

Enrolment Motivations and Institutional Attachment of 30+ Age Bangladeshi Women at Distance Learning Programs

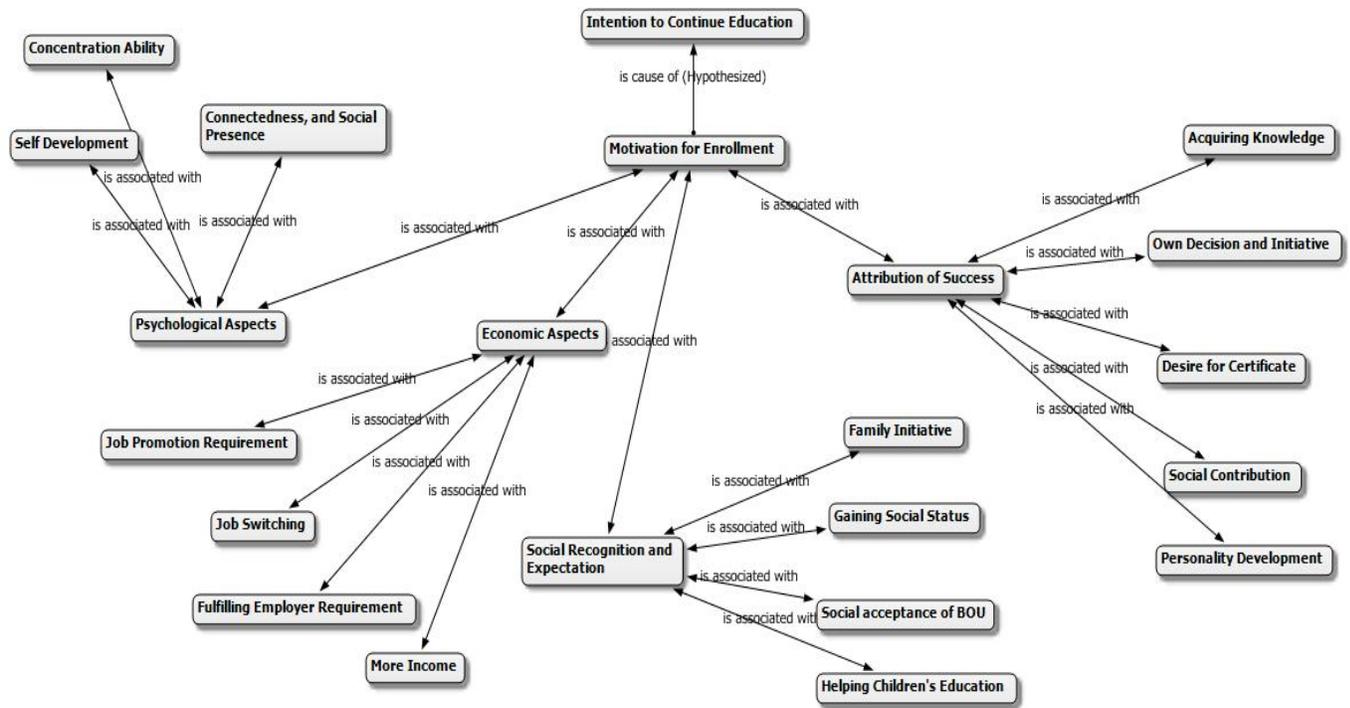
Introduction

Due to the advancement of technological development in medical science and wider facilities and awareness for lifestyle modification, have bring tremendous change in older women. With the increase of life span, women's desire for self-identity and recognized status has been developed. The purpose of this study is to understand and measure the motivation of 30+ women's enrollment in distance education through Bangladesh Open University. Although programs of distance education meet the needs of adult learners who work and who have the career and family responsibilities (Tucker, 2000) it has been observed that most of the women who enroll in open learning programs in Bangladesh Open University , are 30+ years old. Many of them have household production matriarch. This group is between 30 and 60 years old and they have different perception and motivation from those whose age is suitable for traditional formal education. They have their own unique nature educational needs which bring them close to distance education and motivate them to continue education in this age after a break of certain period.

