

Training And Pedagogical Practices Of Rural Vocational Education Instructors In The Context Of Andragogy: An Analysis Of Social Representations

Anselmo Ferreira dos Santos, Francisco Antonio Nascimento¹,
Deivid Guareschi Fagundes², Gabriel Maçalai³, Ricardo Santos de
Almeida⁴, Claudenice Alves Mendes⁵, Carlos Alberto Feitosa dos Santos⁶
Elberto Teles Ribeiro⁷

(Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Amazonas – IFAM – Campus Maués - Brasil)

¹(Universidade Federal do Ceará – UFC - Brasil)

²(Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Farroupilha – IFFar- Brasil)

³(URI - Santo Ângelo- Brasil)

⁴(Universidade Federal de Santa Maria - UFSM - Brasil)

⁵(Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Paraíba – IFPB – Campus Cajazeiras- Brasil)

⁶(Universidade de Ibirapueira – UNIB - Brasil)

⁷(Rede Estadual de Ensino de Mato Grosso do Sul – Brasil)

Abstract:

Background: Rural vocational education plays a key role in training professionals trained to work in the agricultural and farming sector, contributing to the sustainable development of rural communities. In this context, Andragogy, as a pedagogical approach aimed at teaching adults, emerges as a relevant alternative to meet the specific demands of this audience and enhance learning.

Material and Methods: The present study used a qualitative approach to analyze the social representations of rural vocational education instructors about Andragogy. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with instructors working in the area. The instructors' statements were categorized and grouped to identify the main perceptions and challenges related to the application of Andragogy in the context of rural vocational education.

Results: The analysis of the trainers' social representations revealed that Andragogy is perceived as an essential pedagogical approach to better serve adult professionals in their learning process. The results highlighted the importance of the flexibility and adaptability of this methodology to meet the needs and interests of the trainees, as well as to value their experiences and previous knowledge.

Conclusion: The results point to the relevance of Andragogy as an effective tool in the training of adult professionals in rural vocational education. The sensitive and personalized approach of this methodology demonstrates the importance of recognizing the uniqueness of each learner, considering their experiences and expectations. The implementation of Andragogy can promote a more motivating and enriching teaching environment, encouraging the professional development of adults and contributing to the improvement of rural education.

Key Word: Andragogy, rural vocational education, social representations, vocational training.

Date of Submission: 16-07-2023

Date of Acceptance: 26-07-2023

I. Introduction

Rural education has shown to be an area of growing relevance, with an increasing demand for adequate training of its instructors. In this context, the Andragogy approach has been explored as an appropriate pedagogical perspective to meet the specific needs of this group of educators. The present research aims to investigate the training and pedagogical practices of field education instructors in the context of Andragogy, as well as to analyze the social representations that permeate this educational approach.

Rural education covers a set of pedagogical practices aimed at meeting the particularities of rural communities, valuing their culture, knowledge and realities. Educational development in these areas faces

challenges distinct from those found in urban environments, requiring specific training adapted to rural contexts (SOUZA, 2018).

The importance of training field education instructors becomes evident in view of the need for trained professionals to act in an effective and contextualized way. Andragogy, focused on adult learning, emerges as a pedagogical approach that suits the peculiarities and challenges of rural education, valuing the experience and autonomy of learners (FREIRE, 2001). Thus, understanding the pedagogical practices adopted in this context and their implications becomes fundamental for the improvement and effectiveness of teaching and learning in rural education. Rural vocational education has gained prominence as a fundamental area for the development and training of individuals living in rural regions. In this sense, the training of instructors who work in this context is extremely important for the success and effectiveness of educational programs (Silva, 2020).

Given this scenario, the Andragogy approach has been explored as a relevant pedagogical perspective for adult education, providing an adequate theoretical and practical basis to meet the specific needs of educators working with rural vocational education (Smith, 2018). Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the training and pedagogical practices of rural vocational education instructors in the context of Andragogy, as well as to investigate the social representations that permeate this educational approach and its implications for teaching practice (Jones, 2019).

Rural vocational education has been consolidated as a vital tool for the development of rural communities, providing individuals with the skills and competencies needed to improve their lives and contribute to the socioeconomic growth of their regions (Silva, 2020). The training of rural vocational education instructors is a determining factor for the quality and impact of the educational programs offered. With the proper training of educators, it is possible to ensure that students receive a quality education, aligned with the demands of the labor market and the specificities of rural communities (Smith, 2018).

The present study aims to analyze the training of rural vocational education instructors, identifying the main pedagogical approaches adopted in this process, as well as investigating the pedagogical practices used in the context of Andragogy. In addition, it is intended to explore the social representations of instructors about rural vocational education and Andragogy, seeking to understand how these representations influence their teaching practices and their perception of the educational process (Jones, 2019).

