FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE ADULT LEARNERS: A CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARY STAFF

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ABSTRACT

Kenyan Universities like others globally have witnessed significant changes in the last decade of the twentieth century in terms of enrolment, composition of students, programs and modes of learning As part of this process of expansion and heterogenization, new groups of students who, for a complex range of social, economic and cultural reasons were traditionally excluded from or underrepresented in higher education, have come to participate in higher education in increasing numbers. Kenyan Universities are not exempt from this influx by adult learners. In response to the changing market place, University of Nairobi has expanded its programmes in answer to the demand and many staffs have joined en mass in most of these programs for various reasons. As more and more adults are mobilized to learn a new "Learning Age" dawn is breaking which engages, the researcher to revisit the frequently asked question, namely *'What motivates adults to take part in and complete courses in continuing education and competence development?'* The present research is designed to face issues of motivation within the realm of adult education and learning in a theoretical and empirical mode. A case study of University of Nairobi library staff facilitated a re- look at the factors that motivate adults to learn. The study targeted staffs that recently had gone back to study. Data for this research was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule. Items and questions covered full range of the issues being measured. A total of 30 members out of 170 were interviewed. The six motivational factors identified by Morstain and Smart (1974) were used in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the proportions of motivational factors utilizing the six motivational factors as the dependent variables, with age, gender, entry qualification and academic qualification as the independent

variables. The study found out that that adult motivation to engage in learning is established upon a combination of motives which are intertwined. Motives have three major characteristics: they are plural, changeable and contingent upon the individual's life context.

Key Words: Motivation, learning, intrinsic motivation, adults, learning

Introduction

The rationale for research into adult motivation for education rests firstly on the phenomenon of ever-growing demand for competence development. Working adults who want to succeed in the present economic climate are pursuing college and university education in increasing numbers and they are creating a new majority among college and university graduates across the country (Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 1999-200). Again Kenyan economy is now information-driven and a college degree has become an increasingly important credential in the market place, both for new entrants into the labour force and those already in employment. Both workers and employers have to find new ways of developing corporate knowledge and skills without necessarily banking on formal subsidized training programs. Social and economic pressures on organizations thus "naturally" bring about questions of individual motivation to work and to learn in a more acute manner.

Secondly, over the last number of years, most of the new practical developments in adult education have taken for granted the fact that adults are innately motivated to learn hence "volunteers for learning". What might have been obvious in a different historical context appears today as somewhat less sure, to say the least. Moreover, as new approaches to learning develop, more and more commitment is expected from learners themselves if any result is to be hoped for. Thus, adults are more "Mobilized" to engage in learning, but not necessarily "motivated" to learn. A "new educational deal" is taking shape right before our eyes, which engages both researchers, experts and practitioners to have a second look to frequently asked question, namely *'What motivates adults to take part in and complete courses in continuing education and competence developmen*t?*'* This question is posed as the call for adult education, or the more frequently used term, lifelong learning, is gaining ground today, both in Kenya and many other countries.

Indeed, lifelong learning is seen as the solution to several urgent problems. Governments realize the need for more skilled and educated adults in line with the changing labour market.

Industry calls for a labour force having the latest and updated levels of competence. The resultant is high levels of unemployment which erode the governments off the much needed tax base. Politicians regard education as a solution to what they see as democracy problems. Education is supposed to foster active and democratic citizenship. Educators, finally call for education as a means for personal growth and development and for building of the good society (Gustavsson, 2002). If one assumes that education can solve all these problems raised, the vital question posed is therefore to identify and determine what motivates people to participate in adult education. The obvious way of seeking an answer to this question would, of course to ask the individuals concerned, what it is that motivate them to participate in, or abstain from continuing education.

