

The Increased Demand for Adult Education in the Family

Approved: Tom Lo Giudice Date: 4-28-09
Paper/Project advisor

The Increased Demand for Adult Education in the Family

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Abstract

The issue in this research paper was to research three aspects as to why there is an increased demand in adult education in the family which are impacted by economics, strengthening the family ties and lifelong learning. Adults returning to school, like myself, to obtain a higher education are no longer an adage but a necessity for providing economic stability for family members both individually and collectively which is reflected under the literature review College For All Equates Economic Stability. This encompasses the literature showing that on an average, the adult college graduate earns more financially than an adult with only a high school diploma. The employment opportunities are also greater for a college educated adult compared to an adult with a lower level of education. The Pursuit of Happiness literature review highlights areas where parental involvement is extremely important in promoting college readiness for the parent and children, growing exposure to new forms of education including pedagogical, E-learning, and other traditional or nontraditional education setting due to changing technology. Moreover, the Never Stop Learning literature review supports the need for all family members to be lifelong learners for various reasons such as career advancement, financial growth, personal enrichment, and etc. Overall, the literature further shows that the increased demand for adult education in the family is very pertinent to all aspects of reaching economic goals, strengthening family ties, and lifelong learning.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Regardless of age, child or adult, an individual should never cease opportunities to expand his or her horizon to attain a high standard of living for all family members through ongoing education. This research document will discuss three major aspects surrounding the increased demand for adult education in the family. These issues are economics, strengthening family ties, and promoting lifelong learning among family members. In today's global and technological society, the world revolves around the importance of adult learners who are better educated; multi-task oriented, and highly qualified to successfully address family circumstances. Thus, this frame of reference among adult learners oftentimes is dissimulated to family members at an early age through emphasizing the importance of an education, thereby bridging the gap among generations.

Economic, poverty reduction, and eliminating crime are vital in creating brighter futures for today's communities. The aspect of current economics expresses a need for a family to review its current livelihood to determine the quality of life for all members, or as the adult or parent of the household to determine if there is a need to improve the family circumstances. Studies have shown that most parents want their children to have a better quality of life than their generation. Therefore, more adults are either entering the world of education for the first time, or continuing their education beyond high school to enhance the family's overall livelihood. This alludes to higher annual and lifetime salaries consistent with continued higher education.

An ever increasing demand for adult education within the family is the need to strengthen family ties. Most children are extremely proud to see their parents pursue and education. Such inspiration is an aspiration for the child to model the parent. By doing so, each family member will be able to share their strengths and weaknesses. Collaborating together the family ties will be strengthened, individually and collectively, in order to achieve the family's educational goals. Family ties create a special bond, trust, open communication, encouragement, and respect, thereby enabling family members to realize the importance of the increased demand for adult education within the family structures.

Educational studies have shown that the quality of a family's livelihood is directly related to education. The more education an adult attains the higher the quality of life and better standard of living. On the average, the adult college graduate earns more financially than an adult with a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Specialized careers require higher education and the salary tends to commensurate accordingly. Even special careers require the adult to be retrained or re-certified within a designated period of time. In essence, this means the adult must be a lifelong learner. The higher the education, the greater the opportunities are for salary and career advancement, cultural exposure and overall quality of life for family members. Again, the increased demand for adult education within the family promotes a lifelong learning process.

The increased demand for adult education affords family members opportunities to make positive impacts on their school and community by being productive, contributing citizens and tax paying members of society. The information below highlights the summation of the introduction:

- Marketability in the workforce- having an advanced education increases an adult's employment opportunities in the current or future competitive job market;
- Parental involvement of their children- parents are able to contribute to the success of their children's educational endeavors;
- Retain current job – becoming more educated about existing employment job duties would be beneficial in retaining present employment;
- Promotional opportunities – may give an individual the ability to advance in their professional career pursuit; and
- Self improvement – approach in which a person can improve on a desired or a necessary skill.