II. Theoretical Foundation

Rural vocational education: concepts and characteristics

Rural vocational education plays a vital role in developing and enhancing the skills of farmers and rural workers, enabling them to face the ever-changing challenges of the agricultural sector. This educational modality seeks to offer specific training to meet the demands of the rural environment, addressing the particularities of agricultural activities and rural communities. As stated by several experts in the field, rural vocational education must be adapted to the needs of the target audience, taking into account their previous experiences, their local knowledge and the demands of the labor market (FREITAS, 2017). In this way, it is possible to promote the effectiveness of learning and the engagement of students, making them agents of transformation in their own communities.

One of the main characteristics of rural vocational education is a need for contextualization of teaching. By recognizing that rural reality differs significantly from urban, educational programs need to be adapted to meet the particularities and specific needs of rural students. In this sense, authors such as Torres and Figueiredo (2019) emphasize that rural vocational education should value local knowledge and practices, promoting training that dialogues with the culture and identity of rural communities. The contextualization of teaching not only makes learning more relevant and meaningful, but also contributes to strengthening the identity and self-esteem of rural students, recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge in the educational process.

Another crucial aspect of rural vocational education is the need for continued training of parents working in this context. As pointed out by Lima and Silva (2020), teachers and instructors need to be prepared to deal with the particularities of the rural environment and to apply methodologies adapted to the students' reality. The training of educators should include not only technical and pedagogical training, but also the development of a critical and reflective view on rural issues. In this way, monitors are able to promote quality education that effectively contributes to sustainable development and improved quality of life in rural communities.

Proposals for a more global professional education began in the 1930s and began to be more widely disseminated in the 1960s, driven by the increase in rural-urban migration, which led to the growth of large cities and aroused the interest of the country's leaders in promoting actions aimed at the development of the countryside. Another significant change occurred in 1996, with the enactment of Law No. 9,394, which established the guidelines and bases of national education (SENAR, 2020). As highlighted by Cordão (2002), the central function of this new professional education lies in preparing people for the full exercise of citizenship

and for work, enabling them to influence and transform the working world, while developing solid professional skills.

Principles of Rural Vocational Training.

Rural Vocational Training (FPR) is a systematized educational process, which is connected in an integrated way to the various levels and modalities of education, as well as to the spheres of work, science and technology. Its purpose is to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that are applicable in both the productive and social spheres, aiming to meet the needs of an effective qualification for work and, at the same time, seeking to raise the socioeconomic condition of the individual (SENAR, 2020).

Skills development in the context of the future of work presents the challenge of identifying key trends and demands for skills in the medium and long term, as well as addressing the mismatch between the skills most in demand by the labor market and those that current education systems commit to providing. The skills of the future comprise both technical skills and socio-emotional and non-cognitive skills, which play a key role in improving job placement and mobility and are increasingly valued by employers. Among these skills, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, leadership and communication skills stand out, which will be increasingly in demand, (SENAR, 2020).

Andragogy as a pedagogical approach to adult education

Andragogy has stood out as an essential pedagogical approach for adult education, providing an innovative perspective that recognizes the differences between child and adult learning. According to Knowles (1973), andragogy is based on the idea that adults have distinct life experiences and intrinsic motivations to learn, which requires a more personalized and learner-centered educational approach. In this sense, Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) point out that andragogy emphasizes the active role of the adult in the learning process, valuing active participation and the practical application of acquired knowledge.

Unlike traditional pedagogy, which focuses on teacher-directed teaching, andragogy highlights the concept of self-direction in adult learning (Tough, 1979). As highlighted by Brookfield (1986), adults want to know why they are learning something and how it will be relevant in their lives, making the andragogical approach more effective by providing a meaningful context for learning. Furthermore, the andragogical approach recognizes that the motivation to learn may be inherent in the adult themselves, and the role of the educator is to facilitate this process, not just provide information (Merriam et al., 2007).

Therefore, andragogy emerges as an essential pedagogical approach for adult education, considering their unique characteristics and specific learning needs. By enabling more self-directed learning that is applicable to adults' reality, this approach has the potential to create more meaningful and lasting educational experiences (Knowles, 1973). Valuing active participation and recognizing the intrinsic motivation of adults are fundamental aspects of andragogy, making it a powerful tool to boost the personal and professional development of these individuals (Brookfield, 1986).

Training of rural vocational education instructors

The training of rural vocational education instructors is a crucial area for the development of the agricultural sector and the improvement of pedagogical practices aimed at rural areas. In this context, it is essential to consider the particularities of this type of training. According to Lima (2015), the training of instructors who will work with rural communities requires a multidisciplinary approach, covering specific technical knowledge of agriculture and teaching skills that consider the reality and culture of the agrarian environment.

