

# Push or Pull Factors:

## What Drives Indonesian Mature Women Return to Non-Traditional Schools?

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this study was to explore the motivation of mature women who return to non-traditional school. It was explored the push and pull factors in the decision to return. This research utilizes a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques used were interviews and observation. Fifteen mature women participated in this study and each was interviewed for one and a half hours. An inductive and thematic analysis approach is used to develop categories and themes. There are common features in which drive mature women to return to EEP as a ‘push’ factor or were attracted by school/program as a ‘pull’ factor. These features insight into the various considerations in mature students’ re-entry decisions. Some of the push factors are identified as coming from personal such as the desire to succeed, life expectations, and learning needs. Social pressure also part of the pull factor that includes a sense of wanting to be appreciated by others and due to pressure from the community. Open participation, it includes non-selective and non-competitive requirements offered by EEP, is pull factors for women to return to school. EEP opens up the possibility for mature women to take part, as the system is available to access.

**Keywords**—*adult learning, mature student, motivation in learning, styling, push and pull factors*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Adult students, also known as “re-entry students” or “returning students” [1] are defined as adults who return to school after long hiatus while maintaining other responsibilities such as family and work. For these adult students, indeed education is one of factors that can make time more qualified and competitive. Through education, a country can improve the quality of its human resources which has implications for areas of life that lead to welfare. Education is a means of self-development that is carried out consciously so that human potentials are explored. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual, strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, as well as skills needed by a person and the community. The educational process itself is inseparable from the process of exploring self-

potential and cultivating moral values so that education process must be able to foster community participation. In this effort to maximize community participation in education, it is necessary to have synergy from each component of society to develop and expand access to education.

In the Indonesia national education system, education has three pathways as stated in Law number 20 of 2003, namely informal education, formal education and nonformal education. The three pathways of education have different characteristics both on their nature and implications. The existence of these education channels is intended so that each individual can be served systematically in obtaining access to education in a proper and directed manner. The purpose is to minimize the problems with dropping out of school and other problems that hinder community participation in learning. In striving for equitable education, the government has made efforts to make educational policies and programs that can be utilized by every citizen. Thus, education, which is one indicator of a nation’s progress, can build quality human resources.

Nonformal education pathway has the concept of lifelong education, which means that education can be carried out from birth to elderly people. The nonformal education can be accessed anytime and anywhere without being limited to space and time. In practice, nonformal education is not attached to strict regulations and more flexible, where is not bound by standardized rules. Nonformal education is held for community members who need educational services that function as a substitute, enhancement, and/or complement to formal education in order to support lifelong education. One of the programs organized by non-formal education is the Equivalency Education Program (EEP) Package C. EEP Package C is equivalent to upper secondary school in formal education. EEP Package C using an adult education approach model that is student-centred learning. One of the targets is for people aged 15-44 who have not completed the 12 years of basic education.

As has been stated, mature students is one of the target to study the EEP, including the status of being a housewife or married. We can observe that being a housewife is not an easy matter. The role of housewives is actually a determining factor in the development of a superior family. Housewives who take

the Package C equivalency education have main task of being mother, few of them are also worker and also students. In its implementation, it can also be observed that the educational process carried out by housewives has many problems including time management between taking care of the household and studying time. Housewives experience a decrease in learning concentration and have to balance between focus on household affairs and learning. These barriers and challenges influence mature students' academic experience. Some researches mention that some psychological issues such as anxiety, and depression often experienced by adult students [2].

According to Basleman and Mappa [3] learning is one of the vital necessities of human life in its efforts to sustain life and develop itself in the life of society and the state. A person's learning process can be influenced by motivation. Moreover, Kompri [4] stated that motivation to learn can be influenced by internal and external factors. Women mature students certainly have different motivation from other learners, which is this can be influenced by their background and learning goals. Motivation to learn also influences the learning process, in which adults learning have different characteristics from children learning. Some things that need to be considered in the adult learning process are the need to know, the self-concept of learning, the role experience they have, learning readiness, and learning motivation.

