

Motives that Turn Adults at School Again

Leticja PAPA-GUSHO¹,

Abstract

The rapid development and the increased competition in the labour market make continuing education a necessity for an increasing number of people. Thus, in our society, the number of adults that are going back to school is growing every day. But, which are the most important motives that push adults to return back in the school?

The main aim of this paper is to present some of these motives and to analyse the importance of them. For the methodology of this paper there are used only the quantitative methods. The sample is adult students that are frequenting part-time study in some Albanian Universities. To select the sample from the whole population it is used the stage sampling. For data gathering there are used interviews, where the respondents answered questions about the motivation factors that return them again in school. The analysis of data has been carried out according to normal statistical methods.

In closure, via analysing the data, the most important motives that return adults in some Albanian Universities are, keeping their actual job, getting a new job, being promoted or getting a recognised qualification. Some other motives are, performing the work better or developing their self as a person.

Key terms: Motivation factors, adult students.

Introduction

In the last twenty years, Albania has undergone many economic, social and demographical changes, which have led in occasional structuring and restructuring of the labour market. The return in the desks of school is very important for many adults to achieve personal enhancement, to face intellectual challenges, to be more adaptive in the labour market and for many other reasons. (Wezel D, 2008). Today and always more, to create a life long learning society, training and education are given more importance. This main reason why this happens is because adults more and more must face successfully all changes that are encountered in our society for the present and the future. Changing job requirements or career changes often force adults to get additional education to survive or advance in the job market (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). To be successful to afford

1. Leticja PAPA-GUSHO, PhD Candidate, Tirana University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Tirana, Albania, , E-mail: lpapagusho@yahoo.co.uk

all this challenges, adults are dedicating more attention to their education and personal growing. The emphasis on education may be seen in the context of the development of a knowledge economy or a learning society, where learning and development of new qualification is the mean for maintaining and developing individual and societal welfare and wealth (Desjardin, 2006).

In this context, a lot of adults are returning in school to be more prepared for the labour market and more qualified and accepted from it. A considerable part of the adult students are back in school to give another direction to their carriers or they did not have this education possibility in the past due to certain political, social or economic conditions.

They also see education as a very good opportunity to grow from the intellectual point of view, to increase their incomes, to have more chances for carrier promotions, etc. This happens because adults are in a particular stage of their life that requires new development to self.

In this aspect, like Maslow emphasises in his theory (Maslow, 1987), individuals need evaluation, success and respect from others. And they achieve this level being competent and capable in all the skills that they posses. If, the stage that all the need for respect and trust is achieved, individuals feel important and self-confident. At this stage individuals are motivated to enhance growing and self-actualization needs. It has to do with the realization of the unique potential of the individual.

The main aim of this paper is to present some of these motives that return adults back to school and analyse their importance.

Theoretical Framework

According to Skaalvik & Finbak (2001), a large number of studies are conducted in order to explore the reasons or motives for participation of adults in formal and non-formal education. Participation in adult education is often asked to judge the significance of a number of reasons for participation. In many cases the survey methodology is used. Surveying of this type has given varying results with regard to the number and type of factors. In the following table there are shown factors that are found in two surveys, in surveys of Boshier (1991) and Beder & Valentine (1960) in Skaalvik & Finbak (2001). The two surveys found 7 and 10 factors, respectively. However, the table only shows the factors which are clearly identifiable. Six of the motivation factors in the two surveys have clear similarities. According to Skaalvik & Finbak (2001), these similarities are:

- The desire for self-development or self-improvement, including the wish to learn, the need for independence and a desire for increased self-concept.
- Needs connected with family responsibilities, including the desire to become better parents and to be better able to help children with their schoolwork.
- Social contact, including the desire to meet other people and to break the pattern of everybody routine.
- Reading and writing are more limited motives for improving capabilities within these areas.
- Career development includes different desire connected with jobs, from obtaining a job or changing jobs to making a career within the job one has and being better able to carry out the work.
- Educational preparation is used as in indication that participant in adult education is a preparation or qualification for subsequent education.

Motivation factors identified in the surveys of Boshier (1991) and Beder & Valentine (1990).

Factors found in the surveys	
Factors found in both surveys	Self development
	Family Responsibilities
	Social Contact
	Reading and writing skills
	Career development
	Educational preparation
Factors found in only one survey	Community involvement
	Economic need
	Encouragement from others
	Something to do

Source: Skaalvik & Finbak (2001), p.7

In continuation of this reasoning, according to Taylor & Sherman (2008), self-development and self-affirmation enable people to participate and to manage challenging events like learning activities. These components also fuel the ability to set high goals and strive persistently to achieve them. Taylor and Brown (1988) reviewed evidence to suggest that a positive sense of self is associated with working longer and harder on tasks.

