THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG PART-TIME ADULT LEARNERS IN KOTA KINABALU

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2012

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG PART-TIME ADULT LEARNERS IN KOTA KINABALU

This study provides an overview of the motivational factors of adults to pursue learning in higher education. The relationships between motivational factors of participation and academic achievement of adult learners in their learning are determined. Effort is also taken to find out the predictors for academic achievement of adult learners. This is a descriptive-correlational study using questionnaire as the mode of data collection. Five hundred and five respondents comprised of 255 adult learners in a conventional learning mode and 250 adult learners in a hybrid learning mode in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah were selected as samples of study. A thirty-item questionnaire, adapted from Boshier's EPS (1991) and Neill's TUSMSQ2 (2004), was used to measure the five motivational factors, which are personal development, career advancement, social pressure, social and communication improvement, and escapism. The findings indicate that personal development and career advancement are the prevalent motivational factors of participation in learning among adult learners. It is found that there is a positive but low relationship between personal development and academic achievement among adult learners, while social pressure and escapism indicate negative and very low relationships with their academic achievement. In contrast, social and communication improvement, and career advancement do not correlate with academic achievement. Moreover, regression analysis reveals that personal development and social pressure are the predictors for academic achievement in adult education. Lastly, some recommendations and proposals for future studies are discussed.

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini memberi gambaran keseluruhan tentang faktor-faktor motivasi orang dewasa untuk meneruskan pembelajaran ke pendidikan yang lebih tinggi. Hubungan antara factor-faktor motivasi penyertaan dengan pencapaian akademik para pelajar dewasa dalam pembelajaran mereka ditentukan. Usaha juga dilakukan untuk mengetahui peramal-peramal kepada pencapaian akademik para pelajar dewasa. Ini adalah satu kajian deskriptif-korelasi yang menggunakan soal selidik sebagai mod pengumpulan data. Lima ratus lima orang responden yang terdiri daripada 255 orang pelajar dewasa dalam mod pembelajaran konvensional dan 250 orang pelajar dewasa dalam mod pembelajaran hibrid di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah telah dipilih sebagai sampel kajian. Satu soal selidik yang mempunyai 30 item yang diubah suai daripada Boshier's EPS (1991) dan Neill's TUSMSQ2 (2004), telah digunakan untuk mengukur lima faktor motivasi, iaitu pembangunan peribadi, kemajuan kerjaya, tekanan sosial, peningkataan sosial dan komunikasi, dan pengelakan dari kenyataan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pembangunan peribadi dan kemajuan kerjaya adalah faktor-faktor motivasi penyertaan yang lazim dalam pembelajaran di kalangan pelajar dewasa. Kajian juga mendapati bahawa terdapat hubungan positif tetapi rendah antara pembangunan peribadi dengan pencapaian akademik para pelajar dewasa, manakala tekanan sosial dan pengelakan dari kenyataan menunjukkan hubungan yang negatif dan sangat rendah dengan pencapaian akademik mereka. Sebaliknya, peningkatan sosial dan komunikasi, dan kemajuan kerjaya tidak berkait dengan pencapaian akademik. Tambahan lagi, analisis regresi menunjukkan pembangunan peribadi dan tekanan sosial adalah peramal-peramal kepada pencapaian akademik dalam pendidikan dewasa. Akhirnya, beberapa syor dan cadangan kajian masa depan telah dibincangkan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

10MP	10th Malaysia Plan
ACT	American College Testing
CCNA	Cisco Certified Network Associate
CE	Continuing Education
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CPE	Continuing Professional Education
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
GCE	General Continuing Education
GEFT	Group Embedded Figures Test
GPA	Grade Point Average
EM	Extrinsic Motivator
EPS	Educational Participation Scale
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
HUST	Hadhramount University of Science and Technology
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IHL	Institution of Higher Learning
IIM	Intrinsic Intellectual Motivation
IM	Intrinsic Motivator
LASSI	Learning and Study Strategies Inventory
LIRi	Learning in Retirement institute
MBA	Master of Business Administration
M-EPS	Mergener's Education Participation Scale
MRS	Medical Radiation Science