The training of these instructors should also include a solid understanding of the demands and challenges faced by rural farmers. As pointed out by Santos and Oliveira (2018), instructors must be prepared to deal with the diversity of socioeconomic and cultural realities in rural areas, adapting their educational strategies in a contextualized way that is sensitive to the needs of learners.

A relevant aspect in the training of rural vocational education instructors is the need to develop leadership and group management skills. According to Souza and Silva (2017), instructors should be trained to promote a participatory and collaborative learning environment, encouraging the exchange of experiences and teamwork, fundamental characteristics for the development of successful agricultural projects.

Technology has also played a growing role in rural vocational education. The training of instructors should address the use of digital resources and technological tools applicable to the agricultural context, as highlighted by Rocha and Alves (2020). This will allow instructors to be able to integrate innovative and up-to-date practices into their teaching methods, boosting the educational process in the field.

Therefore, the training of rural vocational education instructors is an essential step for the promotion of sustainable development in rural areas. The multidisciplinary approach, the understanding of local realities, the development of leadership skills and training in educational technologies are key elements to improve the quality of teaching and, consequently, contribute to the advancement of agriculture and rural life more broadly.

Pedagogical practices in the context of Andragogy

Andragogy refers to a pedagogical approach focused on adult education, recognizing their unique learning characteristics and promoting a more personalized and learner-centered educational approach. Knowles (1980) defines andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn", highlighting the importance of considering adults' life experiences and intrinsic motivations in the educational process. Unlike traditional pedagogy, which focuses on direct teaching and the role of the teacher, andragogy emphasizes self-direction of learning by the adult, valuing active participation and practical application of acquired knowledge.

Pedagogical practices in the context of andragogy are fundamental to promote meaningful and effective learning among adults. According to Brookfield (1986), andragogical pedagogical practices should encourage dialog between the instructor and the learners, allowing them to bring their experiences and prior knowledge to the educational environment. In addition, learning should be relevant to the adult's reality, with the aim of solving problems and facing challenges in their personal and professional life (Merriam et al., 2007).

Andragogy also emphasizes the need for a more flexible and adaptable approach to teaching. As highlighted by Tough (1979), adults learn at different rates, and pedagogical practices must be sensitive to these individual variations. The instructor should be a facilitator of the educational process, providing an encouraging and safe learning environment where adults can explore, reflect and apply knowledge in their daily lives (Merriam et al., 2007).

Therefore, andragogy is a specific pedagogical approach for adult education, valuing self-direction of learning and the relevance of learners' personal and professional experiences. Andragogical pedagogical practices should be learner-centered, promoting dialogue, active participation and practical application of knowledge. In addition, flexibility and sensitivity to individual needs are essential to create an effective and stimulating educational environment for adult development.

Social representations

Social representations are fundamental concepts for understanding the processes of building knowledge, culture and identity in a society. According to Moscovici (2015, p. 47), social representations are "a set of concepts, propositions and explanations that circulate in a given society, constituting a form of socially shared and constructed knowledge". For the author, social representations are mediators between the individual and the social world, allowing him to understand and interpret the reality around him.

Besides Moscovici, other authors have contributed to the development of the concept of social representations, such as Jodelet (2001) and Abric (2003). For Jodelet (2001, p. 12), social representations are "a dynamic and constantly evolving set of values, ideas, concepts and practices that allow individuals to understand and interact with social reality". For Abric (2003, p. 85), social representations are "a system of knowledge that allows the construction of a common reality, shared by a group or a society, and which manifests itself through socially institutionalized practices and discourses".

Thus, social representations are understood as forms of knowledge socially constructed and shared by a group or a society, mediating the relationship between the individual and the social world. These concepts are fundamental for understanding the processes of construction of culture, identity and social practices in a society. For Abramo (2007), social representations are important because they allow us to understand how individuals make sense of social reality, building their own systems of meaning and interpreting the world in which they live. Social representations are a form of shared knowledge that allows individuals to understand and deal with the complexity of social reality, organizing and giving meaning to the information they receive.

According to Jovchelovitch (2008), social representations are a form of practical knowledge that allows individuals to guide their actions in the social world. Social representations are constructed from the social interactions and everyday experiences of individuals, and exert an important influence on their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. Social representations are a form of mediator between the individual and the social world, allowing them to adapt and interact effectively with the reality around them.

Social representations are collective constructions of meaning that people use to understand and interpret the social reality that surrounds them. According to Jodelet (2001, p. 27), social representations are "socially constructed forms of knowledge that allow the understanding, communication and elaboration of shared social practices". Social representations are constituted from social interaction and the exchange of

information between individuals, being influenced by the values, beliefs, experiences and knowledge that circulate in society.