According to Skaalvik & Finbak (2001), Norwegian surveys have previously shown that intrinsic motivation is the most important motive for participation in leisure time courses, while career development is the most important motive for participants in work related -courses. The most dominant career-related motive in Skaalvik's survey was being better able to carry to one's work. Skaalvik & Tvete (1980) also found that interest in the subject and self-improvement were the most important motives for participation.

Benshoff and Lewis (1992), in their study, emphasize that many adult students come back to school to complete educational pursuits they began years before. They may have dropped out school for a number of reasons, including financial conditions, competing responsibilities, lack of focus, motivation and maturity. Other major reasons that adults return to college include family life transitions (marriage or divorce), change in leisure patterns, and self-fulfilment.

Clayton and Smith (1987) identified eight primary motivations for non-traditional women students' decisions to pursue a degree. These motives are self-improvement, self-actualization, vocational, role, family, social, humanitarian and knowledge.

Burges (1996), emphasises that additional information on why adults participate in educational activities appears to be necessary if the field of adult education is to continue to improve educational offerings. In his study, this author tested the hypothesis that reasons chosen by men and women for participating in educational activities factored into eight groups. The results were factor analyzed and seven groups of reasons were identified. Based on the nature of the items comprising each, the factors were named, the desire to know, the desire to reach a personal goal, the desire to reach a social goal, the desire to reach a religious goal, the desire to escape, the desire to take part in an activity and the desire to comply with formal requirements.

Another study from Kwang, K& Creighton, S. (2000), focuses on the growth in the participation of adult education in the United States from 1991 to 1999. Data from the National Household Education Survey in US show that about 90 million adults were engaged in one or more types of adult education in the 12- month period represented a significant increase in participation compared to 1991 and 1995.

Methodology

Procedure and sample

For the carrying out of this study it was chosen a quantitative research model as well as a qualitative research model. In this paper it is presented only the data from the quantitative research. The withdrawal of the sample from the population is made with sample stage methods. Initially, by means of these methods there were selected four higher education institutions in the country and then the sample is selected from the general population of adult students that are frequenting the part-time study in these institutions. The general population that served for this sample are adult students that actually are frequenting the part-time educational system in public university of Tirana, Korça, Elbasan and Durrës in the 2011-2012 academic year. This population for one year has been approximately 9697 and for four years of study are 38788 students. But actually, in all universities are enrolled for four years only 25000 students.¹ From this population is issued a sample of 400 participants. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1970, p 94).

As mentioned above, from this population the sample is selected through the stage probability sample. It involves selecting the sample in stages that is, taking sample from sample. This type of stage sampling means to select a number of universities at random, and from within each of these universities, select a number of faculties at random, and from within these faculties select years (first year, second year, etc) at random, and from within these years select a number of students. Through this method a sample that represents the population features is selected. From 400 adult students which made the sample, 130 are men and 270 are women or 32.5 % are men and 67.5 % are women. The largest number of participants is age 25-39 years with 73 %, which is followed by 17 % of 40-49 years old. Then comes the age group up to 24 years 6%, and in the end is the age group 50-59 years 3.8 %. From 400 participants in the study the largest number of the adult students is from the married group 59 %, and then there is the unmarried group 33.5 %, 5.3 % are cohabitating and two other groups divorced and widows compose only 1% of the sample.

The level of education of the participants of the study is as follows; 36 % have high school degree, 55% have university degree and this school is for them second university degree, 8% have master degree. Only 0.5 % of the adult students that are frequenting part-time studies have declared that their higher level of education is the specialized courses. From 400 participants, 150 adult students or 37.5 % are unemployed, 242 adult students or 60.5 % are employed, and only 8 students or 2% are households.

Questionnaire

The instrument that it is used for gathering data is the questioner that is made from some rubrics. Administration of the questioner is conducted with 400 respondents who filled out this questionnaire for about 35-40 minutes. Initially participants were informed about the purpose of the study and clarified that the survey data will be used only for academic purposes. Given that the focus of this article is only motivations for returning

adults at school, this article presents only the questionnaire elements that have to do with this argument. They are organized in the form of open question where students according to increased importance should write three main motives for which they are back at school again.

Sources of error

The manner by which this research took place intended to minimize non real results. However, as most of the studies in the field of adult education, this study is based on self-report. So, the results can depend on the participants’ understanding of the questions in the survey as well as their being sincere when they completed the instrument.