Statement of the Problem

Continuing Adult Education is imperative to achieving success. To what extent do economics, strengthening family ties, and promoting lifelong learning relevant to the increased demand in Adult Education?

Significance of the Problem

The significance of the increased demand for adult education in the family is the need to continue learning among all family members in order to economically prosper, while strengthening family ties, and to continue being a lifelong learner for personal growth throughout a lifetime.

Assumption

For the purpose of this paper, it is assumed that all research and review of the current literature is reported and documented as accurately as possible. It is also assumed that the literature will make recommendations on how best to use the research available.

Delimitations of the Research

The research will be conducted through the Karmann libraries (University of Wisconsin-Platteville) over a period of thirty-three (63) days. Primary searches will be conducted via Internet through EBSCO Host with ERIC and Academic Search Elite. Key search topics will include “adult education and economy,” “adult education and family,” and “adult and lifelong learning”.

Method of Approach

A review of literature related to research and studies on how and why there is an increased demand for adult education will be conducted. The findings will be summarized and recommendations made.

Definition of Terms

Adult Education. Anyone who is age 18 or older, learning skills, acquiring knowledge, and developing both professionally and personally.

E-Learning. Distance education, online learning, web-based training (Remtulla, 2007)

Extended Traditional University. Programs under the auspices of the traditional University designed to capture nontraditional students including youth oriented higher education such as Youth Options and other precollege initiatives to advance higher education.

F.A.S.T. Families and Schools Together is a family oriented program to strengthen parent involvement with in the schools and community. (Wisconsin Center For Education Research, 1988)

Financial Aid. Various types of financial assistance to pay for higher education.

“If I can do it, you can too.” Adult learners can achieve their educational goals, such aspiration and inspiration with diligence and effective application of time and energy, and perseverance, young people can continue to be lifelong learners.

Parental Involvement. Awareness of and involvement in a child’s schoolwork, understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and student success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about student progress. The term “parents” refers to

biological parents, adoptive and stepparents, and primary caregivers (e.g., grandmother, aunt, brother) (Fan & Chen, 2001).

Precollege Program. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Instruction Precollege Program, these are programs that provide middle and high school students with an array of college preparation activities to promote access to higher education.

PTA. Parent and Teacher Association is a collaborative effort to provide students with a quality education.

Technology Based University. More adult and workforce orientated higher education system which minimizes the physical separation of the student from the instructor with a reduced cost and increase access to higher education.

Traditional University. An educational system where faculty primarily imparts knowledge to students in a regular, on campus classroom setting.

Upward Bound Program. This program is a federally funded initiative that provides fundamental support to high school participants in their preparation for college entrance. (United States Department of Education, Trio Program)

Chapter 2

College for all Equates Economic Stability

“Poverty reduction is deeply implicated in structures of politics, economic culture, and technology, from the global down to local levels. Irrespective of the political ideology of a nation, adult and lifelong education can and must play a significant role in reducing poverty. Present studies argue that the reeducation of adults is a dire necessity for effective poverty reduction” (Bhola, 2006 p. 231). Historically, the “have and have nots” date back to ancient history. A combination of power was used to develop class systems resulting in inclusion and exclusion of people based upon their societal status and/or wealth while discriminating and excluding groups that were not of the same status or race. Moreover, the elitist class used their status quo to render other groups as powerless thereby creating poverty within a community. (Bhola, 1972)

With the onset of the 20th century, American working life continued to show high poverty levels. Only a small number of adults had a high school diploma. During the 1960’s, many individuals who were labeled as “hippies and flower child” transitioned to corporate executives, college professors, medical practitioners, etc. Gone are the days of afros, peace signs and mural Volkswagen bugs. “The historical increase in the workplace demand for secondary education is obvious in any analysis of official government data. In 1973, only 28% of the prime-age workers had any post secondary education (Carnevale, 2008). By 1975, full-time employees with Bachelor’s degrees had 1.5 times the annual salaries of employees with only a high school

diploma. This number evolved by the year 1999 to 1.8. “A person with a Bachelors’ degree will earn, on an average, almost twice as much as workers with their high school diploma over a lifetime (\$2.1 million compared to \$1.2 million). This is a result of not only higher starting salaries for people with higher education levels, but also the sharper earnings growth over the course of their careers.” (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Thus, adult education has become paramount to ultimate professional success thus, slightly reducing poverty levels in communities.

