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The positive and negative effects of formal adult education on the sense of comfort

The author in her thesis categorises the functions of adult education from the individual's point of view, whether it focuses on the labour market or the individual's life quality. Both function groups allow to create a function of a new aspect, i.e. the establishment of the comfort feeling. According to Kispálné Horváth, Mária comfort feeling is an umbrella term including the following dimensions: feeling of safety, lifestyle, time structure, psychological dispositions, social relations and the usability of knowledge. The author analyses the positive effects of formal adult education on several segments of comfort feeling, as well as presents the potential negative effects of formal adult education.

A function of adult education from a new aspect: creating and enhancing the feeling of comfort

Creating and enhancing the sense of comfort is essential for an adult in the 21st century as crucial changes have happened both in the economy and labour market since the last few decades. These changes have had a significant effect on social factors, the lifestyle, mentality and mood of people, as well. As a result of globalisation, opportunities of the individual have been broadened in many aspects, although, we experience constant changes all walks of life, we have to live in the world of everything is uncertain. It is a balked area without any external and internal limits on which balks are continuously being changed (Mátrai, 2009). In the world of uncertainty creating the sense of comfort can be crucially important; and the formal and non-formal adult education with its positive effects can also contribute to it. Thus, creating and developing the sense of comfort can be interpreted as a function of adult education which can be also put into the function group that concentrates on the labour market and quality of life. The 1st table shows one possible grouping of the functions of adult education from the individual's perspective.

1. table: One possible grouping of the functions of adult education from the individual's perspective

1. táblázat: A felnőttképzési funkciók egy lehetséges csoportosítása az egyén szemszögéből

	Function group, concentrating on the labour market	Function group, concentrating on the quality of life
Main scene	Formal training	Non-formal training
Main goal	Enhancing the individual's economic role taking and employability	Personal development of the individual, and the improvement of the individual's quality of life

Direction of development	Development of the human capital	Development of the human resources
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Function ensuring qualificational competence ▪ Function of stabilization ▪ Function of substitution ▪ Function of correction ▪ Function of parking court ▪ Function creating and enhancing the sense of comfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Function of personal development ▪ Function of recreation ▪ Function of lifestyle-forming ▪ Adult-socializing, lifestyle-coordinating function ▪ Communal-civil function ▪ Function creating and enhancing the sense of comfort

Based on my readings, the sense of comfort is an umbrella term, which – in relation with the formal and non-formal adult education – has the following dimensions:

1. existential and emotional sense of security
2. lifestyle, the chance of forming the lifestyle freely
3. time structure, the freedom of time management
4. psychic dispositions
5. social relations, social networks
6. the usability and transfer of knowledge

Hereinafter, I am shortly presenting the positive and negative effects of formal trainings on the above mentioned dimensions of the sense of comfort.

The positive effects of formal trainings on the adults' sense of comfort

By obtaining a qualification through formal adult education training, the individual's chances increase at the labour market and thereby his existential sense of security, as well (Dimension 1). The existential motives have a significantly important role among the learning motives in adulthood, especially in the case of adults who attend formal trainings. When I studied college students in adult education in 2005 and 2006, I could present that in the case of 37% of the correspondent students the existential motif was the strongest, while 47% chose the interest motif and 16% chose the prestige motif as the most dominant one. However, studying the motives with GPAs (grade point averages), it could be stated that the existential motif is the strongest among students with the best GPA and the weakest with the worst GPA (*Kispálné Horváth, 2007b*).

The good academic records in formal training and positive feedback from the teachers can enhance the self-confidence of an adult and can lead him or her to the sense of achievement in the formal training (Dimension 4).

Those adults who attend formal trainings establish new personal relationships and a part of these relationships last still after the end of the training, as well (Dimension 5). While individuals are attending these formal trainings, they can make friends, can help each other and the relationship network can also broaden. Friendship is probably rarer but social relations and relationships which support and assist the participants in the learning process or in other fields of life during the training are more frequent.

If the natural learning method is more dominant in formal training – during which the emphasis is on the utilization of the knowledge, experiences, practical application – adults feel themselves better during the training, they are more motivated and it has a positive effect on their sense of comfort (Dimension 6). Adults have extensive knowledge of reality, wisdom, work experience, literacy and multiple experiences which definitely influence their learning and teaching process. Adults require the fulfilment of student-based learning paradigm instead of the teacher-based one. The students' sense of comfort can naturally be influenced by the teachers, as well. It may happen throughout their professional competence, preparedness, social competences, their abilities which can create sufficient learning environment, complete understanding of the teacher's role and personality.

The negative effects of formal trainings on the adults' sense of comfort

Attending a longer formal training, which takes more years, may have a negative effect on the existential sense of security of the adults (Dimension 1), as based on my experiences, the studying adults are afraid of the fact that certain drawbacks may affect them at their workplace because they study; or because of learning they suffer from conflicts at the workplace.

As learning is a secondary activity along work for the vast majority of adults, learning programs can happen besides work, in the leisure time (*Csoma, 2004*). Consequently, attending formal trainings has a pressure-like influence on the individual's lifestyle and time management: his leisure time and time spent with the family become reduced, as well as the hours spent with sleeping (but a little slighter than in the case of the two former categories) (Dimension 2 and 3). In my research, which was conducted among correspondence students, it was found that the lifestyle of their vast majority, 93%, changed during their higher

education studies; and 33% of them had big chances in lifestyle. Analysing their time management, it can be stated that again 93% of the adult students reduced leisure time and 67% of them slept less than previously. 86% of the students spent less time with their families during the training (*Kispálné Horváth, 2007a*). In this field, the existing negative effects can be intensified or reduced by the organizers of the training by the facts of how organized the training is; what the information flow is like between the students, teachers and organizers and in what degree – as far as possible – the related needs of the adult students are taken into consideration.

Testing in the formal training may increase the anxiety of the adults (Dimension 4). Adults experience the evaluation in a more different way than children because evaluations and marks often play an existential and prestigious role for them. Social and psychic specialities are the core elements of learning in adulthood; moreover, there is a correlation between them: the adult's individual psychic features like fatigue, lack of time and multiple tasks of the nervous system originate from the sociological, social specialities in adulthood (*Durkó, 1998*). Besides the socio-cultural situation, lack of time and learning-methodical deficiencies, the feeling of shame significantly influence the adults' learning process and their attendance in the formal training (*Koltai, 2003*). In the already mentioned research I showed that students mentioned anxiety about testing as their most frequent weakness in learning from the eleven options. Moreover, analysing the heightened state of mind during exams, it could be stated that for 51% of students it was absolutely no matter who the examiner was, what the subject and method of the exam were and how prepared they were, as they were rather anxious because of the exam situation (*Kispálné Horváth, 2007b*).

Regarding people who learn in formal training besides work, conflicts at the workplace and within the family may increase because of the constraint of triple correspondence (Dimension 5). As it was presented in my research, which I have already mentioned, 39% of the working students have difficulties with fulfilling the requirements at the workplace because of their studies. Additionally, 27% of them had conflicts at their workplace since they had been studying. 20% of them reported conflicts within their family because of their higher education studies (*Kispálné Horváth, 2007a*).

When the artificial learning method and the education-oriented teaching paradigm start getting importance in the formal training, then adults do not find much pleasure in the training and may become under-motivated (Dimension 6).

Besides further studies about the positive and negative effects of formal trainings on the sense of comfort, an interesting research area can be also the analysis of the non-formal

trainings' effects. In my opinion, those effects are only positive because of the adults' interest and the nature of training (e.g.: study circles, clubs, trainings, open university).

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