In the context of discourse analysis, social representations can be used to understand the various forms of meaning construction that emerge in the discourses produced by the subjects. According to Maingueneau (2010), discourse analysis must take into account not only the linguistic structure of the text, but also the conditions of production and reception of the discourse, as well as the social representations that circulate in the social context in which the discourse is inserted. In this sense, discourse analysis can be a valuable tool for understanding the social and cultural dynamics that influence the production and reception of discourses.

The use of social representations can also be relevant to the understanding of teacher identity, since social representations about the role of the teacher and about education in general can influence the construction of teachers' professional identity. According to Nóvoa (1992), teacher identity is a continuous construction process that involves not only teachers' professional practices and knowledge, but also the social representations that circulate in the educational context in which they work. Thus, the analysis of social representations can be a strategy to understand the identity dynamics of teachers and to promote more critical and reflective pedagogical practices.

III. Materials and methods

The study was conducted with instructors of the National Rural Learning Service in the Ceará Regional (SENARCE) during the 1st Instructors Meeting held between April 3 and 5, 2023. The event provided a space for reflection on the role of the instructor, principles of andragogy, with lectures, workshops and studies of teaching methodologies. The heterogeneity of the participants represented the diversity of the research population.

In order to define an adequate sample for the investigation, a survey was initially carried out to verify the total number of SENARCE instructors. For the constitution of the sample, a statistical study was used that led to the adoption of the Simple Random Sampling technique (MENDES; PAIM; MOREIRA, 2020). According to this type of sampling, "any subset of the population, with the same number of elements, has the same probability of being part of the sample. In particular, each element of the population has the same probability of belonging to the sample". Based on this study, we concluded that a sample of 20% of the universe of trainers would provide substantial support for our research.

Thus, we decided that the research corpus would consist of 61 subjects. This number encompasses about 98% of the teaching functions, taking into account that this percentage refers to the number of teaching functions. This adequately represents the universe of subjects selected for the research.

Research in social representations requires the combination of quantitative and qualitative data for a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural processes of the subjects investigated. Data collection for this study was carried out in two stages, using a form with a free word association test and semi-structured interviews. According to Abric (1994), the appropriate choice and use of data collection instruments are fundamental to ensure the validity of the results. The combination of these instruments allowed a structural and in-depth analysis of the representational content, enabling a better understanding of the cultural referents of the representation investigated.

The prepared form was the instrument used to collect data from the research participants. It consists of three parts: the first is intended to collect personal information from the subjects, the second consists of the free word association test, where participants must fill in words related to the inducing term and list them in increasing order of importance, selecting the most important and justifying their choice.

According to Jodelet (2001), this technique is widely used in the structural approach of social representations, as it allows to highlight the semantic universes of words that are grouped and combined for certain populations. The structural approach enables the rapid apprehension of the organization and hierarchy of the symbolic elements of a representation, revealing implicit or latent elements that could be lost or masked in discursive productions (MOSCOVICI, 2015).

When analyzing the subjects of this study, we identified three variables that we considered relevant to understanding their profiles: gender, age and length of service. The first variable evaluated was gender, revealing that the majority of the subjects are male, while less than a third are female, as can be seen below.

Table 01 - Individuals by gender

| | Absolute Value | Relative Value |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Number of Men | 42 | 70 % |
| Number of Women | 18 | 30 % |
| On the record | 0 | 0,0% |
| Total Individuals | 60 | 100 % |

Prepared by the authors (2023)

Another important finding is that the average age of the subjects is between 33 and 39 years, with a total age range varying from 29 to 67 years. We also note that the average age of males is higher than the average age of females

The form was applied to minimize external interference, although resistance and interference were still recorded during its application. Nevertheless, the data were collected satisfactorily.

The semi-structured interview was used to investigate the content of the representations, allowing interaction with the researcher and the problematization of subjective and collective aspects. This strategy allowed the interviewees to discuss the proposed theme without answers or conditions predetermined by the researcher (FONTANELLA et al., 2011; MINAYO, 2010). This approach made it possible to focus on the key issues of the study according to the perception of each interviewee and to obtain the necessary information.

Prior to the interviews, the subjects received a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, ensuring adequate conditions so that there were no interferences that could harm data collection. The interviews were recorded with the authorization of the participants to ensure the best use of the information. According to Fontanella et al. (2011), the use of the tape recorder allows the complete use of the material provided by the informants and facilitates the identification of important ideas and additions to the data when necessary.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 instructors selected according to criteria guiding the research sample, such as area of residence in the city (North, South, East, West), gender, age, length of service and location of the school, seeking to ensure maximum heterogeneity among the interviewees. The semi-structured interview had the function of deepening the investigation into the content of the representation in focus.

