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PROFESSIONALISATION IN THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING IN THE TERRITORY OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA¹

ABSTRACT

In this paper we discuss the professionalisation of adult education and learning in the territory of former Yugoslavia. The rationale behind the paper is based on the presumption that the process of professionalisation represents a reflection of social conditions, tradition, culture, development of higher education institutions, the scientific/knowledge base for a certain field on the main elements of the profession. Our aim is to critically discuss professionalisation in the field of adult education and learning with a threefold focus (on the profession, representing the sociological dimension, on professionalism, representing the philosophical/ethical dimension, and on professionalisation, representing the andragogical dimension). The findings indicate that in the territory of former Yugoslavia significant but insufficient progress has been made when it comes to shaping the field of professional practice and in the professional preparation of andragogues/adult educators at universities, including improvement in continuing professional development. On the other hand, when it comes to establishing professional associations, licensing, and the development of professional code(s) of ethics, the process of professionalisation has been very moderate and slow.

Keywords: *professionalisation, profession, professionalism, andragogy, professionalisation in the field of adult education*

PROFESIONALIZACIJA NA PODROČJU IZOBRAŽEVANJA IN UČENJA ODRASLIH NA OBMOČJU NEKDANJE JUGOSLAVIJE - POVZETEK

V prispevku razpravljamo o profesionalizaciji izobraževanja in učenja odraslih na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije. Pri tem izhajamo iz predpostavke, da proces profesionalizacije odseva družbene razmere, tradicijo, kulturo, razvoj institucij visokošolskega izobraževanja, znanstvene/spoznavane temelje določenega področja na osrednjih elementih te stroke. Naš cilj je kritično razpravljati o profesionalizaciji na področju izobraževanja in učenja odraslih s poudarkom na treh elementih: stroki, ki predstavlja sociološko dimenzijo, profesionalizmu, ki predstavlja filozofsko/etično dimenzijo, in profesionalizaciji,

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ki predstavlja andragoško dimenzijo. Ugotovitve raziskave kažejo, da je bil na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije dosežen pomemben, vendar še vedno nezadosten napredek v procesu profesionalizacije, kar se tiče oblikovanja polja strokovne prakse in strokovne priprave andragogov/izobraževalcev odraslih na univerzah, kar vključuje tudi izboljšave na področju trajnega strokovnega razvoja. Na drugi strani pa je pri vzpostavljanju strokovnih združenj, pridobivanju strokovnih dovoljenj in razvoju strokovnih etičnih načel postopek profesionalizacije zelo omejen in počasen.

Ključne besede: *profesionalizacija, stroka, profesionalizem, andragogika, profesionalizacija na področju izobraževanja odraslih*

INTRODUCTION

The process of professionalisation has been a genuine issue in the field of adult education and learning (AEL) for more than fifty years. Substantial efforts (including conferences, research monographs, special issues of journals, conceptual and empirical research) have been devoted to clarifying various aspects of professionalisation in the AEL field (e.g. the main elements of the profession, tasks and roles, competency and/or the different competences of adult educators/andragogues), as well as to the various dimensions of the profession of an adult educator/andragogue (sociological dimension – profession, philosophical/ethical dimension – professionalism, and andragogical dimension – professionalisation).

In what follows we argue that even in the earliest stages of developing ideas and establishing a conceptual framework for the professionalisation of AEL, authors from the territory of former Yugoslavia expressed very progressive and prominent thoughts. Some authors (Bulatović, 1983; Jelenc, 2000; Krajnc, 1971; Savičević, 1965) considered the process of professionalisation to be a dynamic continuum that creates possibilities for the professional preparation of andragogues, based on andragogy and on corresponding, research-generated knowledge.

AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH TRENDS

According to Askling and Almén (1995) most research studies (both conceptual and empirical) written about the process of professionalisation in the field of education can be categorised into four groups: (a) research studies about the profession, focused on the characteristics of the occupation, (b) research studies about professionalism that refer to the expertise of those who practise the occupation, (c) research studies about professionalisation that refer to changes in the status and prestige (and thus also power) of professionals, and (d) research studies about de-professionalisation.

Lattke (2016) introduced a new, biographical perspective in research studies about the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL. He emphasised that recently, “some conflicts between a ‘policy view’ and an ‘academic view’ on professionalisation” (Lattke,

2016, p. 87) have been occurring among European authors. The reason for this is that a “policy view” reduced the scope of their research to “simply structured lists of skills, attitudes and knowledge, which adult educators are expected to possess” (ibid.) instead of encompassing broad lists of various factors that influence the profession of adult educators/andragogues, and the whole process of professionalisation as well as its manifestation – professionalism. Thus, following Lattke’s (2016) analysis, one could categorise studies about the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL as follows:

- studies that map the field of AEL,
- studies that create conceptual foundations,
- studies aiming to achieve in-depth understanding of the topic, and
- evaluative studies about the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL.

Alternatively, based on an in-depth analysis, we consider that research studies (both conceptual and empirical, that used qualitative, quantitative, and rarely, mixed methods of methodology) about the process of professionalisation and related issues (e.g. profession and professionalism) could be classified as follows:

- research studies about the profession of adult educators/andragogues (where the sociological dimension is emphasised),
- research studies about the professionalism of adult educators/andragogues (where the philosophical/ethical dimension is emphasised), and
- research studies about the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL (where the andragogical dimension is emphasised).

A brief outline of research studies on profession in the field of AEL

There are numerous research studies about the profession of adult educators/andragogues that emphasise the *sociological dimension*. These studies, according to the relevant literature, are usually grounded in ‘traditional’ approaches: structuralism, essentialism, functionalism, processualism, and the taxonomic approach (Ovesni, 2009). Based on Parsons’ ideas, some sociologists (Zvekić and Savin, 1981; Zvekić, 1990) implied that professions are determined by a fragile, normative social order, and emphasised the importance of the cognitive component, i.e. the importance of the formal professional preparation of professionals for professionalisation. The importance of the cognitive component of a profession (a profession’s specialised body of abstract, theoretical knowledge) has been stressed in many research studies that adopt traditional sociological approaches (Egetenmeyer and Käßplinger, 2018; Freidson, 1999; Ovesni, 2009).

Some recent studies about the profession of employees and/or professionalisation in the field of AEL that adopted qualitative research methodology and explained this topic from the policy/system, institutional or individual perspectives have also stressed the importance of the cognitive component of the profession (Lattke, 2016; Egetenmeyer and Käßplinger, 2018). Moreover, the importance of this component has been emphasised in mixed methods research studies about the profession of employees in the field of AEL too (Eraut, 2000; Day and Gu, 2007).

A brief outline of research studies on professionalism in the field of AEL

Compared to studies about professionalisation in the field of AEL, papers about professionalism in this field (*philosophical/ethical dimension*) are rare. Nuissl (2009) found that in many European countries, the reasons for this are as follows: (a) the saturation of the profession of adult educator/andragogue by the context of performance, (b) the lack of national occupational regulations that include precise descriptions of the jobs, roles and duties performed as part of the profession of adult educator/andragogue, (c) the lack of proper professional preparation when it comes to adult educators/andragogues, (d) the inappropriate continuing professional training of adult educators/andragogues, (e) the insecurity of employment conditions of adult education staff, and (f) the fact that “many adult education staff members do not even see themselves as adult educators but rather as belonging to a certain social or business context” (Nuissl, 2009, p. 129). In short, Nuissl indicated that

[i]f professionalism in adult education is discussed at all, then the debate usually refers to one particular sector within adult education rather than to the whole picture. [...] [V]irtually in no country we can find a debate on adult education as a profession. What can be seen though in many cases, is an intense debate on the competencies and skills needed by people working in certain jobs in the field of adult education. (Nuissl, 2009, p. 129)

This insufficiency has recently been partially overcome by the research of a number of authors (Egetenmeyer and Käpplinger, 2018; Drakulić, 2010; Ovesni, 2009; Jütte, Nicoll and Olesen, 2011; Maier-Gutheil and Hof, 2011). Jütte et al. (2011), who describe professionalism as the quality improvement of a profession during the process of professionalisation, have noticed the tendency of certain authors researching the professionalism of adult educators/andragogues to follow the way that the European Commission emphasises the functional markers of professionalism – increasing competence, quality and qualification, and disregarding other important markers, e.g. the formal, university professional preparation of members of the profession, or professional autonomy. Studies centred around the professionalism of adult educators/andragogues that deal with the possibility of the elimination of under-prepared or inadequately prepared human resources in the field, that omitted to put (at least additional) focus on the development of professional ethical codes, regardless of the research paradigm they adopted, are still widely spread among researchers in the field of AEL (Bechtel, 2008; Hartig, 2008; Nittel, 2000; Peters, 2004, as cited in Maier-Gutheil and Hof, 2011).

Conversely, some researchers have emphasised the philosophical/ethical dimension of adult educators/andragogues’ professionalism, and the importance of adopting a code (or codes) of ethics. Ovesni (2009) noted that formalised codes of ethics are important distinctive characteristics of the profession, relevant to the monopolisation of the area, standardisation and improvement of professionalism. Adopting a code of ethics is a very

complex stage in the process of professionalisation. The lack of a code of ethics will not lead the profession into amateurism or unprofessionalism, while the introduction and adoption of professional codes of ethics drives the profession into a new, more complex stage in the process of professionalisation and to the creation of closer relations of conceptual framework with practice in the related field. Egetenmeyer and K apflinger wrote that “professionalism as the goal of professionalization can be developed through a scientific qualification, by professional associations and through a code of ethics” (2018, p. 50). Drakuli  (2010) claims that professionalism is tightly connected to the integrity of the professional behaviour of adult educators/andragogues, rooted in the usage of a code of ethics, while Maier-Gutheil and Hof noted that professionals “develop their professionalism through a process of learning” (2011, p. 75).

A brief outline of research studies of professionalisation in the field of AEL

The process of professionalisation in the field of AEL is defined in many ways: as an act of establishing control of an interest group over the field of professional practice, as posing a set of obligatory parameters (or standards) and a design of the profession consistent with accepted values and theoretical foundations, as “the process of structural change that occurs in an occupation as it develops its objectives of obtaining public recognition of its status as a profession” (Jarvis, 2002, p. 148), or as considered by Savi evi  (2006), an andragogical process of an “infusion of knowledge” into the developing profession in support of a dynamic and responsible professional performance. The process of professionalisation represents a reflection of the main elements of the profession (professional associations, professional autonomy, social control of the profession, social status of the profession, professional standards, professional ethics, and professional subculture) viewed through the lens of social conditions, tradition, development of higher education institutions, scientific/knowledge base in the specific field, culture, etc.

STUDIES ON PROFESSIONALISATION FROM THE TERRITORY OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

In the community of researchers in the field of andragogy/AEL, professionalisation is a pressing issue. Therefore, for the purpose of this brief outline, we will concentrate only on research studies on professionalisation (excluding all papers related to related issues) published by authors from the territory of former Yugoslavia (TFY).

The dynamism of the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL as the continuing interconnection of the profession of andragogue/adult educator with many different knowledge-related and context-related factors has been emphasised in papers published by several authors from the TFY (Alibabi  and Avadgi , 2013; Findeisen, 2004; Jelenc, 2010; Krajnc, 1977; Ku i , Vrcelj and Zovko, 2016; Lavrnja, 2001; Matijevi , 1985; Ogri-zovi  and Su i , 1983; Pongrac, 1990, as cited in Lavrnja and Klapan, 1998; Vili  Klenov- ek, 2018;  arkovi  Adle i , 2010). Furthermore, authors from the TFY who considered the process of professionalisation as a dynamic continuum underline the necessity of

dynamical international cooperation, especially among European countries (Despotović, 2010; Krajnc, 1989; Ovesni, 2009; Savičević, 1965, 2010). However, broader studies on the process of professionalisation in the last ten years have been sporadic (Despotović, 2010; Klemenčič, Možina in Žalec, 2009; Ovesni, 2009; Možina, 2011), and in this period, only one comprehensive paper (Žiljak, 2011) aimed to give a critical overview of actual research into professionalisation in the field of AEL in Europe and in the TFY.

The competence-based approach provided the foundation for research on the competences of professional andragogues/adult educators performed by Klemenčič, Možina and Žalec (2009). Although centred on competences, their findings revealed that most andragogues/adult educators perform the roles of organisers or leaders of adult education and adult education teachers without adequate professional preparation. They generated a professional framework for andragogues/adult educators based on competences for the estimation of educational needs, educational planning, educational organising, realising education, evaluating education, leading the process of education, and the management of the process of education. They also emphasised the urgent necessity for the “professionalisation of the role of adult education organisers” (Klemenčič et al., 2009, p. 27).

In a study about the profession and professionalisation of andragogues Ovesni (2009) found that the process of professionalisation as a dynamic continuum is determined by professional knowledge obtained during formal, university professional preparation. The results of her study showed significant differences in the perception of some aspects of the process of professionalisation between andragogues (i.e. adequately professionally prepared employees in the field of AEL) and ‘andragogic personnel’ (i.e. inadequately professionally prepared employees in the field of AEL).

Ovesni (2009) found that in the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL, profession-related, scientific research-based, university-obtained, and continuously enhanced knowledge has a dominant role. Andragogues empowered by professional knowledge express the tendency toward professional behaviour that is the goal of the process of professionalisation at the individual level. Andragogues therefore:

- require rigorous control of the entrance into the profession and of entry into professional associations;
- prefer autonomous work performance through self-reflection and a critical approach to practice as well as responsible decision making;
- need performance standards established by professional associations;
- rank members of their own profession highly, but only those who are adequately professionally prepared practitioners;
- express a strong commitment (affective, normative, and continual) to their own profession;
- manifest professionalism in performance;
- have a cooperative professional subculture;
- are professionally engaged (i.e. strive for professional affirmation through substantial cognitive and emotional investment).

Otherwise, andragogic personnel, although striving for professionalism, indicated certain insecurities regarding professional knowledge. Consequently, they:

- are indifferent towards professional associations;
- recognise interdependence between professional autonomy and professional knowledge;
- are insecure about the locus of professional control;
- express commitment to colleagues, especially because of the necessity for sharing knowledge sharing;
- manifest professionalism in performance;
- have a very close, friendly professional subculture, focused on knowledge sharing;
- are instrumentally-oriented when it comes to professional engagement.

The discrepancy in the perception of the elements of one's own profession between andragogues and andragogic personnel is primarily traced to basic university education, along with the standardisation of professional performance and continuing professional education through mechanisms determined by professional associations. Because of the prevalence of andragogic personnel over andragogues, as Ovesni (2009) wrote, the profession of employees in the field of AEL is not clearly socially recognised, while their professionalisation is an ongoing process.

Despotović (2010) performed a very interesting empirical analysis of the scope of professionalisation in adult education based on established levels of public recognition (legitimacy) of adult education, and scientific and professional recognition of adult education, and found that adult education is recognised as:

- a separate economic activity with a diffuse structure,
- a socially marginalised field of practice with insufficient legitimacy, reduced level of professionalisation, and absence of recognition of different professional forms,
- an area of university education, with a deficiency in basic university education,
- an area for performing applied scientific research, although with insufficient fundamental, genuine theoretical and empirical research, and
- an area where professional associations address standards of performance, emerging research trends and design practice, without the capability to develop "mechanisms to control the entry into the area of adult education and work performance in it" (Despotović, 2010, p. 66).

Možina (2011) made the distinction between two kinds of explanations of the process of professionalisation based on empirical research. The first one, marked as "hard", comprises of a set of strict criteria: (a) a developed knowledge base that determines the theoretical concept, (b) an established formal education system that sets out the minimum requirements and ensures the minimal quality for individual professional performance, (c) a strong prior selection before entering the profession, and a control function means of certification, (d) a formally organised social group (professional association) that performs the functions of determining occupational status and protecting professional interests, (e) established standards and routines for professional performance, (f) a stable

career development system that includes the determination of benefits and salaries, career advancement and a system for professional development, and (g) professional autonomy that arises from the social recognition of a profession.

Another set of criteria, marked by Možina (2011) as “soft”, is appropriate for raising the level of professionalisation of employees in the field of AEL, and is comprised of “people who are engaged in similar activities and have a common sense of purpose, meaning or mission” (Možina, 2011, p. 27). That includes their engagement with the diverse programmes of “education and training, which, however, are often not related to a certification of knowledge” (ibid.). She stressed that the professionalisation of employees in the field of AEL, viewed from an individual perspective, showed a great variety of work roles, and also found that the role of andragogues as experts “with a high professional education [...] trained in andragogy” (ibid., p. 28) is dominant, while the role of other employees in the field of adult education as experts “without a publicly recognised education or specialisation in andragogy” (ibid.) is subordinate.

All of the analysed research studies showed that the profession of andragogue/adult educator, along with their professional preparation, is heterogeneous. Diversification is based on professional roles, job tasks and the formal professional preparation of the members of the profession. Furthermore, in the studies described, all of the researchers found that professionalisation in the field of AEL in the TFY is an ongoing process, while, as Despotović indicated, the field itself is a “fragmented and amorphous area without significant public authorities and major sources of funding and political support” (Despotović, 2010, p. 66).

THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONALISATION IN THE FIELD OF AEL IN THE TERRITORY OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Apart from ideal-type professions in the fields of medicine, law, and the professions of priests or university professors, all other professions are in the process of development (Freidson, 1999). Consequently, as reported in all of the analysed studies, professionalisation in the field of AEL in the TFY is a continuing process. However, this process is heterogenous, and consists of a few quests. Based on such a frame of reference, to explain the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL in the TFY, we found the most comprehensive to be the processual approach. Through the lens of this approach, based on the phases of the process of professionalisation described by Wilensky (Wilensky, as cited in Ovesni, 2009) as the grounds for comparison, for the purpose of a brief review of a cross-country comparison of certain elements of the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL in the TFY, we formulated three research questions in the form of quests for the process of professionalisation as follows:

- a quest for the field of professional practice,
- a quest for the professional preparation of andragogues at universities, including continuing professional development, and
- a quest for professional association, licensing, and development of a professional code(s) of ethics.

Therefore, we adopted a point-by-point organisational scheme for comparing specific elements of the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL in the TFY.

A quest for the field of professional practice

The process of shaping the field of professional practice in the TFY began with the development of national standard classifications of occupations (e.g., NSCO). Consequently, in the TFY, the profession of andragogue/adult educator is listed regarding performance in similar yet distinctive ways.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina's NSCO (Bajramović, 2016), it is listed in three sub-categories:

- in the category Other upbringing and education professionals, in the sub-category Professionals/experts for educational methods and counselling, as Andragogues;
- in the category Other upbringing and education professionals, in the sub-category Experts for upbringing and education, as Organiser of adult education in educational institutions;
- in the category Experts for Management, in the sub-category Experts for human resources and career, as Organiser of adult education in enterprise.

In the Croatian NSCO (MZO, MRMS, 2008), it is listed in two categories:

- in the category Scientific-educational, educational and other experts for education, in the sub-category Other highest experts for education, in the class Professionals/experts for educational methods, as Andragogues;
- in the category Business, social-humanistic and other experts and scientists, in the sub-category Business organisational and related and other experts, in the class Human resource experts, as Planner of human resource development, Organiser of adult education, and Leader of educational programmes.

In the Macedonian NSCO (Kostovska, 2015), it is listed in three sub-categories:

- in the category Other education professionals, in the sub-category Experts for educational methods, as Andragogues;
- in the category Other education professionals, in the sub-category Experts for education, unclassified at another place as Human resource education instructors;
- in the category Administration experts, in the sub-category Experts for training and human resource professional development as Organiser for education of employees in enterprises, Training administrator, Workforce development specialist.

In the Montenegrin NSCO (MONSTAT, 2010), it is listed in two categories:

- in the category Other upbringing and education professionals (in teaching process), in the sub-category Experts for educational methods, as Andragogues;
- in the category Administration experts, in the sub-category Experts for human resources and professional orientation, as Expert for human resources, and in the sub-category Experts for training and professional development of employees as Organiser of human resource professional development, as Human resource development instructor, and as Expert for human resource education.

Serbia still does not have a new, formally adopted NSCO. According to the classification of occupations (Vukmirović, 2011) in the present internal standard for the needs of the Census of Population, Households and Apartments in the Republic of Serbia 2011, the profession of andragogue/adult educator regarding performance is listed in two categories:

- in the category Upbringing and education experts, in the sub-category Other education professionals, in the class Andragogues, pedagogues, and upbringing and education system experts, as Andragogues;
- in the category Business and administration experts, in the sub-category Administration experts, as Experts for training and professional development, Organisers for human resource education, Human resource expert, Human resource education expert, and Human resource professional education and training expert.

In a recently published e-classification of occupations in organs of the state (Vlada RS, 2018), the profession of andragogue/adult educator is listed in two categories:

- in the category Employees in preschool, basic and high education and upbringing, as Andragogue, and Andragogical assistant, and
- in the category Employees of professionals in social care, as Andragogue.

In the Slovenian NSCO (SURs, 2018), the profession is listed in three sub-categories:

- in the category Education, in the sub-category Basic education, in the subclass Primary education with adaptation for adults;
- in the category Education, in the sub-category Other unclassified training, upgrading and training, in the class Other unclassified training, upgrading and training, which includes the nonformal education of adults: the implementation of vocational training and advanced training programmes, national vocational qualification, carrying out preparations for the verification and validation of national vocational qualifications, carrying out master's, master's and managerial exam preparations, teaching different skills for coaching and learning assistance, computer training, language teaching, religious education, education that is indivisible according to ISCED level, and different trainings (rescue training, survival training, training for public speaking, teaching fast reading);
- in the category Other business and business consulting, in the sub-category Other management consulting services, in the class Human resource management consulting, which includes: counselling, leadership and operational assistance in managing the human potential of the organisation, i.e. a revision of staff performance, development of workforce potential, staff counselling and employee relations, etc.

With the exception of Serbia, the process of shaping the field of professional practice in the TFY is unified through the adoption and adjustment of the International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO-08 (in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Slovenia). Furthermore, one would expect that upgrading and diversification of NSCOs could improve the 'visibility' of the professional field and decrease the recognition of different professional forms.

A quest for professional preparation at universities, including continuing professional development

As in the case of the previous quest, the requirement of scientific research in the field of AEL that defines and determines the scientific discipline of andragogy is critical. Based on data obtained by university websites in the TFY, multi-level university programmes for the professional preparation of andragogues/adult educators in the TFY are still few. In Serbia, the extensive programmes (at the bachelor, master's and PhD levels) are offered by the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (2018), at the Study Group for Andragogy, Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy. At the same university, andragogy is a subject at the bachelor and PhD level at the Faculty of Security Studies. At the University of Novi Sad (2018), courses in the field of andragogy can be studied at the bachelor and master's level in the Pedagogy study programme. At University of Niš (2018), adult education as a subject can be studied at the bachelor level at the Faculty of Philosophy as part of the Pedagogy programme. In Slovenia, the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana (2018) offers extensive, diversified and complex programmes at bachelor level in the study programme for Pedagogy and Andragogy, and at master's and PhD levels in the Andragogy (adult education) study programme. The Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska (2018) offers a master's study programme in Adult Education and Career Development, while subjects that cover the field of adult education can be studied as part of the bachelor level study programme Educational Sciences/Pedagogy. Adult education as a subject that can be studied at part of first- and second-cycle study programmes of Pedagogy is offered by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Maribor (2018), whereas at the University Nova Gorica (2018), adult education as a subject can be studied at the master's level at the School of Humanities, as part of the Pedagogical master's in Slovene studies programme.

In all other countries in the TFY courses in andragogy or other adult education related courses at different levels of study are offered by some universities. Andragogy courses are offered in Croatia at the University of Rijeka (2018a, 2018b), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education (different study courses in andragogy and related subjects at single- and dual-subject bachelor's and graduate programmes in pedagogy, and in the PhD Pedagogy programme), the University of Zagreb (2018), Faculty of Philosophy (a few study courses in andragogy or other adult education related courses at the single-subject bachelor's degree programme in Pedagogy), the University of Split (2018), Faculty of Philosophy (a study course in andragogy is part of the dual-subject bachelor's degree programme in Pedagogy), and at the University of J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek (2018), Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, a study course in andragogy is part of a dual degree graduate programme in Pedagogy.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina study courses in andragogy or other adult education related courses at different levels are offered by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo (2018a), as part of the study programme in Special Pedagogy (a couple of adult education related subjects at graduate level), and at the Faculty of Political Sciences, the

University of Sarajevo (2018b) they are also part of a first-cycle programme in Security and Peace Studies. In Republika Srpska, at the University of Banja Luka (2018), several study courses in andragogy or other adult education related courses are offered in graduate and PhD study programmes. At the University of Montenegro (2018), the Faculty of Philosophy, a number of adult education related subjects are part of the specialist, master's, and PhD levels of study in the Pedagogy programme. In Macedonia, at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (2018), the Faculty of Philosophy numerous courses in the all three cycles are offered at the Institute for Pedagogy. The Pedagogical Faculty of St. Clement of Ohrid, University of Bitola (2018), includes andragogy/AEL related subjects in the study programmes of Management in Education at the master's and PhD levels, whereas at the Goce Delcev University in Štip (2018), the Faculty of Educational Sciences, andragogy/AEL related subjects are included into the study programmes of Management in Education and Educational Policy (at the master's level) and at the School of Pedagogy (at the PhD level).

The network of university programmes for the professional preparation of andragogues/adult educators in the TFY, although significantly and substantially increased from a few decades ago (Ovesni, 2001), is still incoherent.

Based on data obtained from the EURYDICE (2018) platform for all countries from TFY, university-based programmes for continuing professional education of andragogues/adult educators are very rare. In Slovenia, such programmes are, among others, provided by higher education institutions that developed and implemented the programmes according to law and subsidiary legislation. In Macedonia each provider of adult education services is obligated to sign an employment contract with the hired andragogues/adult educators. They are also responsible for the professional development of their staff, which aims to improve professional performance. In Croatia, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education organises training for all teachers and heads in adult education with the goal of improving their professional performance and increasing their competences. In Montenegro all andragogical trainings are organised exclusively through project activities (projects supported by DVV International, projects related to elementary functional literacy, projects related to the elementary education of the Roma population). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Education organises non-mandatory trainings for all teachers and trainers in adult education, among other providers. In Serbia the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, provides accredited programmes for the mandatory continuing professional education of andragogues/adult educators. The law and subsidiary legislation acknowledge various other providers of non-accredited programmes for the continuing professional education of andragogues/adult educators (schools, NGOs, agencies, etc.).

According to data obtained from EURYDICE (2018), programmes for the continuing professional development in the TFY are diversified – by providers, content, legislation. Some of them are mandatory and comprehensive (Slovenia, Serbia), while most aim to increase the level of certain competences, or as in the case of Montenegro, to provide only

project-related competences. Approaches like the former can be especially damaging to the ‘fragile body of knowledge’ of adult educators who do not have adequate professional preparation. Adult educators without solid extended knowledge obtained in university studies might get the impression that they ‘learned how to become effective andragogues’ after a single project-related andragogical training. But skills related to only one issue (e.g. the elementary education of an ethnic group, or in a short general course) will help neither to develop valid, reliable competences, nor facilitate the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL.

A quest for professional association, licensing, and development of a professional code(s) of ethics

The main role of a professional association is to create, by negotiation, mutual legal boundaries, and to completely independently determine and control the division of labour within its field of professional practice (Ovesni, 2009). During an earlier period in the TFY, the Federation of Workers and National Universities as a union of adult educators, and andragogical societies as professional associations, made a significant contribution to the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL. They were also the generators of valuable professional knowledge. The Croatian Andragogy Society (CAS, 2018) organises international conferences on adult education every two years. It has organised 32 national and 5 international conferences and published five books of the proceedings of international conferences. The implementation of projects and thematic research in the field of adult education is an important fundamental task of the Andragogical Society of Slovenia (ADS, 2018) and their attention is focused on the development of professional knowledge. The Society of Andragogy of Serbia – DAS – is a non-governmental and non-profit association founded in 2010 that gathers all andragogues interested in affirming the profession and promoting the concept of lifelong learning (DAS, 2018).

The establishment of professional associations is of the greatest importance for the process of professionalisation because their functioning has a complex meaning: they act as cornerstones around which the whole area is integrated, they accumulate the professional strength of their members, but also disseminate important professional knowledge and perform different kinds of professional control – they control entry into the profession, licensing, standardising performance and establishing a code of ethics. Without established professional associations, the profession cannot have full control over its members and over the field of performance, or the possibility of full professionalisation. Because of a lack of professional association in the countries from the TFY, or due in part to their inactivity, the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL is moderate in its intensity and restrained in the patterns of its performance.

CONCLUSION

Research studies on profession in the field of AEL emphasise the importance of the cognitive component (i.e. a specialised sum of abstract, theoretical, profession-related

knowledge). In most research studies, professionalism has been observed through the lens of only one or a few components usually related to professional competences, while the essential characteristic of professional behaviour has been ignored. Such reductionism in research on professionalism has led to unacceptable simplifications because the exclusion of relevant characteristics of the profession describe it as occupation and displace it at a lower level in the process of professionalisation.

Authors from the TFY have observed the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL as a dynamic continuum of interconnected knowledge-related and context-related factors. Broader studies about the process of professionalisation in the last ten years have emphasised that andragogues/adult educators perform distinctive roles, differentiated job tasks, and that they need diversified, specialised professional preparation that is based on accurate scientific knowledge. What is more, the findings of these studies have implied that professionalisation in the field of AEL is an ongoing process, that the standardisation of professional performance is needed, as are continuing professional education through mechanisms determined by professional associations, a stable career development system, and the professional autonomy that arise from the social recognition of a profession.

Observing the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL in the TFY through the lens of the processual approach has revealed that in the last ten years the field of scientific research and the field of professional practice have become more delineated than before, and that professional preparation at universities, including continuing professional development in the TFY, is better established. However, professional associations with the potential for developing a professional code(s) of ethics, licensing and certification in the field have only been founded in Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia. Therefore, the continued monitoring and research of the process of professionalisation in the field of AEL in the TFY could lead us to higher levels of professionalism – to improvements in the quality and achievements in the profession. We also think that new studies about this problem, but with a different methodological approach, could be a starting point for future theoretical insights and more complex empirical research.

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