Throughout an ever changing global society, not everyone attains a college degree; however everyone should strive for some form of higher education. This equates with a higher salary and better livelihood. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 also shows that, on an average, a person with some high school education earn \$23,400 , high school graduate at \$30,400, some college \$36,800, Associate Degree \$38,200, Bachelors Degree \$52,200, Masters degree \$62,300, Doctoral Degree \$89,400, Professional Degree \$109,600. Similarly, work-life earnings for full time employees including college graduates and non graduates reveal that people with some high school education earn 1.0 million, high school graduate 1.2 million, some college 1.5 million, associate degree 1.6 million, bachelors degree 2.1million, Masters degree 2.5 millions Doctoral degree 3.4 million, Professional degree 4.4 million. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

“A mind is a terrible thing to waste” is the United Negro College Fund’s slogan. In today’s society, this waste has been minimized through the increasing number of adults pursuing advancement in education correlating with high salaries for themselves and their families. To attest to this, the 21st century has brought many changes to the realm of education. Our society has finally realized how important education is and that our future generation of children is lacking in receiving the academic and social skills they need. With the monumental and

historical election of the first African American President, Barack Obama, the education system has now been pushed to the forefront of politics. The United States educational system is now seen as flawed and has a great need to be changed. President Obama's education initiatives for students begin in the infancy stage and continue through adulthood. Some of his initiatives include supporting young children and their parents, expanding the head start programs, supporting bilingual education, reforming no child behind, doubling financial support for successful charter schools and closing those that do not work. President Obama's administration is also focused on strengthening the Math & Science curriculum throughout school systems and giving financial support to schools to try to help counteract the dropout rates. Other initiatives include supporting college outreach programs such as Precollege, Gear Up, Upward Bound, other Trio programs and college credit initiatives. An extremely important issue that President Obama calls attention to is our American teachers. In school settings and other educational environments, teachers are the role models for our students. According to President Obama's initiatives, teachers should be appropriately trained, retained, and rewarded. With the new Presidential administration, the expectation is that teachers will no longer be underappreciated and underpaid.

With the turn of the century and the plummeting of our economic system, paying for college tuition has become more expensive. President Barack Obama wants to make college affordable for all people. To achieve this, he would employ the American Opportunity tax initiatives. This would help many families pay for college tuition. In return, the student would be required to give back through community service projects.

Currently, the entire world is in an economic crisis. Many financial resources have been cut throughout the United States and Wisconsin is no exception. Specifically, Wisconsin

Governor Jim Doyle's initiatives include cutting millions of dollars throughout the state, while increasing funding for our children's education. As Obama, Doyle understands that preparing students to compete successfully in a global world is a top priority. His plan is called the UW Agenda. This initiative includes keeping college tuition affordable for families with incomes less than \$60,000 a year. Under this plan, Governor Doyle promotes strengthening the Wisconsin Covenant. The mission of the covenant is to provide higher education financial support to students who perform well academically and who exhibit positive behavior throughout their high school experience. Governor Doyle also proposes to finance initiatives to recruit and retain accredited teachers. In his initiatives, Governor Doyle will be presenting legislation that will create opportunities for schools to cooperate and collaborate more effectively. Finally, Governor Jim Doyle has pledged to protect what is most important to Wisconsin and its future, the children.