Enrollment Motivation for 30+ Year Old Women: FGD

Several focused group discussion (FGD) sessions were conducted on exploring the aged woman learners' motivation and causes of enrollment. The group classification was checked and rated by 15 students of BOU who were not participants of FGD. In this case each rater was given the headwords (e.g. job switching, family initiative, contribution to society etc.) and the phrases that justify the headword. Later, these four themes along with their following subthemes became independent variables in order to examine how much they predict intention of 30+ women to continue education in BOU.

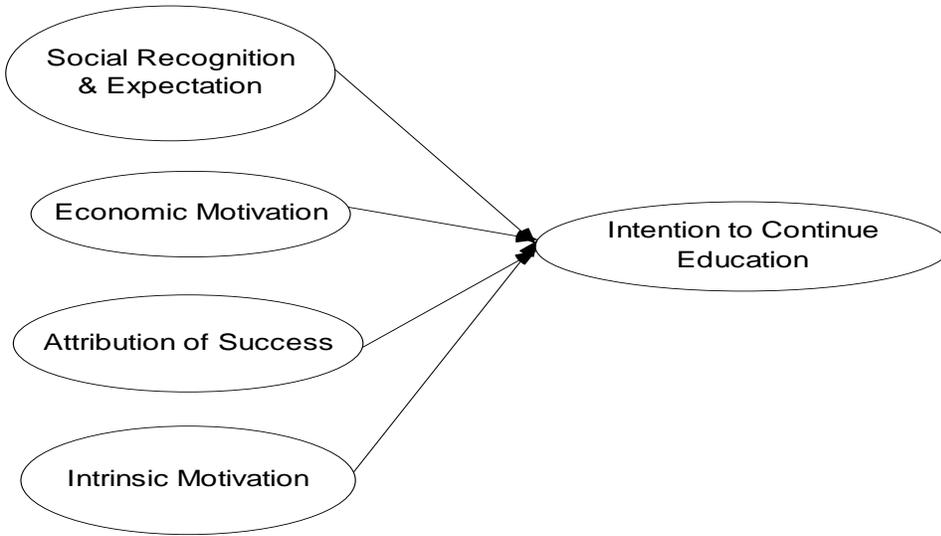
Figure 1: Atlas.ti Network View of the Motivation Model for 30+ Year Woman and Hypothesized Relationship with Intention to Continue Education



Enrollment Factors in FGD

In this study the findings of FGD supports to highlight some specific motivation such as social recognition and expectation, economic aspects, intrinsic motivation, and attribution of success. The research argues that these motivating factors are the motivations of enrollment in open learning for 30+ year’s women. It is assume that while women’s enrollment in schools at early age is the decision of family, but in later stage, it is initiated by the women themselves. Therefore, the strength of motivation should be correlated with the intention to continue education at BOU. Theoretically social recognition works as a motive for many of people’s behavior (Hallmann & Breuer, 2014). Similarly, social expectation is an interest of society that may change the role of woman and lead them to go open learning. Therefore, the factors associated with women enrollment may be explained under these three paradigms along with economic motivation. Another reason of inclusion of these factors is that these are not completely personal rather socio-familial and according to educational marketing research these factors contribute to enrollment motivation (Kallio, 1995). Although some studies examined discontinuation of enrollment i.e. dropout factors, we investigated intention to continue instead of dropout. Thus we hypothesized the following model:

Figure 2: Motivations of enrollment and intention to continue education



Note that while figure 1 mentioned above is inductive in nature, the figure 2 is deductive. Therefore in the following sections we defined the constructs and conducted a survey to investigate the hypothesized model.

Social Recognition and Expectation

Social recognition is defined as the influence of social environment perceived by an individual (Hallmann & Breuer, 2014). The social system of Bangladesh is collectivistic as all characteristics are prevailing there (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Being a collectivist society, some women in Bangladesh have to enroll at distance education because of family initiative such as the family wants someone to be educated and therefore appreciate her enrollment. It has also been revealed from the FGD that family bear expenditure of education so that their daughter becomes more accepted in family and society and consequently family can empower her in activities outside home. Like family initiation in enrollment some get enrolment with an aim to help their children's education. Furthermore, social status determines the role of individuals, so people want to achieve it to contribute to society and change their position. Students desire for higher social status those who are not satisfied to their current status, may motivate them to enroll at BOU. They assume much educational qualification will increase their social status. Job will be offered by several organizations because of the qualification, views and opinion will be accepted among people.