A survey of the current trend indicates that a number of education programs in universities for adults has steadily grown and an increase in enrollment of students 35 years of age and older has been witnessed in the last five years or so. Indeed, over 60 % of students in our higher institutions can be characterized as non-traditional. (Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac, 1999-200)

In this information society lifelong learning has become something that affects all or nearly all people. As a result, many colleges and Universities have struggled to adapt to this changing student market place. The first assumption is that the university undertaking adult education understands the community – its real needs and interests. Secondly it is presumed that the policy makers understand the needs of the adults. Third, it is presumed that the university instructors understand how to organize the learning experiences, materials and methods of instruction for the adult learner. If the adult learners are to be adequately served, institutions of higher education must assess their needs and motivations, understand the differences between adult learners and the traditional age college student, and make appropriate adjustment in administrative procedures, programming, and teaching-learning process. In response to the changing market place, University of Nairobi has expanded its programmes from extra-mural classes, distance education, and currently the parallel programs in answer to the demand. Staffs have joined en mass in most of these programs for various reasons.

The first of the specific functions of the university in adult education is to provide an opportunity for adults to pursue formal education as long as it is beneficial to them. Universities should offer

regular degree programs to those persons who have delayed their education and now wish to have a unified program. It should also offer certificate and diploma programs for those who are interested in pursuing preparation for a limited area. The second function of the university is to provide for a continuation of education for those who have degrees or who have at least some college work. The continuation function has many other aspects. It provides for the special needs of those who want further development in certain skills. Again, there are a few persons in every community who are interested in pursuing knowledge for its own sake and doing so systematically. A continuation program also may provide mental rejuvenation for those who because of social pressures of a complex society and a deadening effect of routine activities, find that monotony has dulled their intellectual capacity and perception. University adult programs have a usual potential in assisting this rapidly increasing group. A third function of a university is to meet vocational and professional needs that are in harmony with its objectives.

The present research is designed to face issues of motivation within the realm of adult education and learning in a theoretical and empirical mode.

Motivation of adults to seek learning has been researched in recent years (Houle 1961; (1979 Johnstone and Rivera ,1965; Burgess,1974; Morstain and Smart,1974; Cross ,1979; Aslanian and Brickwell,1980; Ron and Zemke ,1984)   and the general conclusion is that participation in any type of educational activity is usually undertaken for a variety of motives rather than a single one, and that these usually reinforce each other.

Wlodkowski, 1985; Sutcliffe and Jacobson, 1998 suggests six factors that affect motivation and concludes that a person's readiness to participate in an organized learning programme is influenced by a whole range of factors. It is quite clear from research findings that, most of the main reasons for participating in adult education lie in a cluster of orientations that are quite similar. The reason for participation does not always lie within learners but in the dynamic tension that exists between learners and the socio-cultural world. Motivation is therefore not a simple issue since individual motives and action are strongly affected by where people are located (socially, culturally and spatially) and the constraints or incentives that operate on their choices (Sargant, 1997). Yet if there is need to learn and if most people actually embark upon learning projects there must be reasons why others do not attend formal educational provision.

Cross, 1983; Mc Givney, 1990; Sargant 1990; Carre, P. 1997; Sutcliff and Jacobsen, 1998 records some of the most frequently mentioned deterrents to participation broadly classified

under: dispositional barriers, situational, and institutional barriers. The various findings have come out with the deterrents, which provide variety of reasons why the groups of adults do not participate and if adult education is to attract them, it needs to address some of the problems. Mc Givney discusses how adult education need to target the non-participant groups, and this reflects clearly the philosophy of adult education being a commodity to be marketed.

Conceptual Framework

The stereotyped image of university student as one who is 18-23 years, in residential, fulltime study is being challenged by a new reality. Adults in their late twenties, thirties, forties and older have enrolled in increasing numbers in higher education institutions. Colleges and universities that once filled with youth are actively recruiting adult population in big numbers.