The Pursuit of Happiness

In the words of most parents "I want my child to attain the American Dream" is never ending. The aspect of strengthening family ties expresses the need for a family to review its current livelihood to determine the quality of life for all members, or as the adult or parent of the household to determine if there is a need to improve the family circumstances. Studies have shown that most parents want their children to have a better quality of life than their generation. The parents have high expectations for their child to succeed in life which leads to higher achievement among the children (Fan & Chen, 2001). In addition to encouraging and demanding

that their child achieve nothing less than their very best in school, many parents continue their education. For example, many adults return to school to achieve their high school diploma, others continue their education by acquiring a technical degree or certificate, and for other adults who have attained a four year college degree, their pursuit often lead to obtaining a second college degree, a master's or PhD in a marketable career. In recent years, adults have become increasingly more interested in continuing their education. According to a 2001 U.S. Department of Education study, the participation rate in adult education increased by 6% from 1995 to 2001 (Katz, 2007). Such action displays to the children that the demand for adult education within the family is extremely important.

During the fall, children are not the only students entering a classroom setting. Many parents are pursuing their education as well. The children attend school during the day and parents mostly in the evenings. For the most part, children are extremely proud to see their parent pursue an education. Such inspiration is embedded in the younger family members. Many adult family members structure their study time with their children. On many occasions, the child may be the tutor or educational mentor to the struggling parent who is returning to school. Likewise, the parent may be the tutor or mentor to the struggling child. Each family member brings some strengths and weaknesses to the table. Together as a family, other ways to promote the aspect strengthening family ties is through parental involvement which could include the family participating in programs such as local F.A.S.T. program, PTA organization, Precollege programs, and Upward Bound program, faith based organization, sporting activities, and etc.

“While classroom instruction remains the primary method of delivering lessons, many programs are adding ways of providing content and contact using computers and the internet.”(Speizer, 2007). In today's new age of technology, even the simplest computer literacy

tends to pose a challenge for many parents. Given that today's children are born into an advanced technological society, they are able to help their parents become computer literate. This enables parents to not only participate effectively in the traditional classroom course work, but also E-learning programs. With continuous advancement of digital technology, children teach their parents how to use cell phones, iPods, emailing systems, digital cameras, and other electronic devices. Such communication and technology expansion minimizes computer illiteracy or digital gap between generations (Riquelme, 2004).

As the adult learner matriculates in higher education, one of the major concerns affecting the family is financial assistance to maintain the family livelihood while paying for a higher education. Family discussions concerning the total family budget allows for open communication to discuss current family financial situations, as well as future college funds for both the adult family members and the children. For example, if the family's income is below the federal poverty guidelines the parent would be eligible to receive various federal and state grants and loans from the institution she/he is preparing to attend such as the ones listed below:

- Federal Work-Study (FWS) provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. A Federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Pell Grants are awarded usually only to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree. Sometimes a student enrolled in a post-baccalaureate teacher certification Pell Grants are considered the foundation of federal financial aid. Additional aid from other federal and nonfederal sources could be added.

- The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) program is for undergraduates with exceptional financial need. Pell Grant recipients with the lowest expected family contributions (EFCs) will be considered first for a FSEOG. Just like Pell Grants, the FSEOG does not have to be repaid.
- The Academic Competitiveness Grant was made available for the first time for the 2006-2007 school years for first year college students who graduated from high school after January 1, 2006, and for second year college students who graduated from high school after January 1, 2005.

There are other grants in addition to these financial resources. Colleges provide institutional grants and loans to help make up the difference between college costs and what a family can be expected to contribute through income, savings, loans, and student earnings. Other institutional grants, known as merit awards or merit scholarships, are awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Some merit awards are offered only to students whose families demonstrate financial need. Others are awarded without regard to a family's finances. Some grants come with special privileges or obligations. It is recommended that a student finds out about the types of grants awarded by each college they are considering.

- The Talent Incentive Program Grant provides grant assistance to the most financially and educationally disadvantaged students. The grant requirement is that these students must be a resident of Wisconsin and attend eligible colleges and universities in the State of Wisconsin.

