

How Is It Essential for Immigrant Adult Learners to Participate in Adult Educational Programs? In the Case of Greece

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The present study is a comprehensive exploration of the broader outcomes of the factors that motivate adult immigrants to participate in Lifelong Education (LLE) programs and the practical importance of participation in the adult education programs of the Greek language. The issue of the motivation that drives adult immigrant learners to attend educational programs has not been widely researched. It should cover a higher degree of individual differentiation, from gaps in reading, writing, and arithmetic to the lack of practical work experience. The research was based on bibliography research. The information gathered was—to a great extent—identical to the results of relevant research efforts in this field. The most important findings were shown by quantitative research that the basic motives that drive adult learners to participate in educational programs were professional advancement, improving communication skills, and improving family relationships; also the results concluded that attending educational programs is very important for permanence in the country. Moreover, the obstacles were investigated that immigrants face as well as the importance of learning the Greek language. The conclusions of the study, although they cannot be generalized, contribute to the understanding of the design and implementation procedure of programs in the context of adult education organizations, as well as to the understanding of the motivated factors that facilitate the development of effective programs.

Keywords: immigrants, educational programs, language, motivations, obstacles

Introduction

Lifelong learning education is a recent constitution. Of course, the concept of Lifelong Learning education re-emerged in the 20th century to meet the workforce's further education and training needs. As a consequence of globalization and rapid technological development, it has become a key pillar and driver of political arrangements in the agendas of all developed states. Lifelong Learning is an indisputable condition and an inescapable need for adults in the general population and for socially vulnerable groups, such as immigrants. The social profile and intercultural philosophy that permeates the scientific field of Adult Education can contribute the most to the development of people's skills and abilities, to the management of fears and internal obstacles that exist in each person's personality, and to their transformation through exploring the orientation and management of life's ambiguities.

Adult Education since the 19th century has focused on the fight against illiteracy, poverty, and social exclusion. In contrast, in the 20th century, political actions expanded to assimilate minorities into the national

collective framework (Vergidis, 2003). Moving on to today, the development of Adult Education (at a domestic reference level) primarily involves training cultural minorities. In particular, we are referring to programs for learning the language and combined programs for learning the language and integration into the labor market. Therefore, there is talk of strategic programs for social inclusion and dealing with social exclusion (Karalis, 2008).

Lifelong learning programs for immigrants are essential for facilitating their integration and enhancing their skills, knowledge, and competencies. These programs can cover many areas, including language acquisition, vocational training, cultural orientation, and personal development.

The Greek Society

In recent decades, apart from economic developments, Greek society has undergone rapid social and cultural changes in its composition, which has resulted in its being considered a multicultural society. This fact has not been the case in past decades. Economic changes, racism, social inequality, religious prejudices, demographic effects, the rise of crime, and, in general, the change in the structure of Greek society are all issues that remain open and need investigation and imperative research to establish the best possible way of the treatment and smooth social integration of incoming people into the Greek reality. Such a society has been the Greek society for the last two decades. As a consequence of the above and within the framework of educational equality, many academic programs for the education and training of socially vulnerable groups in adults have been created in recent years. The main objective of these educational programs was to combat social exclusion by promoting the employment and social adaptation of socially vulnerable groups, such as immigrants.

The presence of these newly arrived people highlighted the need for their training to integrate into the social conditions and for the natives to receive additional training to better deal with social phenomena such as unemployment that arose with the arrival of an additional population. However, the reality could be more favorable, especially for immigrants from Third World or Balkan countries under unfavorable economic or political conditions.

Immigrants face many difficulties when trying to adapt to another society. Characteristics of Adult Learners as members of a vulnerable group are the following:

- Low self-confidence—feeling rejected
- Minimal motivation for learning
- Biological-physical barriers
- Learning problems
- Absence of learning culture
- Impairment of expression in written and spoken language (Papaioannou & Anagnou, 2014).

Nowadays, many programs have been designed and implemented for immigrants to learn Greek as a second language. This research draws its research material from the “Odysseus” program of INEDIVIM because it is one of the few organizations in Greece that allows all immigrants to attend Greek language courses for free. The state organizes educational programs for adult immigrants. In this research, it is considered appropriate to focus on the academic programs concerning adult immigrants wanting to learn the Greek language. The various programs for learning Greek as a second or foreign language, aimed at the above population groups and offered by multiple agencies in Greece, are part of the immigration and social policy. The first and essential stage for building a training program is the investigation of the needs of the target group (Vergidis, 2003), more specifically,

for a language program to learn Greek as a second or foreign language, the detection and analysis of students' language and communication needs.

Furthermore, some Lifelong Learning Centers exist, such as:

- The Lifelong Learning Centers (LLC-KΔBM) of the Ministry of Education and Religion provide informal education to adults. In the context of a general education curriculum, the Centers also offer Greek language lessons to migrants.
- The Centre for the Greek Language which is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religion, collaborates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its purpose is to reinforce and promote the Greek language in Greece and abroad. It also organizes the instruction of the Greek language to natives and foreigners.