It is on this premise that the researcher set out to identify the factors that motivate adult learners: a case of university of Nairobi library staff.
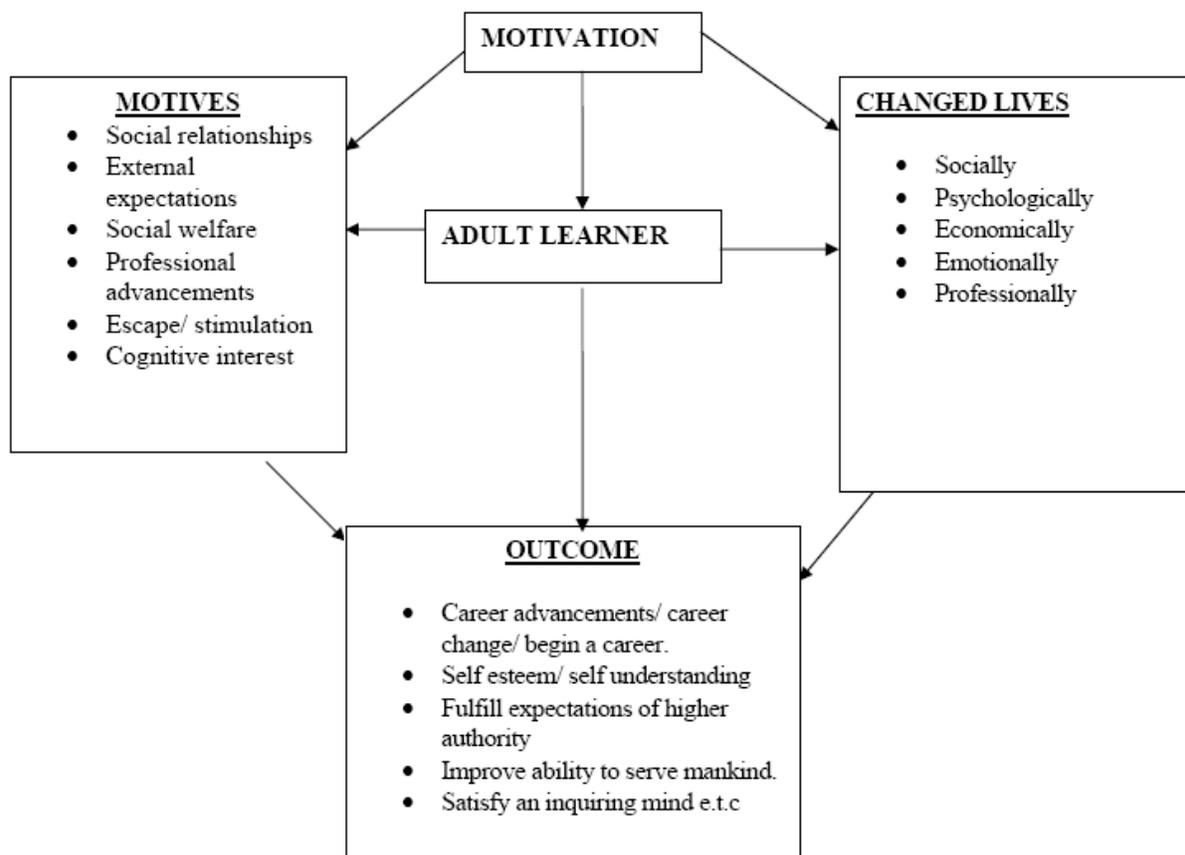
Methodology

The research was a case study of the University of Nairobi library staff. The population consisted of approximately 170 members of staff. The target group comprised of 30 adults aged is 18 years

and above of both gender, currently enrolled in an adult education program including those who have recently (1-5 years) graduated from such a programme. The data of this research was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule.