The analysis of the words related to the term "Andragogy" was conducted using the SPSS statistical software, widely used in academic research, allowing data processing and the performance of several analytical studies (Silva & Almeida, 2021). In addition, the EVOC software was used to build quadrants with the evocations made by the participants during the free association of words test, allowing a detailed analysis of these evocations (Fernandes&Araújo, 2019).

To analyze the justifications given to the word considered most important among the evocations produced, the content analysis method was used (Bardin, 2016; Oliveira & Moreira, 2020; Gomes et al., 2021), which enables the systematic study of communications and seeks to understand what the data mean.

The content analysis process suggested by Bardin (2016) involves three phases: pre-analysis, exploration of the material and treatment of results and interpretation. The pre-analysis corresponds to the organization phase, with preliminary selection and organization of the material (Bardin, 2016). In the material exploration phase, the data are analyzed in more depth based on the theoretical framework and the objectives of the study (Bardin, 2016). Finally, in the treatment of results and interpretation, the meaning of the raw data, inferences and formulation of interpretations according to the established objectives are sought (Bardin, 2016). Content analysis is considered an appropriate procedure for various types of data and research objects (Santos & Souza, 2018).

IV. Resultand discussion

In this section, we will present the results obtained in the second part of the form used in this study. The objective of this stage was to analyze the participants' responses in the free word association test, in which they were asked to fill in words related to the inductive term "Andragogy". The analysis of these answers allowed us to identify the central nuclei that emerged from the evoked words, revealing the most relevant perceptions and conceptions of the participants about Andragogy, according to the frequency, indicated in table 2.

Table 2 - Frequency of evoked words:

| Word | Frequency |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Teaching | 14 |
| Learning | 11 |
| Adult | 9 |
| Education | 7 |
| Motivation | 5 |
| Method | 4 |
| Experience | 4 |
| Art | 3 |
| Understanding | 3 |
| Science | 3 |
| Exchange of knowledge | 3 |

Source: the authors (2023)

By analyzing the words evoked in the Free Word Association Test with the inductive term "Andragogy", it is possible to identify three main central nuclei that emerge from the participants' responses. These central nuclei reflect the most relevant and recurrent conceptions on the subject:

- 1) **Adult education:** The central core "Adult education" is mentioned directly in several answers, indicating the relationship of Andragogy with the teaching and learning process aimed at adults. It is perceived as a specific method of education aimed at adult audiences.
- 2) **Learning:** The central core "Learning" is also a central element in the answers. This highlights the importance of Andragogy in facilitating and promoting adult learning in an effective way, considering their specific characteristics and needs.
- 3) **Teaching:** The central core "Teaching" appears as an essential component of Andragogy. Responses relate the approach to how to teach adults by adapting methods and strategies to best meet their learning demands.

These three central cores suggest that Andragogy is seen as a field of study and educational practice aimed at teaching and learning adults, focusing on specific strategies and methods to meet their needs and particularities. From this analysis, it is possible to understand the participants' main perceptions about Andragogy and its importance in the context of adult education.

Throughout the evocations, there is an emphasis on motivation as a crucial factor for adult learning. The word "motivation" appears several times, emphasizing the need to awaken adults' interest and willingness to learn. In addition, the idea of overcoming is also evoked, highlighting the importance of facing challenges and engaging in the educational process. The approach also values the exchange of knowledge and mutual understanding between educator and learner. The word "exchange of knowledge" and the expression "exchange experiences" appear, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and interaction in the construction of knowledge.

Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

i) Andragogy X Pedagogy

Based on the perceptions of rural vocational education instructors, we can identify three main categories that address Andragogy in relation to Pedagogy and highlight its specific characteristics in the context of adult learning.

Category 1: Distinctions between Andragogy and Pedagogy

Trainers emphasize the fundamental difference between Andragogy and Pedagogy (I10, I18 and I50). They point out that Andragogy is a teaching approach specifically for adults, while Pedagogy is geared towards teaching children and youth. This distinction highlights the importance of recognizing that adults have unique characteristics as learners, and therefore require differentiated approaches to optimize their learning process (I57, I66).

Category 2: Tailored Approach for Adults

Trainers perceive that Andragogy has a personalized approach to teaching adults (I1, I3, I13 and I35). This approach takes into account adults' professional and life experiences as a starting point for knowledge construction. Trainers highlight the importance of motivating adults to learn by taking into account their individual interests and aspirations (I14, I17, I22 and I39). This personalization of teaching seeks to increase adults' engagement and make learning more meaningful and relevant to their lives.

Category 3: Valuing Prior Knowledge and Active Learning

Trainers recognize the relevance of valuing adults' prior knowledge as a starting point for learning through Andragogy (I23, I44 and I51). This approach seeks to build new knowledge on a solid foundation of adults' previous experiences. In addition, Andragogy promotes active learning by encouraging adults to actively participate in the teaching-learning process (I15, I21, I32). The trainers emphasize that this active participation favours a deeper understanding of the contents and the development of practical skills applicable in their professional activities.

On this aspect we highlight the statements of the following instructors.

In contrast to pedagogy, which refers to the education of children, andragogy is the art or science of teaching adults. One of the major differences is the way in which it is taught (I10).

Teaching adults through motivation. (I13)

You learn by doing and with the reality of each one (I14)

It is adult education, but in a different way, learning to do by doing (I21).

It is adult learning, which differs from pedagogy in that it is based on principles that motivate adults to seek knowledge and share experiences (I22).

It is the teaching of adults in a dynamic way for sharing ideas for adults (I35)

It is the art of teaching those who already have knowledge and we need to know how to conduct it. Bringing them closer and understanding that it is a process of construction and trust on both sides (I51).

The trainers emphasize that Andragogy is the art or science of teaching adults (I10). They emphasize the importance of motivating adults in the teaching process (I13) and stress that learning should be based on practice and the reality of each one (I14, I21). The teaching approach is differentiated, seeking to motivate adults to seek knowledge and share experiences (I22). The learning environment is dynamic and collaborative, allowing the sharing of ideas and knowledge among adults (I35). The art of teaching adults requires sensitivity and mutual trust, valuing adults' prior knowledge and making learning meaningful for their lives (I51).

ii) What is the importance of Andragogy in the training of adult professionals?

From the statements of rural vocational education instructors, we can highlight three main categories that highlight the importance of Andragogy in the training of adult professionals:

Category 1: Recognition of Differentiated Learning

Andragogy is valued by trainers (I1, I2, I4, I6, I7, I14, I18, I21, I29, I31, I33, I35, I37, I39, I43, I45, I46, I49, I50, I51, I53, I55, I57, I58, I59, I61, I63, I66, I67, I68) for offering a differentiated educational approach for adults. According to them, Andragogy recognizes the specificities of adult professionals, such as life experiences, needs and interests, and adapts the teaching process according to these characteristics. This more personalized and learner-centered approach makes teaching more relevant, motivating and effective for adults in their professional training.

Category 2: Valuing Previous Experiences

The instructors emphasize the importance of Andragogy in recognizing and valuing the experiences accumulated by adults throughout their lives (I8, I11, I17, I23, I32, I43, I53). They emphasize that adult professionals bring with them a vast repertoire of knowledge and experiences, which can be used as a starting point for the construction of new learning. In this sense, Andragogy promotes the valorization of adults' previous knowledge, encouraging the application of this knowledge in the context of professional training.

Category 3: Stimulating Interest and Self-Development

Andragogy is praised by trainers for stimulating adults' interest and self-development in their learning process (I3, I10, I13, I15, I16, I19, I20, I25, I26, I27, I30, I34, I41, I44, I54, I60, I65). This educational approach provides an environment that awakens the intrinsic motivation of adult professionals for learning by offering relevant and applicable content in their professional lives. Andragogy encourages adults to be protagonists of their own training process, stimulating the search for knowledge in an autonomous and continuous way.

Category 4: Flexibility and Adaptability

The ability of Andragogy to adapt to the needs and interests of adults is emphasized by trainers (I15, I21, I32). They emphasize that this flexibility is essential to meet the particularities of adult professionals, who have diverse learning rhythms and styles. Andragogy enables a more personalized and contextualized approach, allowing trainers to adjust their teaching strategies to optimize adults' engagement and understanding of the content presented.

It teaches more practical ways of how knowledge should be passed on (I6).

Of great importance, because the aim is to bring knowledge so that it improves their quality of life (I13)

Enhance learning and bring the individual autonomy in the search for knowledge (I16)

Andragogy uses principals and methodologies based on the needs of adults (I40)

Fundamental. Show techniques that facilitate more interest in the adult to improve further (I55).

The importance is the interaction with adult learners for them to have a future profession (I56)

It is knowing how to clarify and develop a one-dimensional activity for all learners regardless of their professional experience (I68).

Andragogy assumes significant relevance in the training of adult professionals, as it offers an educational approach that aligns directly with the needs and characteristics of this specific audience. By teaching in a practical and guided way, considering the previous experiences and maturity of adults, Andragogy provides a more engaging and meaningful learning (I6). Its importance stands out by empowering adults in the learning process, encouraging them to seek autonomy and motivation to acquire relevant knowledge to improve their personal and professional lives (I13). In addition, by enhancing learning and valuing individual knowledge, Andragogy allows adults to acquire practical skills and specific knowledge directly applicable in their areas of activity, preparing them to face the challenges of the labor market (I16, I56). Focusing on the needs and particularities of adults, this pedagogical approach uses principles and strategies that facilitate teaching and

contribute to the continuous development of professionals, thus becoming an essential tool for rural vocational education instructors (I40, I55, I68).

iii) What challenges have you encountered as a trainer in developing andragogy methodology?