- The Wisconsin Higher Education Grant (WHEG) Program provides grant assistance to undergraduate Wisconsin residents. Student must be enrolled at least half-time in degree or certificate programs at University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Technical College, and Tribal institutions. WHEG grants are need based. Students are only eligible for this award for ten semesters.
- The Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) Program provides grant assistance to undergraduate from Wisconsin. The students must be enrolled at least half-time in degree or certificate programs at non-profit, independent colleges or universities based in Wisconsin. Awards are based on financial need. Student receiving WTG grant are only eligible for ten semesters.
- Lawton grant program is to provide financial assistance to minority undergraduate to improve their opportunities for retention and graduation and lessen the burden of student debt.
- The U.S. Department of Education administers the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program and the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan. These loans are known as the Stafford loan for students and the Plus loan for parents.
- The Federal Perkins Loan Program provides low-interest loans to economically disadvantage students.

Also, after the parent receives his/her higher education degree, the chances of advanced employment is greater which entails the ability for parent to save money for the children education in the future. Simultaneously, the parent as well as the children can encourage each other to maintain high academic standing leading to possible higher education merit scholarship opportunities. To attest to this, a recent new release from the U.S. Department of education stated that within the next five years, sixteen million students will graduate from high school. Many families will experience difficulty paying for their children's college fees. With this in mind it is important that family ties are strengthened by the adult learner (the parent) who must promote higher education by expecting the child to achieve academic excellence to be eligible for all forms of higher education financial assistance (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Collaborating together the family can make each other stronger and help accomplish their educational goals. Lives can be turned around thereby resulting in changed lives of adults who want to reach their goals of a higher education.

A true story attesting to this issue occurred in a local community where an adult was labeled the "town drunk". With constant encouragement, love, caring, belief in the family member's self esteem, ability, as well as, social services support, this person has not only completed a two year technical degree, but has attained a four year college degree, master's degree and a Doctorate. The once "town drunk" is a highly respectable school counselor touching the lives of youth encouraging them to get their education while they are young, and if, for whatever reason they failed to do so as a young person, there is still great hope through the increased demand for adult education. The bottom line is that when family ties are strengthened, open communication, trust, and respect flourishes. Concomitantly, the family ensures that each member is kept abreast of the ever advancing technology.

The ongoing family's inspiration and aspiration help the total family realize the importance of increased demand for adult education within the family structure. In the words of Dr. Lennox McLendon, Executive Director of the National Adult Educational Professional Consortium, "Adult education, whether delivered by a community college, the public schools, or a community based organization, is really an important feeder system to the college, he said, 'We know in adult education that just a G.E.D. is not the solution any more... the college is a key player whether they're a provider of adult basic education or not. They have to get people into their system to be able to establish a family sustaining income'" (Finkel, 2005).

Never Stop Learning

"...it's not an age but a mindset," "Are you a finished product or a work in progress", (Katz, 2007). Continuous adult education can lead to a family tradition of education as a lifelong learning process. Social and educational reports have shown that the quality of a family livelihood is directly related to education; the higher education the better quality of life. The increased demand for adult education relative to the family exhibit's the need to continue the pursuit of an education beyond high school. Today's employer is seeking a well-rounded, better trained employee. As parents instill in their child the desire to attain their "American Dream", the parents oftentimes display their attitude by being able to provide a quality of life for their respective family. The parent or an adult learner never fails to share with their children an analogy concerning the "haves and have nots". They emphasize the need for training and retraining. In many instances, this means training to effectively maintain or even advance on their current job, pursue employment opportunities through a desired career path, and just to

explore education for enrichment and cultural purposes such as learning to play an instrument, take a foreign language, or travel excursions.