The six motivational factors identified by Morstain and Smart (1974) were used in the study. Factor scores were calculated by summing individuals' responses to each of the items that had shown a high factor loading for that factor. The factor labels and sample items were: Social relationships, "To make new friends", external expectations, "To carry out the recommendation of some authority", social welfare, "To improve my ability to serve mankind", career/ work, "To secure professional advancements", escape/stimulation, "To get relief from boredom", and cognitive interest, "Just for the sake of learning". Descriptive statistics were used to identify the proportions of motivational factors utilizing the six motivational factors as the dependent variables, with age, gender, entry qualification and academic qualification as the independent variables.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Motivational Factors (Proportion)

Career Advancement	.71
Continue Education as required	.68
Self esteem	.61
to fulfill someone's expectations	.52
Improve ability to serve mankind	.55
provide contrast	.58
satisfy inquiring mind	.77

Adults who seek adult education for career advancement scored 71%, self esteem 61%, on external expectations 52%, on social welfare 55%, on escape/stimulation 58% and on cognitive interest 77%. The hypothesis that the researcher set out to test were, there is a positive relationship between adult learning and career advancement, adult learning brings personal fulfillment and adult learning provides escape. There was a tendency for the group to score high on professional advancement, moderately on social welfare, and low on escape/stimulation. There is also significant difference in motivation reported in the higher scores by adults on the motivational factor of cognitive interests and lower scores on external expectations. High scores

on such items as "To learn for the sake of learning" and "to seek Knowledge for its own sake" indicated that adult learners have an internal drive for knowledge. In addition, results showed by the lower scores that adults are less motivated to pursue a college degree for reasons of forming social relationships or meeting external expectations of another person or authority. Students who were not seeking degree qualification scored higher on escape/stimulation factor.

Age and Motivational Factors

Table 2: Age on Motivational Factors (Proportion)

Age				
Below 30	31-40years	41-50yrs	Above 50yrs	Total
Career Advancement	.33	.71	.76	.75	.71
Career Change	.67	.43	.35	.50	.42
Secure full time employment	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Begin Career	.00	.14	.00	.00	.0323
Update Skills	.00	.14	.24	.25	.19
Continue Education as required	.67	.86	.59	.75	.68
Keep up in the profession	.33	.14	.12	.00	.13
Self esteem	.67	.57	.65	.50	.61
Basic Skills	.33	.00	.0588	.25	.0968
Meet Interesting people	.33	.00	.24	.25	.19
Explore Personal Interests	.00	.57	.41	.25	.39
To comply with instructions	.00	.14	.0588	.00	.0645
To fulfill someone's expectations	.67	.43	.53	.50	.52
Improve ability to serve mankind	.67	.86	.47	.25	.55
Prepare for community service	.00	.29	.24	.50	.26
Improve ability for community work	.33	.43	.24	.25	.29
Relieve boredom	.00	.00	.12	.00	.0645
Provide break from routine	.67	.14	.35	.00	.29
Provide contrast	.33	.86	.53	.50	.58
Learn for the sake of learning	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Seek knowledge for the own sake	.00	.14	.29	.25	.23

Satisfy inquiring mind	.67	.86	.76	.75	.77

Gender and Motivational Factors

Table 3: Gender on Motivational Factors (Proportion)

Gender			
Male	Female		Total
Career Advancement	.68	.75	.71
Career Change	.47	.33	.42
Secure full time employment	.00	.00	.00
Begin Career	.00	.0833	.0323
Update Skills	.21	.17	.19
Continue Education as required	.68	.67	.68
Keep up in the profession	.026	.25	.13
Self esteem	.47	.83	.61
Basic Skills	.11	.0833	.0968
Meet Interesting people	.16	.25	.19
Explore Personal Interests	.42	.33	.39
to comply with instructions	.0526	.0833	.0645
to fulfill someone's expectations	.47	.58	.52
Improve ability to serve mankind	.53	.58	.55
prepare for community service	.21	.33	.26
improve ability for community work	.21	.42	.29
relieve boredom	.00	.17	0.0645
provide break from routine	.32	.25	.29
provide contrast	.58	.58	.58
learn for the sake of learning	.00	.00	.00
seek knowledge for the own sake	.16	.33	.23
satisfy inquiring mind	.84	.67	.77

There is insignificant difference in the work/career factor between women (67%) and men (68%). Both genders will pursue continuing professional education required in the profession and will update their skills. But more women will keep up in the profession (25%) than their counterparts the men (0.005%).On personal fulfillment women score83% and men 47%. More women will engage into learning to relieve boredom 17% men 0.00% provide break from routine25%women and 32% men. Both gender average on learning to provide escape58%. More male 84% will learn to satisfy an inquiring mind. Women scored 67%, while more women33% will seek knowledge for its own sake men 16%.