Finally, there are non-Government Organizations such as:

- Non-government organizations or/and other bodies, foreign organizations, and entities representing third-country nationals may also offer lessons in the Greek language as well as informal general education courses for adults. Indicatively, view below.

The Meaning of Motivations

In the effort to investigate the motives of adults' participation in educational programs, it is considered appropriate to clarify the term "motives conceptually". The literature review shows that the specific term acquires a different meaning in different scientific disciplines; sometimes motivation refers to "phenomena related to the functioning of human instincts or drives", and sometimes to the set of external and internal factors and processes that activate a person and lead him to set a goal and try to achieve it (Kassotakis & Flouris, 2012, p. 251; Papastamatis, n.d., p. 172) in this second case, the motivations concern the "why" of the behavior, the causes that cause it, or the reasons that explain it, the prediction of human action (Zaxaris, 2003, p. 27; Kostaridou-Euklidis, 1995, p. 17).

However, everyone agrees that they are of great importance in whatever case they are mentioned. Nevertheless, great discrepancies are observed whenever someone tries to define motivation (Dymock, 2011).

A good definition that could be used for motivation is: "Motivation is anything that moves, impels or entices a person to action. Motivations can push the individual by acting from within or control them by acting from the outside" (Kostaridou-Euklidis, 1995, op. Ref. in Syngolittou, 1998). Another definition refers to motivation as the most profound emotional drive that prompts a person to behave and act in a certain way to achieve a goal (Bovee & Thill, 1992, p. 151; Wang & Wang, 2004 Sebastian no chronology—ef' hence: hhh).

According to the bibliographical research, the most usual motivation is the following:

- **Career Advancement:** Many adults pursue further education to improve their career prospects. This could involve acquiring new skills, earning a degree or certification, or staying up-to-date with industry trends. Advancing in one's career often requires ongoing learning and professional development.
- **Job Change or Transition:** Some adults seek education to switch careers or industries. This might involve gaining qualifications or skills relevant to a new field. The desire for a change in work-life balance or job satisfaction can also be a motivation.
- **Personal Growth:** Adult education can provide personal enrichment and self-improvement. Learning new things, whether a new language, musical instrument, or hobby, can be intellectually stimulating and personally fulfilling.

- **Personal Interests and Passions:** Some adults learn purely out of personal interest. They may have a deep passion for a subject or want to explore a new field that has always intrigued them.
- **Self-Confidence and Empowerment:** Learning can boost self-esteem and a sense of empowerment. Knowledge and skills can make adults feel more capable and confident in various aspects of life.
- **Social Interaction:** Adult education can provide opportunities for social interaction and networking. Adults may enroll in courses or workshops to meet like-minded individuals, share experiences, and build social connections.
- **Civic Engagement and Community Involvement:** Some adults pursue education to become more informed and engaged citizens. This can involve learning about political processes, social issues, or community development.
- **Cultural and Language Preservation:** Adults may seek education to preserve their cultural heritage or learn a new language in multicultural societies. This can help them connect with their roots or participate in cultural events.

In summary, adult education is driven by various motivations, which can change over time as individuals' circumstances and goals evolve. Whether driven by career aspirations, personal interests, or societal needs, adult education plays a vital role in lifelong learning and personal development.

Motivations of Adult Immigrants in Education

As far as adult immigrants are concerned, the literature claims that it is very important for them to participate in educational programs for learning the native language, and most of the motivations mentioned are presented to them.

At the same time, “the minimal knowledge” of the language has another consequence for the professional field of immigrants. Immigrants, due to not knowing the language, cannot look for any profession they want. Therefore, they need more experienced options. For example, an immigrant who has studied the profession of doctor, lawyer, or teacher in the country is challenging to practice in the host country. Professional development strongly incentivizes adult immigrants to participate in training programs. Education can play a decisive role in integrating immigrants into their new country, helping them improve their career prospects and quality of life. Let's look at how professional development works as a motivator in adult immigrant education:

Recognition of Foreign Degrees and Skills

Many immigrants hold degrees and professional qualifications from their countries of origin that the new government may need to recognize. They can obtain the necessary certifications and recognitions to use their existing skills and reintegrate professionally through training.

Language Learning

Learning a new country's language is vital for immigrants' professional development. Language is the key to communication, understanding working processes, and integration into society and the labor market.

Acquisition of New Skills and Re-training

Migrants often need to acquire new skills or re-train themselves to meet the demands of the latest labor market. Participation in educational programs enables them to adapt to new conditions and enhance their employability.

Networking and Business Contacts

The training allows immigrants to establish professional contacts and network with other professionals. This networking can open doors to new career opportunities and partnerships.

Understanding the Working Culture

Participation in training programs helps immigrants understand their new country's working culture and practices, which is crucial for successful professional integration.

Improving Economic Prospects

Professional development through education can lead to better financial prospects. Migrants can find better-paid jobs and improve their overall economic situation, offering a better quality of life for themselves and their families.

Self-confidence and Self-esteem

Education helps to increase the self-confidence and self-esteem of immigrants. Acquiring new knowledge and skills makes them feel more capable and ready to meet professional challenges.

Integration in Society

Education contributes to the broader social integration of immigrants by enabling them to participate more actively and effectively in their new country's social and economic life.