Attribution of Success

Attribution theory has been remained one of the influential contemporary theories with implications for motivation for academic affairs, achievement and its outcomes for last thirty years (Hareli & Weiner, 2010; Weiner, 1980, 1985, 2010). The attribution concept of B. Weiner explains issues of learners' behavior modification. It also says they are strongly motivated by the pleasant outcomes that are desired for them. In addition based on the cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory B. Weiner emphasizes that learners' current self-perceptions influences the ways in which learners interpret the 'success or failure' of their current efforts and labors. Their understanding shapes their future tendency to perform certain behaviors that lead them to achieve success and avoid failure. In this theoretical assumption according to attribution theory, the *justification* that people make to explain success or failure may be of three types: Firstly, an individual may succeed or fail because of elements that have their origin within his environment. Secondly, the cause of the success or failure may be either *stable* or *unstable*. That means the outcome of their effort will be the same as it is now or despite the effort outcomes will be different. Thirdly, the cause of the success or failure may

be either *controllable* or *uncontrollable*. If the factor is controllable it means an individual believes that his or her situation can be changed by effort and uncontrollable factor is the opposite one. According to this theoretical framework we understand that the 30+ women enrolled in programs offered by BOU when - as findings of FGD has also revealed - they believe that their success lies within themselves which is controllable, and unstable. The participants of FGD identified that they believe by acquiring knowledge, personality development, achieving certificate, participation into social activities, making self-initiative women can change themselves.

Economic Motivation

Despite the fact that employed students tend to be dropped out from distance learning (Yasmin, 2013) but in case of 30+ women in Bangladesh the case is different albeit some of them have jobs. Therefore, economic motivation is a factor for 30+ women to enroll which may be labeled in this case as their situational interest. Situational interest is defined as temporary interest that arises spontaneously due to environmental factors such as economic pressure or consideration; and in this case the women associate the program of BOU with personal significance or importance to a surrounding object or activity (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). However, to this group of women job promotion requirement, fulfilling employer requirement, necessity of more income, job switching are very important activity for their life so they need to have enrolled at BOU. As older students due to the effects of their life stage, particularly as they relate purpose and motivation of distance education to family and work considerations (Kallio, 1995) which are substantially economic motivation. The women enroll at programs of BOU when they find their employer requires additional educational degree for the up-gradation of their job status and having a certificate from BOU helps them to get promotion in job. Even, program at BOU allows them to apply for advanced job position within or outside their own organization. Therefore, motivation of increasing current income is another economic motivation. 30+ women need more money to maintain family expenses so they enroll at BOU which helps them to earn more money. In order to earn more money women want to switch into different job with additional educational qualification. However, according to FGD, sometimes job dissatisfaction motivates them to join in different type of job albeit the job market in Bangladesh is very competitive (Hossain & Siddique, 2012).

Intrinsic Motivation

The studies found that for children learning motivation is more intrinsic while for adults it is more extrinsic (Mata, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this case, the FGD revealed that 30+ women get enrolled in BOU program being intrinsically motivated too. A motivated woman is likely to be engaged in a related task for example women enrolled in distance learning for her own satisfaction or ability. Doing a task for somebody's own sake, pleasure, cause or satisfaction is an example of intrinsic motivation. If the individual is intrinsically motivated it means he is doing an activity for his inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence (Vallerand & Blssonnette, 1992). Interest of personal development, ability to concentrate, feeling of connectedness, and social presence are the intrinsic aspects of motivation for 30+ women to enroll at BOU. It's their interest of personal development when they enroll at BOU for the sake of developing inner-self, seeking knowledge, awareness, freedom and to make high self-esteem.

Intention to Continue Education at BOU

The present study as outlined above (figure 2) aimed at measuring firstly, the strongest motivational factor of enrollment for 30+ women; secondly relationship between motivational factors and intention to continue; thirdly, association between the age and enrollment motivation as well as intention to continue education. This study employed a survey questionnaire which included a set of factors that motivate women to enroll and influence their intention to continue education at BOU. Employing multiple regression analysis we found firstly the strongest motivational factor of enrollment for 30+ year old women. Therefore we hypothesize firstly, there must be at least one strongest factor that contribute to 30+ women's intention to continue education (*H1*); secondly, relationship between enrollment motivation and intention to continue is significant (*H2*); and thirdly, relationship between the age and enrollment

motivation as well as intention to continue education are significant (*H3*).