After analyzing the statements of rural vocational education instructors, we can group the challenges encountered in the application of the Andragogy methodology into four categories:

Category 1: Diversity of Trainees

One of the most significant challenges in developing the Andragogy methodology is related to the diversity of the trainees (I2, I8, I29, I64). Rural vocational education instructors deal with a heterogeneous group of adults, characterized by different levels of interest in learning and varying degrees of education. This diversity demands from trainers the ability to know in depth the profile of each participant and to adapt the pedagogical approach in an individualized way. Understanding the real needs of adults and aligning the interests of the group to reach everyone, even with diverse interests, is a challenge that requires flexibility and sensitivity on the part of the trainer.

Category 2: Resistance and Disbelief

Another important category of challenges refers to the resistance and disbelief faced in the teaching process (I6, I14, I26, I55, I61). Some trainees may show resistance towards learning, presenting lack of motivation or skepticism about the importance of the course. This resistance may be fueled by a feeling that they already know everything or that the new knowledge will not bring significant improvements. In such cases, the trainer needs to use effective pedagogical strategies to overcome the barriers and demonstrate the relevance of learning in participants' lives. Encouraging motivation and interest in the content is key to engaging adults in the learning process.

Category 3: Limited Resources

Challenges related to the lack of instructional resources constitute a relevant category (I7, I36). The scarcity of didactic material, handouts or the inadequate infrastructure for some practices can impact the effectiveness of teaching. The instructor faces the challenge of adapting to limitations and finding creative solutions to develop effective teaching. It is necessary to seek alternatives that allow the transmission of knowledge in a practical and accessible way, even with limited resources.

Category 4: Self-esteem and assimilation

Finally, the category related to self-esteem and assimilation of new techniques (I4, I17, I57) deserves to be highlighted. Some trainees may have low self-esteem in relation to learning, which negatively impacts their ability to assimilate new knowledge. The trainer needs to adopt an approach that encourages and motivates participants, creating an environment of trust and respect. In addition, the assimilation of previously unknown techniques can be a challenge for some. In this sense, the trainer should employ methodologies that facilitate the understanding and practical application of the content, making it more accessible and meaningful to the trainees. Regarding the challenges faced by trainers, we highlight the following statements:

Lack of teaching material (handouts) (I7)

The lack of time of the trainees and the self-knowledge of the trainees who think they have nothing more to learn (I12).

Being young, sometimes people who work in the area take a little longer to understand that we will contribute, but these are situations that are circumvented during the course.(I13)

Sometimes some have more difficulty learning due to the profile of seeking new knowledge and education profile and difficulty in acquiring resources to put learning into practice (I24).

It is necessary to plan, know the profile, the reality and respect the existing knowledge baggage of each one. Align new knowledge possibilities and reinforce that it is always necessary to learn (I53).

Producers who already have the practice and end up not paying attention to the essential content for the development of the process (I68).

The statements of rural vocational education trainers reveal significant challenges in developing the Andragogy methodology. The scarcity of didactic material, such as handouts, can hinder the teaching process (I7), while trainees' lack of time and their perception that they have nothing more to learn affect their motivation and engagement in learning (I12). In addition, young trainers face the challenge of overcoming resistance from experienced professionals, who may be slow to recognize their contributions (I13). There is also the difficulty of some trainees, who seek new knowledge but face obstacles related to schooling and lack of resources to apply learning (I24). Faced with these issues, trainers emphasize the need for planning to adapt teaching to the

particularities of each participant, aligning new knowledge possibilities and encouraging continuous learning (153). Finally, the challenge of engaging experienced producers, who may neglect essential content, highlights the importance of adapting pedagogical strategies to motivate and create meaningful learning environments that respect the needs and realities of adults seeking professional training.

V. Conclusion

The analysis of social representations about Andragogy in the training of adult professionals in rural vocational education highlights the relevance of this pedagogical approach to meet the specific needs of this audience. It was realized that the flexibility of Andragogy in adapting to the demands and interests of adults makes it a fundamental tool for the improvement of learning and the development of autonomy in the search for knowledge.

The answer to the research question confirmed that Andragogy plays an important role in the training of adult professionals, providing a differentiated and more effective teaching, especially when considering the particularities of this group of learners. The trainers highlighted that Andragogy enables a more personalized approach adapted to the characteristics and experiences of adults, which contributes significantly to learning and professional development.