Research ethics

During the implementation of this study there are followed all the stages of research ethics, where first getting the permission of the structures responsible for faculties in which the instrument is administered. Subsequently, it has become a sensitization of participants before they fill the instrument about the research and its goals, and are guaranteed anonymity and whether they wanted to participate voluntarily in the study. Also, participants who did not want to participate in the study did not meet the instrument.

Results and discussion

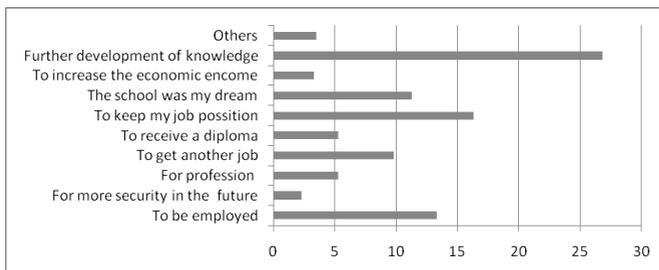
To study motivational factors that turn adults in school in instrument is designed one rubric by which adult students will rank in order of importance three main reasons which have returned them back to school. Later, it was realized coding responses and categorizes them according to the respective categories. The charts below show the frequencies for the three most important motives. This question has been answered by 397 respondents from 400 adult students.

Of these, 26.8% of adult students returned to university to further development of knowledge, 16.3% to maintain the current place of work, 13.3% for finding a job, 11.3% returned because this branch was their hobby or they have been unable to carry out studies in the past time.

If we observe the data it would be concluded that 9.8% of adults think that students who are pursuing part-time studies will provide the opportunity for better work position, 5.3% attend school for a profession, while 5.3% want to receive a university diploma. 2.3% attend school because they believe that this opportunity will ensure more security in the future, 3.3% to increase their economic income.

The category which is named “Other” includes reasons such as: to perform my actual work better, to know new friends, have lots of free time, to feel better and to enhance the economic status. This category captures 3.5% of respondents.

As it is apparent from graph 1, the three primary categories that are dominant are

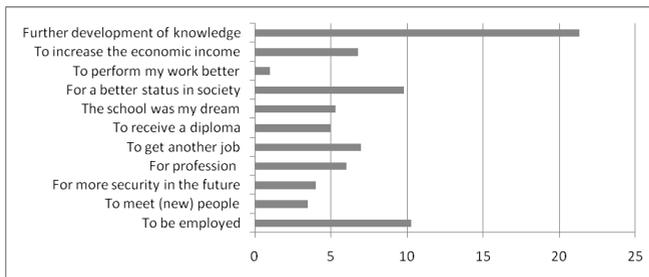


the further development of knowledge, to maintain workplace and find a different job.

Graph 1. Primary motives that returns adult students in School

After this point there are analyzed secondary motives which return adults in school. From 400 respondents, this section has completed 342 adult students.

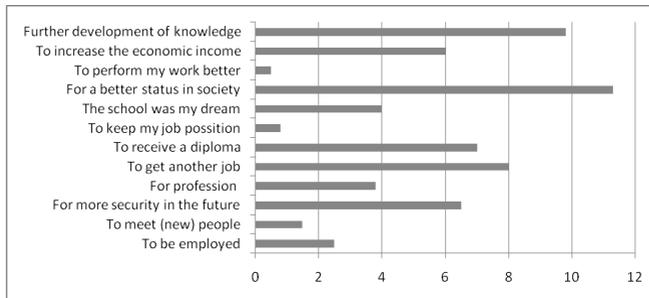
As noted higher percentage have again motives such as the further development of knowledge with 21%. To find jobs or for occupation is filed by 10.3% of adult students. In this section it is very interesting that some motives like to feel better in society or to enhance the status, are filed by 9.8 % and to increase the economic income is filed by 6.8%. All this data are presented in graph 2.



Graph 2. Secondary motives that returns adult students in school.

Regarding tertiary motives, of the 400 respondents, 246 respondents responded to this column. In this point of view if we see the data from the graph the high percentage in this case is “filling better in society” with 11.3 %, followed by “further development of knowledge” 9.8 % and “to increase the economic income” 6.0%. All this data are presented in graph 3.

Regarding tertiary motives, of the 400 respondents, 246 respondents responded to this column. In this point of view if we see the data from the graph the high percentage in this case is “filling better in society” with 11.3 %, followed by “further development of knowledge” 9.8 % and “to increase the economic income” 6.0%. All this data are presented in graph 3.



Graph 3. Tertiary motives that returns adult students in School.