METHOD

Participants

428 undergraduate ($n=$) and postgraduate ($n=$) 30+ year old students of Bangladesh Open University participated in this survey. The average age of the participants was 40 years (min 31 yr, max 55 yr). Demographic description of the sample is mentioned in sections under 'results'.

Measure

In demographic section each participants were asked about their age. The main section of the questionnaire was divided into five scales *viz.* social recognition & expectation, economic motivation, attribution of success, intrinsic motivation, and intention to continue education. Each scale was developed according to findings of FGD outlined in figure 1 mentioned above. Moreover, each scale was considered as main construct which again consisted of subsequent several sub-constructs. The number of sub-constructs under each constructs is found in figure 1 and in 'results' section too. The statements reflecting each sub-construct are developed according to the description and examples given by FGD. However, the meaning plus definition denoted by each scale as well as subsequent subscales are explained in above sections and we avoided repeating definition here due to space constraint. Nevertheless, note that each subscale had 4 to 6 statements on average. The agreement or disagreement of the participants was recorded on 7 point scale whereby '1' indicated strongly disagree and '7' indicated strongly agree. Reliability and Internal consistency of scales and sub-scales are mentioned in the appendix as calculated by Cronbach's Alpha.

Procedure

Six selected learning centers located in urban areas in Dhaka - the capital - and another six located in sub-urban or rural areas that are outside of but close to Dhaka. Then the questionnaires were distributed among all women (whose age is over 30 years) indiscriminately. Students were advised to spend 10 minutes to fill in the form and return it to the distributor. Almost 80% ($n=426$) of the responses was usable.

Data Analysis

In order to test the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis (MRA) was applied to measure whether the model is significant. 'Intention to continue education' was regressed on several sub-scales of four independent variables *i.e.* attribution of success, economic motivation, intrinsic motivation, social recognition and expectation. In addition, from the results of MRA we found the strongest predictor out of four. In addition we conducted Pearson's moment-product correlation to get the relationship between age, enrolment motivation, and intention to continue. However, SPSS was used to run the above analysis.

RESULTS

Descriptives

Table 1 contains the scales and subscales that were used in the survey questionnaire and number of items under each subscales, mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's Alpha. It shows that four independent variables include a number of 16 subscales and there is only one dependent variable (*i.e.* intention to continue education at BOU). According to table 1 all subscales have an excellent level of internal consistency ranging from 88% to 96% although most of them close to 90%. There is also a consistency in standard deviation. However, the scale 'attribution of success has the highest mean score ($M= 4.17$) while the scale 'economic motivation' has the lowest mean score ($M= 4.00$). However, attribution of success appeared in the model as the best predictor to 'intention to continue education' and statistically significant too.

Table 1: Items, Mean and Alpha of all scales and subscales

Scales	Sub-Scales	Items	Mean	SD	Alpha
Social Recognition and expectation	-	-	4.01		-
	Family initiative	5	4.00	1.75	.93
	Gaining Social status	6	3.96	1.63	.90
	Social acceptance of BOU	5	4.05	1.70	.91
	Helping Children's Education	6	4.03	1.58	.89
Economic Motivation	-	-	4.00		
	Job Promotion Requirement	4	4.06	1.80	.93
	Fulfilling employer requirement	4	4.01	1.69	.88
	More Income	5	4.02	1.71	.91
	Job switching	5	3.93	1.63	.91
Intrinsic Motivation	-	-	4.03		
	Self-Development	6	4.08	1.77	.96
	Concentration Ability	5	3.94	1.67	.90
	Connectedness, and Social Presence	5	4.07	1.70	.91
Attribution of Success	-	-	4.10		
	Acquiring Knowledge	4	4.13	1.80	.94
	Own decision and initiative	4	4.11	1.82	.94
	Desire for certificate	5	4.04	1.68	.91
	Social contribution	5	4.10	1.65	.90
	Personality development	5	4.14	1.77	.94
Intention to continue education at BOU	-	5	4.07	1.75	.93