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MSLQ	Motivation Strategies for Learning Questionnaire
MSU	Montana State University
n Ach	The need for Achievement
n Aff	The need for Affiliation
NOUT	National Open University of Taiwan
n Pow	The need for Power
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NT	Non-Traditional Pharmacy Degree Students
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OUM	Open University Malaysia
PKPG	Program Khas Pensiswazahan Guru
RPS	Reasons for Educational Participation Scale
SIUC	Southern Illinois University in Carbondale
SPSS	Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences
TUSMSQ2	The University Student Motivation and Satisfaction Questionnaire version 2
UMS	Universiti Malaysia Sabah
UNIRAZAK	Universiti Tun Abdul Razak
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WED	Workforce Education and Department

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Education plays an integral role in the basic structural evolution of a nation and carries immense impact on the development and progress of any society. In many developing and developed nation, education is regarded as a prerequisite for entry into the professional workplace. Therefore, people are aware of the importance of education in life and they work nonstop to seek new alternatives and changes for the development of their education levels. In current global perspectives, education is deemed as a lifelong process and adults are also increasingly expected to assume active participation in continuing education (Castle *et al.*, 2006; Barnett, 2010). Employers are striving to improve the quality of their workforces to compete in a global marketplace. Meanwhile, employees are working hard to improve their qualifications and gain experiences as a means of ensuring increased ability to start a career, initiate career change, gain specialist knowledge or to enhance prospects of employability (Madsen and Wilson, 2006).

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According to Ng *et al.*, (2009), human capital theory proposes that an educated population is vital in supporting economic growth. Therefore, continuous learning is crucial and a necessity to prepare a worker or employee to subsist and even to succeed in their workplace. The role of higher education in continuous learning has become important both for individuals operating in the learning society and for organizations competing in international markets (Madsen and Wilson, 2006). Therefore, due to the trend and employability which stress on the education attainment, many working adults or employees desire to obtain a higher level of education by taking part-time programmes. This shows that the world of education and workplace are moving closer to each other.

Therefore, towards the early of the 21th century, the connections between the world of higher education and workplace are among the key issues of debate

(Barnett, 2010). Postgraduate education particularly has experienced tremendous growth in recent years with the numbers of adult learners returning to study in colleges or universities growing continually (Kaur and Sidhu, 2009; Chao *et al.*, 2007; Ng *et al.*, 2009; Xiong, 2009). The growth of adult learners can be attributed to the demographic factors of adults, enormous technological changes, and social changes such as the rising educational level of populations, role changes of women, retirement, or changing life styles in accordance with the requirement of knowledge explosion (Cross, 1981).

Due to the demand of a globalized economy which emphasises on a knowledge-based society, this arouses the motivation among working adults to participate in continuing adult education or work-related courses in order for them to survive better at workplace (Madsen and Wilson, 2006; Glastra *et al.*, 2004). Boshier (1991) states that adults are driven by different motivational orientations either internal or external factors to engage in continuing education. Hence, working adults with desire to further studies are believed to have strong motivation to fulfil their needs (Abdul Razaq Ahmad *et al.*, 2009).

Various motivational orientations can be their positive reasons and needs for participation in educational programmes such as to improve career and obtain higher salary or better incentives, to improve knowledge and skills, to be role model for children and so on (Garst and Ried, 1999; Supyan Hussin, 2004). Motivation is directly related to the engagement in educational programmes as well as academic performance of an individual (Delialioglu *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, further study into the link between engagement motivation and learning outcomes among adult learners is clearly needed (Carre, 2000).

1.2 Background of Study

Historically, the mind-set was that the learning or studying process ends with the completion of formal youth education in school and when one enters the working life which is assumed as another new stage and totally different from studying life. Education world and workplace are considered irrelevant to each other. Therefore,

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higher education especially adult learning was neglected and rarely studied during that time (Buchler *et al*., 2007; Castle *et al*., 2006).

However, the transformation of world economy in recent decades increasingly demands a more educated workforce with higher levels of skills and credentials (Kortesoja, 2006). Nowadays, people need higher levels of academic and technical knowledge to remain employable in current organizations (Chao *et al*., 2007). Thus, people are realizing the importance of education to their workplace due to the progression of modern markets around the world. Learning in workplace has become a key issue. Learning is not only a studying process during school time, but it is a lifelong process especially in the workplace. Trends and changes of works occur constantly, and learning is the only viable way to keep abreast and upgrade a person's knowledge and skills.