For today's adult lifelong learner there are various pedagogical settings such as traditional classroom settings, E-learning distance education, corporate universities, technology based universities, and other nontraditional higher educational institutions (Hanna, 1998). These post secondary institutions of higher learning are designed to meet the ever growing educational needs of adult lifelong learners, thus setting the trend for their children's future education, given the ever changing, innovative, and paramount technological society

Employers have increasingly used diplomas and degrees as a way to screen applicants. Once an adult learner has acquired a post secondary degree, the desired employment salary should reflect the credentials. In today's global environment, a higher education supersedes the once "common" high school diploma as a catalyst for higher paying positions in the work place. Gone are the days of the industrial smoke stacks replaced by computers and digital devices, thereby, making formal education a necessity in this competitive world. Research has found that lifelong learners feel they are more knowledgeable and interesting as a result of their continued learning. Even though they often times may lack confidence, they are determined to learn new things, regardless of whether it is for career advancement, employment opportunities , educational gain or wisdom.

Adult learners can be the educational foundation and pillar of strength for the younger generation, particularly family members. The increased demand for adult education within the family realm can promote education as a lifelong process. Most adults would share with the

young students, “If I can do it, you can too”. This means the burden to obtain a higher quality of life through advanced education is an individual’s responsibility. Thus, the individual makes choices and “Choices make demands upon an increase in technological and cultural intelligence” (Glastra, 2004

Chapter 3

Conclusions and Recommendations

The literature review contained in this paper helps to qualify the need for adult education in the family. With the ever changing job market, the number of adults aspiring to attain a higher education is rising, due to the need for employment stability, as well as career advancement. The world revolves around the importance of adult learners who are better educated; multi-task oriented, and highly qualified to successfully address family circumstances. With the increasing cost of living and the paramount cost to acquire an education, there are funds available for higher education through resources provided by the federal, state governments such as grant, loans, and scholarships. Numerous reports with substantiated documents attest to these facts.

Ongoing studies about the demand for increased education among adult learners show that society, as a whole, has not come to recognize that continuing education is consequently essential, as implied to by President Barack Obama's Administration and Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle educational initiatives. Adults have a tendency to be apprehensive when considering going back to school and are unaware of the availability of different avenues of receiving that advanced education. There are many different valid reasons for their reluctance; fear of failure, little motivation, other commitments, lack of time, child care, transportation, shame or discomfort, and monetary reasons. The typical adults who are utilizing the opportunity are the working adults. They tend to seek advanced education to move forward in their current career or to reach careers goals. (See personal statement addendum) Established family support should ensure that each adult should pursue some form of higher education and parents should seek out college readiness opportunities such as precollege programs, previously alluded to, to involve their children. Therefore, in the future, the family structure would prepare each child to graduate

from high school and attend college without any interruption, if at all possible, whether attending a traditional or nontraditional university. Additionally, family members working together can minimize barriers that could hinder the family from achieving their American dream.

Even though a family may attain their education goals, learning should never be stifled or stopped. Technology is making education more accessible; therefore, the family should make lifelong learning a high priority for personal gain, career advancement, and community progress. Adult education is so imperative that without it, many are being left behind. With the way the economy is changing without having the benefits of an advanced education, meeting the basic psychological and physiological needs are going to become more difficult.

ADDENDUM

Personal Statement

Upon graduating from high school and entering college at the University of Wisconsin Parkside, Kenosha, Wisconsin, my educational endeavors were altered due to the need to support my family. I had two children and decided to go to work and take care of them instead of finishing my college education. I was experiencing difficulty securing sufficient financial aid to sustain my enrollment and maintain household. It took me eight years and three additional children to decide to go back to college, but when I did I put my best foot forward and did not look back. I received my Bachelor of Science in Psychology in four years from the University of Wisconsin Parkside. Currently, I am pursuing a Master of Science in Adult Education from the University of Wisconsin Platteville, Platteville, Wisconsin. Upon graduation, my plan is to earn a Doctorate degree in Psychology and establish my own practice. I have and will continue to encourage others to move in the direction of some form of educational advancement. I know from personal experience the benefits of a post secondary education, simultaneously, achieving a higher education is exceptionally fulfilling.

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