

Abstract

“An Adult as a Learning Subject. Adults' attitudes towards their own participation in formal education and some of the factors influencing these attitudes”

The subject of this doctoral dissertation is the attitudes of adults toward their participation in formal education. The inspiration for undertaking this research was the concept of lifelong learning, recognized as one of the key references in educational reflection within the context of contemporary social realities. Although the issues of adulthood and education from a lifelong learning perspective are widely addressed in the literature, topics concerning adults' attitudes toward the learning process itself and their active engagement are relatively rarely explored. The analysis of this phenomenon becomes particularly significant in the context of globalization, digitalization, and increasing labor market demands, which emphasize mobility, flexibility, and adaptability.

The aim of the research was to deepen the understanding of the mechanisms shaping educational attitudes in adulthood and to provide a basis for recommendations for teaching practice. A mixed-methods approach, including longitudinal studies, enabled the analysis of both the structure of attitudes and their changes over time, taking into account diverse conditions, from demographic characteristics and educational experiences to the influence of social and family environments. The study group consisted of students in post-secondary schools, a population previously marginalized in pedagogical research. From a cognitive perspective, the research allowed for a detailed examination of adults' attitudes toward participation in formal education in public post-secondary schools, both at the beginning and at the end of the educational cycle. The results revealed their dynamic nature, showing the educational process as an experience shaping personality and educational behaviors. From a theoretical perspective, the research expands the understanding of adults' educational attitudes as multidimensional constructs deeply rooted in individual biographies, whose variability results from the interplay of environmental, familial, professional, and personal factors. The findings indicate that formal education for adults is not limited to acquiring qualifications but also constitutes a space for the transformation of attitudes, identity, and social engagement.

Keywords: adults' attitudes towards education, formal education, lifelong learning, adult education, post-secondary students