their characteristics. These models fall into three broad categories: the anthropological and psychological models, the philosophical and reflective models, and the internal and external drive models.

Some of the most popular models are shown below. The model of Knowles (1968), as it was called "andragogical", is one of the most well-known models for the learning of an adult and consists of six different elements that make it far from the pedagogical character that corresponds to the science of education and is addressed to younger ages. According to this model, adults are classified based on their need for knowledge, their orientation to learning, their experiences, their self-concept, their learning readiness.

Cross's model is an extension of the previous model and focuses on the characteristics of each adult and makes a clear distinction between the characteristics of adults and children, as well as proposes differentiating the learning style of adults from that of children. This separation is made through the characteristics that have to do with the "personal" and "situational" elements of the individual.

The rest of the adult education models are briefly mentioned:
☐ The McClusky model,
☐ The transformational learning model (Mezirow),
☐ The self-directed learning model (self-directed learning Tough),
☐ The proficiency model (Profigiency Theory Knox),
☐ The learning process model (Jarvis).

III. Conclusion

Adult education is an increasingly important issue and affects both individual and social development. With the spread of technology and globalization, as well as with the increase in professional requirements, the education of adults, or their further education, is at the center of attention. This shows the constant need for

development in the professional, social and individual spheres, as well as the requirements for achieving the above goals. Certainly the education of adults and adult immigrants most often provides improvement goods and advances their careers. Social integration can be achieved through these programs, in addition to personal improvement and professional advancement. There are many methods, approaches and models of learning for adult learners and they are able to choose according to their interests as well as their capabilities. Lifelong learning seems to dominate and the improvement of the individual's abilities, but also the acquisition of new ones is now a continuous journey. Learning in any case must be adapted to each level and subject, as well as the needs and desires of the adult-students. In conclusion, it would be good to continue the funds in education, so that there is continuous improvement, resources, equipment, but also teacher training for maximum efficiency.

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