Regressing Intention to Continue

A multiple regression analysis was run using 'enter' method to predict intention to continue education for 30+ women. A total of 17 variables (all subscales mentioned in table 1 plus age) were entered at regression model explaining 75% of the variance in intention to continue education $F(17, 409) = 94.98, p < .001, adj. R^2 = .747$.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Summaries

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Intercept	.389	.571	
Age	-.008	.023	-.027
Family initiative	-.023	.052	-.023
Desire for Certificate	.030	.055	.028
Personal Development	.023	.091	.023
Social Contribution	.048	.080	.045
Acquiring Knowledge	.085	.072	.088

Own decision and initiatives	.625	.045	.649**
Concentration ability	.139	.043	.133**
Connectedness and social presence	-.100	.059	-.097
Fulfilling employer requirement	.116	.066	.113
Self development	-.048	.048	-.049
Job switching	-.108	.065	-.101
More income	.023	.076	.023
Gaining social status	-.012	.041	-.011
Job promotion requirement	.061	.051	.062
Helping in children's education	.164	.072	.148*
Social acceptance	-.045	.047	-.044

Dependent variable is intention to continue education. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .001$; B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard of error of coefficient; β = standardized coefficient.

The above coefficient table (table -2) indicates that own decision and initiatives $\beta = .649$ is the strongest predictor in this model. Therefore, all results of MRA confirmed that the entire model is significant and at one predictor i.e. 'own decision and initiative' is the strongest predictor H_1 .

Age, Enrolment Motivation, Intention to Continue

In order to test the last two hypothesis (H_2 and H_3), Pearson's moment-product correlation was run (Table 3) and the correlation of age with enrolment motivation is positive and significant ($r = .952$, $n = 527$, $p = .000$). Similarly, correlation between age and intention to continue found positive and significant too ($r = .701$, $n = 427$, $p = .000$).

Table 3: Correlation among Age, Enrolment Motivation, Intention to Continue

	Age	Intention to Continue
Enrolment Motivation	.952*	.740*
Intention to Continue	.701*	-

* = Statistically Significant at $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

DISCUSSION

Motivation of Enrollment and Intention to Continue Education

The analysis is justifying, whether the enrollment motivation of 30+ women is intrinsic or extrinsic. In the result attribution of success appeared as the strongest predictor and thus it can be said the enrollment motivation for them is highly intrinsic (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Weiner, 2010). According to results of analysis it becomes evident that the 30+ women think their success lies within themselves that means success is within their control, and thus changeable. Although the participants of FGD identified that women can change themselves by acquiring knowledge, personality development, achieving certificate, participation into social activities, making self-initiative the most important factor that they think 'own decision and initiative' can empower them towards continuing education. Interestingly, the result shows that strength of own decision and initiative becomes stronger with the increase of age. Thus both of increased age and enrollment motivation make the chance of continuing education in distance learning higher, in other words much motivated and older women tend to have higher intention to continue education.

Conclusion and Further Research

In conclusion, this research does not indicate the causes of enrollment in BOU. The 30+ women are motivated to enroll for achieving success and control their own; lives and make a status in the society. If this motivation can be retained the subsequent enrollment of this group of students will be ensured in future. However, despite the persistent efforts made by the government and non-government organization towards increasing enrollment and continuing education, the question is whether they could overcome the

invisible glass-ceiling barriers in economic, social, familial periphery. Its necessary to investigate whether students of BOU are satisfied to the service, curriculum, course offering, time schedule, learning system etc,in terms of administrative system and educational opportunity open and distance learning in Bangladesh remained behind comparing to other South Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan (Jahan & Habib, 2012). 30+ women students need adequate knowledge and guidance in enabling them to make their choice regarding education and career. They need to be informed about the relationship between qualifications, courses and career. The university can design and offer more market oriented, job related and practical courses. This will fill the gaps between their expectation and reality. Effective planning is required for developing women's academic, technical and communication skills in order to materialize their motivation of enrollment.

Moreover, the stakeholders should conduct research on the mediating and moderating factors that function between the enrollment motivation and intention to continue. BOU must works for successful retention of the 30+ women in distance learning. BOU can experimentally investigate how much system of e-learning is helping this group of learners to continue their education. Finally this study can give birth to a second study while perceived barriers will be compared with enrollment motivation in order to find the expectancy gap among the distance learners.

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