For adult immigrant education programs to be successful, they must be tailored to the specific needs and challenges facing immigrants. Educational institutions must provide flexible and supportive environments that encourage the participation and success of migrant trainees.

Learning the Greek Language

Learning the Greek language will bring significant changes in the way of life of immigrants in the country and the claim of their rights to education, health, and work. More specifically, improvement is expected in the following:

- (a) Conditions of employment, including the minimum age for work, working conditions, including remuneration and redundancy, working hours, leave, and holidays, as well as health and safety at the workplace.
- (b) Education and vocational training.
- (c) The recognition of diplomas, certificates, and other professional qualifications is done by the relevant national procedures.
- (d) The social security branches are defined in Council Regulation (EC) No. 883/2004 on coordinating social security systems for employees, self-employed persons, and their family members moving within the European Union.
- (e) Access to and procurement of goods and services offered to the public, including housing procedures, by national law, without prejudice to the freedom to conclude contracts in conformity with Union and national law.

Obstacles That Face Immigrants in Greece

Immigrants in Greece face various obstacles, ranging from bureaucratic challenges to social and economic hardships. Here are some of the critical difficulties they encounter:

Legal and Bureaucratic Challenges

- **Asylum Process Delays:** Obtaining asylum or legal residency status is often lengthy and complex, causing prolonged uncertainty for many immigrants.
- **Documentation Issues:** Lack of proper documentation can hinder access to services, legal employment, and integration efforts.

Economic Challenges

- **Unemployment and Underemployment:** Immigrants often struggle to find stable, well-paying jobs. Many end up in informal or precarious employment with poor working conditions.
- **Poverty:** High levels of unemployment and low wages contribute to poverty among immigrant communities.

Healthcare Access

- **Limited Access:** Immigrants often face barriers to accessing healthcare services, including language barriers, lack of insurance, and bureaucratic obstacles.
- **Mental Health:** The stress and trauma from their journeys and the conditions in Greece can affect mental health, with limited support available.

Education

- **Language Barriers:** Immigrant children and adults often face difficulties due to language barriers, impacting their education and integration.
- **Integration into the School System:** Enrolling children in schools can be challenging, and they may face discrimination or lack of support in adapting to a new education system.

Social Integration

- **Discrimination and Xenophobia:** Immigrants often encounter discrimination and xenophobia, which can hinder their social integration and acceptance in Greek society.
- **Cultural Differences:** Navigating cultural differences can be challenging for immigrants and the host society.

Language Barriers

- **Communication Issues:** Limited proficiency in Greek can restrict access to services, job opportunities, and community participation.
- **Lack of Language Education:** Insufficient language education programs for immigrants can impede their ability to learn Greek and integrate effectively.

Psychological and Emotional Challenges

- **Trauma:** Many immigrants carry trauma from their countries of origin or the migration journey, which can be compounded by the difficulties faced in Greece.
- **Isolation:** Social isolation and separation from family and community networks can exacerbate mental health issues.

Learning the Greek Language Significantly Benefits Immigrants in Greece in Several Ways

Improved Communication

- **Day-to-Day Interactions:** Understanding and speaking Greek helps immigrants navigate daily activities,

such as shopping, using public transportation, and seeking medical help.

- Access to Information: Knowledge of Greek enables immigrants to understand important information and announcements, whether they are related to public services, health, or safety.

Employment Opportunities

- Job Market Access: Proficiency in Greek expands employment opportunities, as many jobs require communication with colleagues, clients, or customers in Greek.
- Better Working Conditions: Immigrants with language skills are more likely to secure jobs with better conditions, moving out of exploitative or informal work environments.

Education

- Children's Education: Immigrant children who learn Greek can integrate more effectively into the Greek school system, improving their academic performance and social integration.
- Adult Education: Learning Greek opens up adult education and vocational training opportunities, helping immigrants acquire new skills and qualifications.

Social Integration

- Building Relationships: Language proficiency facilitates social interactions and helps immigrants build relationships with Greek locals, fostering a sense of community and belonging.
- Participation in Society: Understanding the language enables immigrants to participate more actively in cultural, social, and civic activities, enhancing their integration into Greek society.

Access to Services

- Healthcare: Speaking Greek helps immigrants communicate their health needs more effectively and understand medical advice, leading to better healthcare outcomes.
- Social Services: Language skills improve access to social services, including legal assistance, housing support, and welfare programs.

Conclusion

We conclude that the immigrant is linguistically excluded, leading to labor and social marginalization. It is in a new environment, and they are unable to communicate with the native population in their daily life and with their colleagues at work, with the parallel universal dominance of the language in every field of their activity which leads them directly to learn the Greek language. The immigrants are in a new social environment and are therefore called upon to communicate daily with many people to respond to the needs that arise. Consequently, improving communication skills is a motivation of particular importance for the immigrants who attend adult education programs. In summary, migrants' participation in adult education programs is critical for their social and economic integration, personal development, social cohesion, and the overall progress of the host community. Migrants' participation in such projects is a key factor in their social and economic integration, contributing to society's overall progress and well-being.

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