Conclusions

From the analysis of the frequencies which are performed on data received for primary, secondary and tertiary motives that turn adults into part- time education system in some Albanian Universities, it is observed in all three categories that the answer that has the high percentage is “further development of knowledge”. This is to be expected because it reflects the high requirements of our times and the rapid development of our society that has very high demands for specialised individuals. Another important motive is to keep my job position or maintain workplace. As for the tertiary motives it is seen in general that a good percentage of respondents are seeking to develop further their social status, also to feel better with themselves or to feel better in society.

References

- American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.)
- Aslanian, C. B., & Brickell, H.M. (1980). "American in transition: Life Changes as reasons for adult learning. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.
- Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N., & Tarule. (1986). *Women's Ways of Knowing: The development of self, Voice and Mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Benschof, J. M. (1991) "Nontraditional college students: An developmental look at the needs of women and men returning to school. *Journal of young Adulthood and Middle Age*. Vol 3.
- Benschoff, J., M & Lewis, H. (1992) "Nontraditional College Students" ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services
- Berg, B. (1989) "Qualitative research methods for the social sciences". Needham heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brazziel, W.F. (1989). "Shaping higher education's future: Demografic realities and opportunities. San Francisco" Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S. (1995). *Adult Learning: An Overview. International Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford, Pergamon Press.
- Burgess. P. "Reasons for Adults Participation in Group Educational Activities" Quality of living Programs, University of Missouri Extension Division, Columbia, Missouri. <http://rite.edu.qut.edu.au/oz-teacher/index.php> 10-09-2012
- Burns & Grove (1997)
- Clayton, D.E., & Smith, H, M.M (1987). "Motivational typology of reentry women". *Adult Education Quarterly*. Vol. 37
- Cohen, L., Manion, L & Morrison, K. (2005). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L & Morrison, K. (2000) "Research Methods in Education" 5th Edition. Routledge Falmer, Taylor & Francis
- Creswell, J. W. (1994). "Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Desjardins, R (2006). *The rise of education as an economical policy tool*.
- European Commission (2003). "*Implementing Lifelong Learning strategies in Europe*". ETF
- Filed, J. (2006). *Lifelong learning and the New Educational Order, Tretham Books*.
- Galerstain, C & Chandler, J (1982). "Faculty Attitudes Toward Adult Students (Vol 30, Nr3), Taylor & Francis, Ltd
- Garcia, L & Fredricks, J (2008) "Developmental Perspectives on Achievement Motivation, Personal and Contextual Influences. Fq 454-455.
- Ginsberg, M, & Wlodkowski, R.J. (2009). *Diversity & Motivation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Glesne, C & Peshkin, A. (1992) "Becoming Qualitative Researchers" White Plains, NY: Longman
- Grbich, C. (2007) "Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction" London: Sage
- <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/bloomrev/index.htm> 05-11-2012
- <http://www.coun.univic.ca/learn/program/hdouts/bloom.html> 12-06-2012
- <http://www.suite101.com/content/6-reasons> 28-03-2010
- Krueger, R.A (1994). "Focus groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research". 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage

- Kwang, K& Creighton,S. (2000). "Participation in Adult Education in the United States". Education Statistics Quarterly, Vol 2.
- MASH, (2007). "*How to Develop the Adult Education in Albania?*
- Maslow, A.H. (1987) "Motivation and personality" 2nd ed. New York: Harper & Row.
- Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS Survival Manual*.(4th ed.). McGraw-Hill Companies
- Patton, M. (1990) "Qualitative evaluation and research methods" Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Senko, C. Durrik, M & Harackie*icz,J. (2008). "Historical Perspectives and New Directions in Achievement Goal Theory, Understanding the effects of mastery and performance-approach goals" Fq 100-101
- Shaughnessy & Zechmeister (1998) "Research Methods in Psychology" 4th edition
- Skaalvik, E. & Finbak, L (2001) "Adult education in Great Britain, Norway and Spain". MOBA Project, The Norwegian Institute for Adult Education.
- Taylor, S. & Bogdan, R (1984)"Introduction to qualitative research methods"2nd Edition. New York: Wiley
- Thompson, S & Schlehofer, M. (2008) "The many Sides of Control Motivation. Motives For High, Low, and Illusory Control", Fq 51-53
- Tuttle.R (1998) "Persisting and non persisting adult students: A study of attribution achievement and classroom environmental perceptions". Journal of Applied Research on Learning
- Welzel, D. (2008). *Reasons Adults Go Back to School*.
- Wlodkowski, R. J. (1999). *Enbancing Adult Motivation to Learn: A Comprehensive Guide For Teaching All Adults*.(3 red) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

(Endnotes)

1 MASH (November 2012)