Professional Entry Qualification and Motivational Factors

Table 4: Professional Entry Qualifications on Motivational Factors (Proportion)

Entry Qualification			
None	certificate	diploma	Total
Career Advancement	.76	.64	.67	.71
Career Change	.35	.55	.33	.42
Secure full time employment	.00	.00	.00	.00
Begin Career	.0588	.00	.00	.0323
Update Skills	.18	.27	.00	.19
Continue Education as required	.82	.55	.33	.68
Keep up in the profession	.18	.0909	.00	.13
Self esteem	.71	.55	.33	.61
Basic Skills	.00	.18	.33	.0968
Meet Interesting people	.29	.00	.33	.19
Explore Personal Interests	.41	.27	.67	.39
to comply with instructions	.12	.00	.00	.0645
to fulfill someone's expectations	.53	.64	.00	.52
Improve ability to serve mankind	.59	.55	.33	.55
prepare for community service	.18	.45	.00	.26
improve ability for community work	.29	.27	.33	.29
relieve boredom	.12	.00	.00	.0645
provide break from routine	.24	.45	.00	.29

provide contrast	.76	.36	.33	.58
learn for the sake of learning	.00	.00	.00	.00
seek knowledge for the own sake	.24	.27	.00	.23
satisfy inquiring mind	.82	.64	1.00	.77

Entry professional qualification as an independent variable was categorized as those with no qualification, certificate holders and diploma holders. They all seek adult education for career advancement in varying proportions, 76%, 64% and 67% respectively. Those with no professional certificates rank highest in satisfying inquiring mind 82% Learning to provide contrast to other exacting details of life76% for self esteem building 71%, and to continue education as required in the profession82%. Certificate holders will follow the same pattern though in lesser proportions, 64%, 36%, 64% and 55%.Diploma holders' biggest motivator is to explore personal interests and career advancement

Academic Qualification and Motivation Factors

Table 5: Academic Qualification on Motivational Factors (Proportion)

Academic Qualification					
Secondary	A levels	University Deg.		Post graduate	Total
Career Advancement	.60	.69	1.00	1.00	.71
Career Change	.50	.50	.00	.00	.42
Secure full time employment	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Begin Career	.00	.0625	.00	.00	.0323
Update Skills	.20	.19	.33	.00	.19
Continue Education as required	.60	.69	1.00	.50	.68
Keep up in the profession	.00	.13	.67	.00	.13
Self esteem	.50	.63	1.00	.50	.61
Basic Skills	.10	.0625	.00	.50	.0968
Meet Interesting people	.10	.19	.33	.50	.19
Explore Personal Interests	.30	.50	.00	.50	.39
to comply with instructions	.10	.00	.33	.00	.0645
to fulfill someone's expectations	.50	.56	.67	.00	.52

Improve ability to serve mankind	.40	.69	.33	.50	.55
prepare for community service	.30	.19	.67	.00	.26
improve ability for community work	.30	.25	.67	.00	.29
relieve boredom	.00	.0625	.33	.00	.0645
provide break from routine	.30	.31	.33	.00	.29
provide contrast	.50	.75	.33	.00	.58
learn for the sake of learning	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
seek knowledge for the own sake	.40	.19	.00	.00	.23
satisfy inquiring mind	.50	.87	1.00	1.00	.77

Academic qualifications are categorized into secondary level, advanced (A) level, university level and postgraduate level. The highest motivator for secondary level category is both career advancement and to continue in professional education 60%. Leaning for its own sake is ranked lowest 0.00%. For the A-level category satisfying an inquiring mind is ranked highest 87% followed by providing contras 75% and both career advancement and continuing professional advancement average at 69%. For the first university degree holders the highest motivators are to fulfill someone's expectations 67% and to prepare for community work 67%.Holders of post graduate degree are content in continuing professional education 50%, self esteem 50%, and exploring personal interests 50%.