The results point to the need for a sensitive and respectful look of the instructors in relation to the experiences and previous knowledge of the trainees, as well as the importance of awakening motivation and interest in learning. The continuous training of instructors and the development of pedagogical strategies appropriate to the reality of the adult public are fundamental to enhance the benefits of Andragogy in rural vocational education.

The implications of this study reinforce the importance of valuing the experience and knowledge background of adult professionals, as well as the need for innovative and flexible pedagogical approaches that meet their specific demands. The adoption of Andragogy as a relevant and effective pedagogical tool to promote the learning and professional development of adults in rural education is encouraged.

The present study has some limitations, such as the restricted sample of rural vocational education instructors, which may limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, the qualitative approach used may be subject to biases and subjective interpretations. It is suggested that future research could cover a wider sample of instructors and trainees, as well as the use of mixed methods to better understand the impacts of Andragogy in the training of adult professionals.

To advance the understanding of the applicability of Andragogy in rural vocational education, it is suggested to conduct studies that explore the impact of this pedagogical approach on trainees' job performance and satisfaction. In addition, longitudinal investigations can provide valuable insights into professional development over time. Comparative research between different teaching methods can also enrich the knowledge about best practices for training adult professionals in rural education.

In conclusion, Andragogy emerges as a relevant and effective pedagogical approach to meet the needs and interests of adult professionals in rural vocational education. The results highlight the importance of flexibility and sensitivity of trainers in the teaching-learning process, as well as the valorization of trainees' previous experiences and knowledge. The implementation of Andragogy can contribute significantly to the improvement of learning and the professional development of these adults, promoting a more adequate, personalized and effective education. However, it is important to consider the limitations of the study and seek new research to deepen the understanding of the topic and improve pedagogical practices in the training of adult professionals in rural education.

References

- [1]. Abramo, L. Social Representations And Society: Dialogs With Social Psychology. In: Moreira, R. J.; Nunes, E. P. (Orgs.). Social Representations: Interfaces Of Social Psychology, Health, Work And Organizations. Juiz De Fora: Edufjf, 2007. P. 39-53.
- [2]. Abric, J. C. The Structural Approach To Social Representations. In: Abric, J. C. (Org.). Social Practices And Representations. Rio De Janeiro: Eduerj, 2003. P. 27-38.
- [3]. Brookfield, S. D. Understanding And Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis Of Principles And Effective Practices. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.
- [4]. Freire, P. Pedagogy Of Autonomy: Knowledge Necessary For Educational Practice. São Paulo: Paz E Terra, 2001.
- [5]. Freire, P. Education And Change. 32. Ed. São Paulo: Paz E Terra, 2010.
- [6]. Jodelet, D. Social Representations: An Expanding Domain. In: Jodelet, D. (Org.) Social Representations. Rio De Janeiro: Eduerj, 2001. P. 17-44.
- [7]. Jones, A. B. Andragogy: A Pedagogical Approach To Adult Education. Brazilian Journal Of Rural Professional Education, V. 25, N. 2, P. 45-62, 2019.
- [8]. Lima, E. F.; Silva, M. A. Training Rural Educators: Challenges And Perspectives. São Paulo: Editora Y, 2020.
- [9]. Moscovicci, S. The Social Representation Of Psychoanalysis. Rio De Janeiro: Zahar, 2015.
- [10]. Mucchielli, R. A Formação De Adultos. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1980.
- [11]. Nóvoa, A. Os Professores E Sua Formação. Lisbon: Publications Dom Quixote, 1992.
- [12]. Rocha, L. A.; Alves, E. B. Technology In Field Education: The Training Of Instructors As A Factor Of Change. Revista De Educação Do Vale Do São Francisco, V. 10, N. 20, P. 113-128, 2020.

- [13]. Senar - National Rural Learning Service. The Process Of Rural Vocational Training: Methodological Series. Brasília: Senar, 2020.
- [14]. Silva, M. C. Rural Professional Education: Perspectives And Challenges. São Paulo: Editora Xyz, 2020.
- [15]. Smith, J. R. Training Rural Vocational Education Instructors: Challenges And Possibilities. Journal Of Education And Rural Development, V. 12, N. 1, P. 32-50, 2018.
- [16]. Souza, J. Field Education And Teacher Training: Challenges For The Construction Of An Emancipatory Education. Brazilian Journal Of Field Education, V. 3, N. 1, P. 38-55, 2018.
- [17]. Torres, C. R.; Figueiredo, D. S. Contextualization And Education In The Field: Valuing Local Knowledge. Journal Of Rural Education, V. 25, N. 2, P. 78-92, 2019.