The combination of globalized competition and rapid technological development generates a business environment with continuous turbulent change in workplace which emphasises the necessity of skills development (Brown *et al*., 2001). This triggers the consciousness among working adults to believe that learning in workplace is a necessary condition to survive in the challenged world at the present time. Thus, the development of lifelong learning is being stimulated in the learning culture. Lifelong learning as the name implies, refers to the motivation and capability of an individual to have further learning (Sim *et al*., 2003). The lifelong learning that is depicted in this study will focus on formal higher levels of education among working adults, namely adult learning.

Nowadays, continuous learning is important to help adults to live better life (Mulenga and Liang, 2008). As the demand of continuous learning increases, higher education institutions are in the frontline of battle for growth. Educational systems in many countries have undergone significant changes to reform programmes and restructure higher education either in undergraduate or postgraduate studies. In Malaysia, the government wished to develop a world-class higher education system to turn the country into a regional centre for educational excellence (World Report Malaysia, 2008).

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According to the former Malaysian Minister of Higher Education Dato' Mustapa Bin Mohamed, citizens should be provided with the best education to enhance the competitive position of the country in the world economy (World Report Malaysia, 2008). Hence, higher education institutions and universities play a crucial role in supporting lifelong learning for working adults by offering different types of part-time courses, web-based learning, open distance learning or e-learning which conform the international standards and produce internationally-recognised qualifications.

In 2001, Malaysia has far more universities compared to the past. For instance, Open University Malaysia (OUM) aims to provide opportunities for higher education to as many people as possible especially working adults (Supyan Hussin, 2004). As an alternative and convenient route to learning for working adults, OUM has introduced the open and distance learning study mode as a way of providing tertiary or lifelong education and boosting skills to working people. The blended learning approach in OUM which incorporates traditional face-to-face classroom settings and online classroom settings is believed to be able to encourage the maximum flexibility in the learning process for working people, and minimizes barriers in continuous learning (Shaari Hamid, 2008).

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Presently, many working adults or employees embark on higher education in part-time programmes to increase their education and knowledge levels. Learning in higher education has become important, universal and general. Consequently, the number enrolment of adult learners is increasing exponentially. Countries with higher levels of education have tremendous involvement of adults in postgraduate and continuous learning activities (Kasworm, 2011). According to Kimmel and McNeese (2006), adult learners' enrolment in higher education experienced a rapid growth and provided a boon for North American colleges and universities in the past two decades. In U.S., 40 percent of adults were reported to participate in formal adult education for work related-reasons during the period 2002 to 2003 (Kleiner *et al.*, 2005). Based on Chao *et al.* (2007), adult learners aged 24 or older comprised of 44 percent of U.S. postsecondary students. Thus, the market for adult education is increasingly becoming more competitive.

Similarly, the number of adult learners in Malaysia is also increasing. According to Supyan Hussin (2004), the number of adult learners in Malaysia moved up from 17,756 in 1996 to 20,000 in 2000. Following the establishment of OUM after 2000, the number of adult learners in Malaysia has been increased continuously. Moreover, it was revealed that Malaysia is expected to have 60,000 distance learners annually under the 8th Malaysian Plan from 2001 to 2005. Based on the Statistics of Higher Education of Malaysia, there is clearly evident that the number of enrolment into part-time and open distance learning in Malaysian Public Institutions of Higher Education has increased significantly from 30,661 learners in 2002 to 46,013 learners in 2007. The number of enrolment continually increased to 49,309 learners in 2008 (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia, 2009).

Apparently, the number of postgraduate students in developed and developing countries is also increasing. This is consistent with Kaur and Sidhu (2009) who reveal the rise of postgraduate numbers in many public universities in Malaysia in the years since 2002. In Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), there was a three-fold increase in enrolment of over 5,000 postgraduate students in 39 schools and four centres of excellence in the areas of Medicine, Science and Technology, Engineering and Arts from 1990 to 2009.

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Malaysia has put in place efforts to develop higher education by offering different educational financial aid plans in recent years. In 2009, the government proposed the Mini Budget Plan to provide more opportunities in postgraduate education for Malaysians to pursue master's and PhD courses. Through this plan, government would undertake to finance tuition fees and provide research grants up to RM20,000 for every student pursuing PhDs locally whereas each master's student would be allocated RM10,000. This plan is believed to have benefited many postgraduate students in Malaysia.

During the launching of the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP) 2010, the Prime Minister stated that a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is the cutting edge of a nation's competitiveness and asserted that Malaysia should attach importance to its education system, thus the programme MyBrain15 was proposed as a sponsorship