Discussions

Motive analyses led to the following conclusions: Declared motives were stronger for women than men almost everywhere but the cognitive factor. Age had little effect on motives, when organization was held constant. Level of qualification/ professional status had noticeable and combined effects on motives resulting in a rather clear cut distinction between two groups as revealed by factor analyses. The first cluster grouped together highly qualified and with professional status. The most prevalent motive for this category was operational/ professional with all other motives ranking significantly lower. In strong contrast, the second cluster grouped together less qualified / with lower professional status. This second group showed markedly superior motives for engaging in learning in all areas except "social –affective" and "hedonic".

Conclusions

The major purposes of this study were to examine the factors motivating adults' participation in higher learning.

What is noteworthy is the fact that, motives form temporary patterns of motivation that cannot be assimilated to either permanent dimensions of self, or to lasting indexes of an individual's rapport or learning or even to a stable characteristic of a person's motivation for a learning content. Motives have three major characteristics here: they are plural, changeable and contingent upon the individual's life context.

The research project has come up with the following conclusions:

1. A complete, validated list of motives has clarified our vision of the reasons adults have for enrolling into adult education courses;

2. A theoretical model of adult motivation for education has been constructed on the basis of a renewed, socio-cognitive vision and validated through a series of interviews;

3. The model has been operationalized and a valid, internally consistent instrument of motivational assessment was produced;

4. The instrument was used on adults who were in adult learning programs, which allowed a series of analyses to be carried out;

5. As a result of those, numerous differences have been established between groups of adults as to the dynamics of engagement into adult learning programs.

6. Results obtained in the present research as to differences in motive combination between adults who engage in learning programs could be duplicated and extended in different settings using the present methodology and instrument.

Recommendations

The best way to motivate adult learners is simply to enhance their reasons for enrolling and decrease the barriers. The following are recommendations to the policy makers, the universities, the educators and the employees.

1. The institution addresses adult learners' life and career goals before the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align its capacities to help learners reach their goals. Instructors must learn why their students are enrolled (the motivators); they have to discover what is keeping them from learning. Then the instructors must plan their

motivating strategies. A successful strategy includes showing adult learners the relationship between training and an expected promotion.

2. The institution promotes choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial.

3. The fact that more adults are inclined to seek learning for cognitive reasons as opposed to fulfilling the expectations of a formal authority would have some practical implications for the administration and program planners in higher institutions who are seeking improved ways to serve adult learners. Hence it would be helpful both to university personnel and students to relate marketing strategies and the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs to the inner drives that motivate the students to seek learning.

4. The institution's faculty uses multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) for adult learners in order to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills. They should engage the learners in the design of learning. Encourage them to be self-directed, be a facilitator rather than a didactic instructor. The individual learners' needs and learning styles should be taken into account, utilize the learners' past experiences, in the learning process and make the learning activities seem to have some relevance to the learners' circumstances.

5. The institutions assist adult learners using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance students' capacities to become self-directed, lifelong learners. They should work on attitudes so that education becomes desirable, and ensure that teaching is performed in such a way as not to scare off people later in life.

6. The institution uses information technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience. Flexible, ICT-based learning modules should be provided to overcome barriers of time and space

7. The institution engages in strategic relationships and collaboration with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners. They should arrange educational opportunities reflecting the needs of the job market.

8. The institution conducts its outreach to adult learners by overcoming barriers of tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities. Employers are advised to reorganize work in order to facilitate developmental learning.

Suggestions for further research

Adult educational theory could benefit from wider analyses of the reasons why adults seek learning. Comparison of results obtained with similar procedures in a variety of settings could enlarge our vision of adult motivation to learn and develop. More research is needed to explore many other facets of adult learner, in addition to motivation. Such dimensions as cognitive, emotional and moral development, and their relationships to learning motivation, should have implications for how adults learn in a higher education environment.

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