In this regard, researchers conducted study with the aim of uncovering and describing the motivation and learning process of mature women who participate in the EEP in Serang City, in Banten Province, Indonesia. Despite many studies investigated issues of female adult students, the majority of research concern to psychological issues while learning [2]. Meanwhile, the positive side of mature woman motivation in learning in traditional school context are rarely uncover. In this study, the motivation of mature students returning to education was described through the 'push-pull' theory. Push-pull theory was originally conceived as a way to explain human migration patterns [5] and has been applied to various fields, such as business and management [6]. Antony and Ord [7] utilized push-pull theory to explain the varied motivations of second-career teachers which motivations for teaching were "multifaceted, complex, at times emotionally charged, and contradictory." Antony and Ord defined push factors as "those factors that provided momentum (or activation energy) towards seriously considering teaching as career" (p. 365). In their study, these push factors include "current job dissatisfaction, relocating and not being able to find a career in their usual field, being fired, lack of fulfilment and undesirable work". Pull factors, on the other hand, refer to what draws individual to become teachers. A push-pull factor analysis incorporates aspects of psychological/personal reasoning, including intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic aims, and the ecological/contextual factors surrounding the career change, such as unemployment, dissatisfaction, or other life changes. The push-pull factor analysis provided insights into the various consideration contributing to Indonesian mature women's decision to re-entry into non-traditional school.

## II. METHODS

This study utilizes a qualitative research methods that intended to describe and explain social phenomena or event that occur in community groups. The interpretive paradigm involves qualitative research methods that are best applied when the purpose of the research is to understand people's experiences and events [8]. This research method is used to obtain in-depth data and reveal the facts that occur in the field. In qualitative methods, the intent is not to generalize the population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon [9]. The data and information from informants was carried out into three stages, namely; (i) the orientation stage, the goal at this stage is to obtain information about the background which will be followed by the detailed information obtained at the next stages; (ii) the exploration stage, at this stage data collection is carried out, then an analysis is held followed by a report on the results of the analysis, (iii) the member check stage, the stage for checking data errors.

The study was conducted at Insan Madani Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in Serang City. A total of fifteen mature students participated in interviews. Most of participants' age range between 25 to 39 years old. Majority of them are household wives, but some have occasional jobs such as program facilitator at district level, a teacher at early childhood education, and village cadres who participate in various activities. The individual interview processes was taken in both the EEP school and in the neighbourhood where most participant lives. Due to limited time, sometimes the researchers took half an hour interview in the school area, and continued in the participant's house for another half an hour or one hour additional interview. The individual interview process allows the researchers to focus directly on the personal views of adult students learning experiences in non-traditional schooling. This study seeks to gather housewife student's voices, rather than interview teachers because adult student perspectives are seldom represented. The adult students at EEP are regarded as marginalized in society and are excluded from educational policies and practices. Thus, this study present the opportunity to begin placing adult students in a central and meaningful way in this research project. It also aims to locate adult students as active social agents to recognize and facilitate the student's agency, as well as the constraints they act within [10]. After the data is obtained, then the data analysis is carried out. Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data, which involves 'consolidating, reducing and interpreting what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning' [11]. The flow of data analysis used by researches in this study include; (i) organizing data, (ii) reading and memoing, (iii) describing, classifying and interpreting data into codes and themes, (iv) interpreting data, and (v) representing and visualizing data. An inductive analysis approach is used in order to develop categories and themes. It is an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by "the study's purpose, the researcher's orientation and knowledge and the meanings made by explicit by the participants themselves" [11]. In developing categories and themes, the researchers begin with raw data from the interview, followed by several

codes, and then onto the general categories and themes. After the procedure of building themes are completed, the researchers approach the final step, which is representing and reporting the findings.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Package C Equivalency Education Program offers a second opportunity for adults who failed in their first attempt of schooling (i.e. mainly from traditional school). Barrat, Berliner and Fong [12] discuss 'push and pull' factors for dropouts, as well as those who re-enter. The decision to take another chance in education is reflective of a preference for moving ahead and/or not staying behind [13]. This section is discussion the story of adult students journey to non-traditional school as a result of personal and society initiated (push) or school/program initiated (pull). The decision-making process regarding returning to education for Indonesian mature women represented in terms of model of factors which drive students ('push' factors), against which are ranged the factors which help retain students on their courses ('pull' factors).

#### A. *A Sense of Accomplishment and Maturity*

Mature women students understand that their participation in the EEP are to gain knowledge and insights that can create a more adequate condition for themselves. The desire for success that mature students have is related to success in learning goals, so that with these objectives, mature students consciously take action that support themselves to develop through the EEP. This is in accordance with the opinion of Setiana [14] which explains that the purpose of adult education is a process of changing behaviour towards a better and more profitable direction. It is can only occur if there are fairly basic changes in the form or increase in knowledge, skills and attitudes at the same times. