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## THE ESSENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EDUCATION BASED ON TRADITION

### Introduction

Every people, regardless of size, has its own way of being, of working, of seeing the world in which they live and in all that they have been and are in a reason and an order. An effective education will always and everywhere have three temporal dimensions: initiation into the problems of the past, present and future. Summarizing all this we mention that education is a complex social activity that is carried out in a chain of actions exercised consciously, systematically and organized, focused on the idea of developing an active and creative personality through the transmission and assimilation of values.

Education is a social phenomenon, which has accompanied human history since its inception and will continue to exist throughout existence. The term education is initially used in a broad sense, it designating the external approach (impulse) about the development of human qualities, mental or physical characteristics. As a scientific term it is used with the meaning of personality development and human formation. Since the appearance of the rational man in the history of society, there has not been a being who does not educate and is not educated in the history of education. Undoubtedly, the young generation is educated in the first place. Education of children is the primary function of mankind. However, the personality is formed after the age of youth, after studying, educating, self-educating all own life.

Popular pedagogy is a concentration of the people's experience and used by the people for educational purposes. This empirical experience passed down from generation to generation has turned into customs and traditions, into a well-defined educational culture. Traditions are indispensable for the construction of the future and for the mobilization of human energies. In conversations the people, based on popular ideas and traditions of education, bring arguments, examples from life, a saying or a proverb and use to clarify certain life situations as a generalization of factors, events, pedagogical phenomena.

The values of popular pedagogy were the basis of education systems, being original. Our folklore is nothing but education, learning, development and becoming. Popular education finds its origin in the philosophy and psychology of the people, folklore being a source of inspiration. The formative potential of aphorisms, proverbs and sayings is a challenge for all humanity.

The pedagogical problems, partly, in the Romanian popular culture, entitle us to state that there are grounds to find in this culture the elements of a pedagogical thinking system, ordered in its specific notions and in the ways of approaching education. As such, the Romanian popular culture tends towards an education system, which extends from the problems related to the child's upbringing to those of the social and human relations in general.

The fundamental characteristics, which define and impose themselves in the popular education system through the need for education, the possibility of education and the permanence of education, have led to the creation of a popular empirical system of education which permanently establishes relations between man, nature and society. Education based on popular traditions through historical-ethnographic and historical-cultural knowledge takes place in contact with spiritual-moral orientations, included in the general context of the traditional way of life of the people and manifested in character, customs, sayings and proverbs, "norms of behaviour in the practice of human relations".

### **Theoretical assumptions**

Traditional pre-school education can be fuller and more effective if it involves: highlighting the terms of traditional education that will be systematized; moral-popular exploration on the line of generational continuity: grandparents – parents – children; elucidation of the models of habits and traditions, and methods of moral education in the system of values of moral education promoted by old pre-school students;

The aim of the research is to determine the theoretical and praxiological foundations of traditional education, while the research objectives are: studying the key concepts regarding the researched educational phenomenon; substantiation of the theoretical and methodological premises of traditional education; determining the conditions and ethno-pedagogical factors for the formation of moral culture in pre-schoolers.

## **Methodology**

The methodology of this research results from the purpose and objectives of the ascertaining and formative approach and consists of theoretical methods (analysis and synthesis of literature; hypothetical-deductive method for interpreting and explaining the results obtained in research); empirical methods (observation, conversation, test, questionnaire, finding and control experiments). The education methodology highlights the positive actions, which are manifested in the education of children and oriented towards their active and conscious involvement in the process of their own formation and their creativity stimulation. In this context, the dynamic-open relationship consists in changing the relationships that are established between the different methods. The diversity of methods is imposed by the complexity of the education process, each method must be chosen according to the register to which it is reported. The amplification of the formative character of the methods supposes the emphasis on the social relations that the child has in the process of personality culturalization and formation.

With the help of the moral explanation, we reveal the content of a requirement, of a moral norm and rule. The explanation fulfils two functions: an informative one (awareness of the meaning of a requirement) and stimulating one (it consists in motivating the requirement, in triggering the affective, stimulating states through the force of language).

Ethical conversation is a dialogue between teacher and trainee which aims to clarify moral knowledge and trigger appropriate emotional states. The advantage of the dialogue consists in training the trainees in the analysis (debate) of the moral facts, in capitalizing on their life experience. Ethical conversation fulfils multiple functions: information, awareness, reinforcement and correction.

The moral story consists in the narration, the presentation in an attractive form of some real or imaginary events and facts with moral meanings, in order

to help the children to draw conclusions, lessons about their own behaviour. It is mainly used in small classes.

The example is based on intuition (or imagination) of some models that embody moral facts or actions. The efficiency of the example depends on the quality of the model, what it illustrates and how this model is perceived and reflected. There are many proverbs, maxims, famous quotations that highlight the special role of example in the process of education. Gradually, criteria are developed that allow the child to differentiate between positive and negative examples. Depending on the source of the model we distinguish direct/indirect and positive/negative examples. Direct examples are provided by people close to the child: parents, teachers, colleagues, etc., while the indirect ones are presented by describing some facts, moral actions, exercised by a real or imaginary person (examples of honour, modesty, patriotism, etc. encountered in literary characters). Examples can be positive or negative (both among children, in the immediate environment, and between educators). Negative examples will not be declared undesirable, but will show the consequences in case of negative behaviour for children to make their own decision that they do not want to follow such behaviour.

Moral exercise consists in the systematic and repeated execution of some facts and actions, in relatively identical conditions in order to form habits and habits of moral behaviour, to establish and fix volitional and character traits, moral conduct, and practical moral relations. The method of moral exercise involves two main moments: formulating requirements and the actual practice.

The requirements prescribe the way in which the activity will be carried out and the conditions that will have to be observed. The most important ways in which requirements can be formulated are:

- order – a form of categorical expression of a task;
- disposition – a more attenuated order form, accompanied by explanations and arguments, regarding the necessity of fulfilling the obligations;
- exhortation and suggestion – indirect forms of formulating requirements, which are based on certain qualities of students (sense of duty, honour, etc.). In this way we contribute to the transformation of external requirements into an internal motive of conduct;
- the request – by which we warmly request the voluntary fulfilment of certain tasks. The friendly relationship between the teacher and the children is expressed in this case in the use of expressions such as: please, be kind, etc. from which it results that the teacher is also penetrated by the sincere desire for the students to behave properly.

Other forms of expressing requirements are: stimulating an activity by promising a reward, initiating competitions between students, using perspectives, encouraging, arising enthusiasm, cultivating traditions, and prohibition as a negative form of formulating requirements.

## Discussion

We find the first definitions of education in various researchers who state the essence of the phenomenon. These definitions are systematized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Definitions of education**

<b>Definitions of education</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Researchers</b>
“Education is the art of forming good habits or developing the native skills for the virtues of those who have them.”	“Dialogues”	Platon
“Education must be an object of public oversight, not private.”	“Politics”	Aristotle
“Education is an activity of stimulating these “seeds”, and implicitly, of leading the process of humanization, “man” cannot become human unless he is educated.”	“Didactica magna”	J. A. Comenius
“Education takes the form of an interpersonal relationship of supervision and intervention that is established between the ,preceptor’ (educator) and the child (the future ,gentleman’).”	“Some thoughts on education”	J. Locke
“Man is the only being who must be educated to become a Man. Man needs care and culture, but in a judicious setting. Thus, the art of education or pedagogy must become judicious, in order to be able to develop human nature in such a way as to fully achieve its goal.”	“About Pedagogy”	I. Kant
“Education is both intervention and non-intervention: “Negative education supposes the removal of any obstacle to natural development, everything must be left to happen on its own without any intervention.”	“Emil or about Education”,	J.-J. Rousseau
“Education is more important than instruction. ... education is divided into three subdivisions: government, education (achieving specific goals) and moral education.”	“Science of Pedagogy, Deduced from the Purposes of Education”	J. F. Herbart

<p>“Education is an action “exercised by the adult generations on those who are not ripe for social life”; aims to provoke and develop a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states in the child.”</p> <p>“Education consists in a methodical socialization of young education.”</p>	<p>“Education and Sociology”</p>	<p>É. Durkheim</p>
<p>Education is “a social and individual fact at the same time.”</p>	<p>“Education and Ideal”</p>	<p>C. Narly</p>

Source: own research.

Today’s society demands, more than ever, the creative intelligence and capacity of man. Researcher N. Silistraru states “Education as a process reflects a psychological need, engaged in the numerous interindividual relationships that intervene in the formation-development of the human personality, in a system of predominantly deliberate actions in which influences are concentrated at the level of profile institutions” [7, p. 49]. V. Panico points out “Education as a socio-human phenomenon represents the life of human society or the system of ways of organizing and carrying out activities and attitudes of personality” [5, p. 80]. The core of education is the direct inclusion of personality in the system of activities and social attitudes. “I believe that education is, consequently, a process of life and not a preparation for the after-life” [3, p. 48].

From the stated ideas, education is a socio-human phenomenon, which preserves and transmits the experience of theoretical and practical knowledge, the values of culture and civilization from one generation to another, being an eternal category. With the advent of society, man becomes the object and subject of education. Education has aimed, over time, the formation of human personality, depending on the particularities of each, but also depending on the social dynamics, the mobility of educated people through the dynamic integration of man in society. The process of education is completed only when we consider its formative component, because it aims to ensure the continuity in time and space of generations: in time because it draws its juice from the experience gained by past generations, takes place now and forms personality in a perspective of the future and in space by the fact that it takes place within a national system.

Educational experience, namely empirical experience, has been and continues to be passed down from generation to generation, which over time has become a habit and a tradition, a well-defined educational culture. The problem of the pedagogical heritage of the past, as well as its contribution to the current and perspective educational culture, remains one of the most acute and constructive

ideas which find their sap in popular pedagogy. C. Usinski is the first to use and introduce in the scientific literature the term “popular pedagogy” and founded the popular principle as a principle of national education [11].

As the main means of education, popular pedagogy uses all the components of popular culture: the fairy-tale, proverbs and sayings, folk art craftsmanship not before song and music. They reveal the content of children’s education and training, the basic moral rules and ideals, the understanding of good and evil, the norms of communication and relationships between people; describe the history of the people in the form of epics, chronicles and oral folk creation. Popular pedagogy is the totality of knowledge, skills and abilities accumulated and confirmed by the practice of life, which are transmitted from generation to generation as a progress of the historical and social experience of the popular masses [6, p. 11]. Certainly, popular pedagogy is the natural foundation on which the edifice of contemporary education science is built.

G. Volcov uses the term traditional pedagogy, which represents that pedagogy that is not written anywhere, but which, nevertheless, exists in another form. Certain rules of education are passed down from generation to generation and which, viewed from the perspective of a long time, appear to us as embodying the entire life system of a people and an era. This is the very pedagogy of the people, of the whole people, in any people, an existence above animality. For the case, in a way, it is more valuable than cult pedagogy [10, p. 27].

N. Silistraru states that “through traditional pedagogy the very conditions of human existence are preserved. As vague and rudimentary as it may seem to modern science, traditional pedagogy still has a body of principles and an evolution” [7, p. 27]. Popular pedagogy is the social consciousness of the people, because it has developed on the basis of the generalization of the facts of the people, who did not have a special training, having some random moments. Adults are in constant contact with children not only because they fulfil their mission, pursuing a pedagogical goal, but they simply enjoy this intellectual activity – the cultivation of general human qualities [7, p. 131–132].

Popular pedagogy has man in its sights throughout his life: from birth to death, from grandchild to grandparent and also aims at the self-education of the elderly, preparing them, as it were, for eternal life, as the great Czech pedagogue J. A. Comenius states it. The ideals of the formation of the perfect, harmonious personality are manifested in all peoples, first of all, through the general-human qualities, the national colour persisting more or less permanently. Therefore, popular pedagogy is not a science, but a field of empirical knowledge. However,

the empirical character of popular pedagogy does not diminish its importance, because the process of knowledge usually begins with living contemplation and from experience to practice.

The traditional pedagogical culture supposes a rich system, which includes various functions, factors, methods, means and forms of education, in this sense the cardinal problem consists in the formation of the real man. Popular wisdom underlies many education systems. As for us Romanians, “folklore can help the most, and within folklore, the paremiological side, proverbs and sayings, and with them, being part of the family, riddles and games for children” [7, p. 30]. Many pedagogical ideas of the people enrich the arsenal of the formation of the ideal personality. The works of academician G. N. Volcov, considered the founder of ethno-pedagogy as a science not only in Russia, but also in the world, made an important contribution to universal culture. He discovered for the first time many aspects of national pedagogy as a means of educating the young generation [10]. S. Baciú defines “popular pedagogy (ethno-pedagogy, traditional pedagogy) as a concentration of empirical knowledge, controlled by the experience of the people, constituting the totality of ways, means, exhortations and skills used by the people for educational purposes” [1].

Subsequently, “popular pedagogy is the object of study of pedagogical science, and the branch of pedagogical science which deals with the study, analysis and generalization of facts and phenomena of popular pedagogy is ethno-pedagogy” [6, p. 9]. Popular pedagogy as an object of ethno-pedagogy helps to achieve the national principle, scientifically argued by C. D. Usinski, as a sacred principle of national education in the conditions of society democratization. Three main principles of C. D. Usinsky are up to date: ... the people have a special, characteristic educational system; in the human soul the feature of nationality has its roots much deeper than others; the educational ideas of each people are penetrated by nationality much more than others [11, p. 124].

Noticing the potential influence of popular pedagogy, N. Silistraru affirms the key positions. [7, p. 131–132]:

- popular pedagogy is a natural phenomenon, inseparable from the life of the people;
- the participation of the people’s representations in the process of pedagogizing the masses; taking into account the fact that the greatest wealth of the society is the children; each one is born as someone’s grandchild and dies as a grandparent;



- the integrity of the pedagogical process, the capitalization of the education through which a harmony between consciousness, behaviour and activity would be created;
- early inclusion of children in the pedagogical process, in the process of self-education, mutual education, re-education;
- ensuring maximum independence and autonomy in education;
- differentiated attitude towards personality (individual and age peculiarities);
- ancestral worship, mother worship, child worship in all traditional education systems is axiomatic;
- ideas in traditional pedagogical culture are variable and permanent, always urging a creative activity in the educational work.
- In this context the following factors of popular education should be mentioned:
  - organizing and consolidating the group of the individuals to be educated;
  - activating the process of forming self-awareness and self-esteem;
  - creating an open educational space for ethno-value orientations;
  - efficient application of methods, means, procedures;
  - support on the principles of socio-cultural-historical variability;
  - ensuring the efficient interaction between the external and internal (personal) environment as conditions for the formation of ethno-value orientations for a long period of time.

Many pedagogical ideas of the people enrich the arsenal of perfect personality formation. Popular education is, in fact, social education. Throughout history, man has been and remains an object and subject of education. The educational experience accumulated over the centuries in correlation with the empirical knowledge controlled by the practice of life make up the core of popular pedagogy. Traditional education refers to long-standing habits that society has traditionally used. The main purpose of traditional education is to pass on to the next generation those skills, facts and standards of moral and social conduct that adults consider necessary for future generations. Romanian traditional education is based on the transmission of the values of the Romanian culture from generation to generation and has decisively contributed to the perpetuation of the Romanian spirituality over the centuries. It cannot be said that there is a society without tradition.

The issue of “tradition” in education was studied, in particular, by E. Macavei in the study *Theory of Education*: “Tradition (in Latin – *traditio, onis* =

transmission, rooted; trado, ere = to transmit, to trust, to care for, to recommend, to teach someone, to teach others, to tell stories, to tell orally, in writing) says the researcher, condenses ensembles of habits, beliefs, practices preserved and passed down from generation to generation, constituting the legacy of a community, proof of the standard of living of the community in different historical periods, a component of identity” [4]. The researcher V. Capcelea states “tradition expresses a legacy of customs, traditions, beliefs that are transmitted from generation to generation, constituting specific features of a people” [2, p. 10], while S. Baci defines tradition as a historical process of accumulation, typification, imitation and selective assimilation in the development of a natural order of values. Finally, the connection of the present with the past and with the future in the process of forming the tradition is the basis of the social-historical solidarity of humanity. Through this, the past, present and future of man form a unity in continuous transformation and self-improvement [1].

Traditions have emerged and gradually crystallized from people’s life experience, being constituted and transmitted throughout history. They are a collective memory in which a secular social experience is retained, imprinted, preserved and reproduced. Undoubtedly, imitation is essential in the transmission of traditional experience. The child and the young person see habits and rituals, participate in them, hear songs and memorize them, because they are repeated and because the adults do so. Attachment to tradition is manifested by value, critical, selective respect for the identity of a community. Tradition is the legacy of a community, the proof of the existence of the community, conservation, progress or regress directions. Relation to tradition is a matter of education and must be preserved, respected, known, valued and passed on selectively to future generations.

Through the educational system of the community (formal, non-formal, informal) the material and spiritual creation of the forerunners is transmitted selectively and according to value criteria. The pride of belonging to a community under the emblem of tradition is an element of support for self-confidence. Through its character, the national education introduces the child in the culture of its own people and highlights its creative potential. Even modern societies have their own tradition, but most of the time it is not noticed because it seems obvious. In modern European societies education takes place within the three established institutions: family, school and often church. Family and school, the religious cults and the state, the communities, especially the rural ones, have been and are factors of conveying the traditional values. Spontaneous and diffuse or

systematic and organized, in the same sense or in different senses, with equal or different input, they contributed each in its own way and with its own means to the education of children and to the shaping of a conception about their upbringing. As a matter of traditional education, the family always came first. Moreover, along with the wisdom contained in folklore, we will also find advice, directly or implicitly, on how this wisdom should be passed on to children in order to be useful to them. We can speak, therefore, of a true popular pedagogy. “Traditional, popular education has come together in a conception, with its permanence and dynamism, and this is what we could call traditional pedagogy, the educational theory of tradition itself” [8, p. 27].

Traditional education by transmitting the values of Romanian culture from generation to generation has decisively contributed to the perpetuation of the Romanian spirituality over the centuries. It is conceived as an art to lead the child to assimilate the norms of civilized society by reproducing the existing socio-cultural system. By default, traditional pedagogy considers that at a certain age children will have to accumulate a certain quality and quantity of knowledge and be able to assimilate certain behaviours. In this system the child learns by reproducing the given model, and education is generalizing, equalizing, according to a model which is not always understood by the child although it is tested and accepted by adults.

## Conclusions

Popular pedagogy is presented as a branch of empirical knowledge, accumulated by the people, in which they find reflection the goals of education, as well as all the means, procedures and skills used for the education of young generations. Also, through traditional education from the perspective of national values, we are convinced that we can teach children:

- to value man, culture, work, moral and Christian virtues;
- to access the fascinating world of material and spiritual popular culture;
- to find similarities between practices from kindergarten life and practices from village life;
- to make connection between present, past and future;
- to know where they come from and where they are going;
- to know and love the work of pedagogical research;
- to form positive traits of will and character.

**Abstract:** In the study it is presented and argued the actuality and importance of the topic. Education is a key factor in the formation of generations and represents the life of human society. The research hypotheses are formulated, the purpose and the objectives through which the correct research route is described. Educational experiences, namely empirical experience, has been and continues to be passed down from generation to generation, which over time has become a habit and a tradition, a well-defined educational culture. Traditional education refers to customs, which society traditionally used. The main purpose of traditional education is to pass on to the next generation those skills, facts and standards of moral and social conduct that adults consider necessary for future generations. The research methodology is exposed by elucidating the general aspects of traditional education, namely the methods of moral education. The conclusions systematize the theoretical values from the result of the investigation, namely the traditional education.

**Keywords:** traditional education, popular pedagogy, principles, factors

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