

Miroslav Krystoň
The Slovak Republic

Motivation in the adult education

Abstract

The content of the contribution is an analysis of the structure of those motivation factors influencing the decision of adults of various kinds of competence for further education. The author also presents the results of research into the area of motivation.

Key words: *Motivation; education; adult education; research results.*

Motivation is generally known as one of the basic factors that influence continuance and quality of education. It is equally valid for both elementary and secondary school pupils as well as for both university students and for the group of citizens studying at their adult age.

In this contribution, we want to focus on this specific category of those who take training. We shall analyze the system of motivation factors that influenced their decision for further education.

1. Theoretical basics

Adult education today represents an inseparable and integral part of **lifelong education**. It relates to family education, preschool education, and school education. It enables adults to complement, enhance or change their already gained education as well as its potential in the direction of their individual interests and needs. Adult education is examined by an independent social-science discipline called **andragogy**, which together with pedagogy and geragogy (a science on the education of seniors) makes up a system of science on formative education. One of the areas focused on by andragogical theory and research is the area of motiva-

tion of adult citizens as to their further education. **Motivation** can be generally described as “a dynamic intra-psychic process in which mutual relations of subject stimulations (inner motivation) and environment (outer motivation) make up a tension, concentration and an activity orientation that leads a man to the goal following the decision making process.” (Palán Z.: 2002, s. 125). There are the following tasks of motivation in the educational process:

- ⇒ to concentrate attention
- ⇒ to call out tension and interest
- ⇒ to create conditions for work (László K.: 1997, p. 36)

In our contribution we shall point to the motivation of a human decision to study again at an adult age. It will be necessary to take into account that motivation to learn is different for children and for adults. Motives for education of adults are rooted especially in their needs, interests, skills as well as in individual's character-
volitional qualities, such as:

- ⇒ commitment appreciation
- ⇒ perfection endeavour for a certain field of study
- ⇒ effort to get or enhance one's qualifications
- ⇒ attempt to advance at work and the like.

A further important group of motives involves those resulting from the awareness of the importance, significance and perspective of education as well as of the wish to be well informed about new areas. For example:

- ⇒ foreign languages
- ⇒ discoveries, investigations
- ⇒ legislation
- ⇒ company's economic documents
- ⇒ social-economic processes, and so on.

These motives are quite strong as they relate not only to the consolidation of human intellectual and moral quality, but also to one's existential and social position as well as to one's overall preparation for life (Hotár S. V., Paška P. Perhács J. 2000. p. 270) Czech author M. Beneš states that the typical feature of motivation for adult education is: the need to solve concrete problems, which represents the basic difference between the motivation of children and adults. The said author also says that: based on wide-ranging research implemented in various countries in the world and in various cultural environments, it is possible to feature relatively exactly the **structure (typology) of motives** of adult partaking in further education:

⇒ **Social contact.** Participants try to start or to develop contacts, they look for the acceptance of others, they want to understand personal problems, to improve their social position, they are in need of group activities and friendship of allied people.

⇒ **Social stimulations.** Participants try to get latitude which is not bothered by everyday pressures and frustrations.

⇒ **Professional reasons.** This concerns the aim to ensure or develop one's own job position.

⇒ **Participation in political, especially communal life.** The main ground is an endeavour to improve skills for participation in communal matters.

⇒ **Outside expectations.** Participants follow recommendations of their employer, friends, social workers, counseling services, and the like.

⇒ **Cognitive interests.** This motivation corresponds to the classical picture of adult education, which comes out of knowledge value itself as well as its acquisition. (Beneš M.: 2003. p. 89)

In actual decision situations these motives, of course, influence one another and they interweave. In any case it is true that their recognition is an important factor while planning, constructing as well as while implementing adult education in factual conditions of particular education institutions.

2. The presentation of the research results

Throughout the years 2000 – 2004 we prepared and conducted research focused on the identification of motivation factors that led adult citizens to the decision to resume education throughout various regions of the Slovak republic. Altogether 1598 respondents took part in the research; women were represented by 56.1 % (n = 896), men 43.9 % (n = 702). In order to get the most valid data, such respondents were addressed who studied in various fields and education institutions at that time. In this contribution we will present some partial results that concern selected groups of respondents. These are:

- a) employees in industry;
- b) social workers;
- c) pedagogues.

A) Employees in industry (626 respondents)

We directed our research into big factories where there is already a developed and functional system of further professional education of employees: Matador a.s. Púchov, Železiarne Podbrezová a.s., INA a.s. Kysucké Nové Mesto, Nákladná doprava s.r.o. Žilina, SPP Bratislava. Out of the total number of the respondents (626), 72.4% were men and 27.6% were women. The strongest motivation factors in this group were: **an effort to improve one's financial appraisal** (28.4% of the respondents) and **a pressure from the employer** (24.1% of the respondents); 19.0%

of the respondents said they decided on further education **on the basis of their own endeavour to enhance or broaden their qualifications**, while this motivation was often connected with a possibility of obtaining a better job position. The same values (13.7%) in the scale of motives were represented by: **an effort to develop one's own personality and an expectation of a better position at the labour market**. Only minimally (1.1%) the factors were mentioned which we had provisionally labeled "other", like an effort to enhance one's social prestige, family influence, the influence of friends and colleagues and so on.

B) Social workers (346 respondents)

The strongest motivation in this group was assigned to the **effort to develop one's own personality** (32.8%). The tendency of the social workers to perfect themselves was proved also by the fact that the second place in the scale of motivation factors was scored by an **effort to improve one's own qualification** (27.6%). The third place was scored by the **pressure from the employer**, (22.5%). Distinctively lower values referred to other motives:

- ⇒ **better salary** - 8.3% = 4th place
- ⇒ **other motives** (social prestige, family influence and the like- 6.0% = 5th place
- ⇒ **better chances at the labour market** - 2.8% = 6th place.

C) Pedagogical workers (311 respondents)

In this group of respondents, a different hierarchy of motives for further education was detected. The strongest factor was an **effort to enhance or to broaden one's own qualifications**, which often was **linked to a possible job position development** (38.9%). In this context, **the pressure from the employer** distinctively appeared (28.3%). The third place was taken by **other motives** (social prestige, an effort to get a scientific degree, an influence of friends and colleagues, and the like - 18.0%). An **effort to earn a better salary** as a motive for further study was mentioned by 9.0% of the respondents. Only 5.8% of those studied said they decided for further studies to **develop their own personality**. None of the respondents (0.0%) said the motive was to **get a better position at the labour market**.

3. The research conclusions

Based on the analysis of the said ascertainties we may say that:

- ⇒ There are statistically important differences in the hierarchy of motivation factors for adult learners in the area of industry and employees in the public services.

⇒ For industry employees the outer motives dominate (employer's pressure, an effort to earn a better salary). In the group of social workers and pedagogues, the inner motives are more strongly represented– especially an effort to enhance one's own qualification (professionalism), an effort to develop one's own personality, or other motives linked to for instance social prestige.

⇒ In all the analyzed groups, employer's pressure begins to be a strong motivation factor.

⇒ Social workers and pedagogues, unlike industry employees, much less, or not at all, link their further education to their better position at the labour market.

⇒ In the group of social workers and pedagogues, further education is not distinctively linked to an effort to earn a better salary.

4. Conclusion

As already said, the presented ascertainments represent only a preliminary outcome from more extensive research. We have intentionally focused on a group of social workers and pedagogues, because the knowledge of motives structure which led these adults to their further education are practically and really applicable within the conditions of the Pedagogic Faculty of MBU in Banská Bystrica focusing on exactly these target groups in its external study programme.

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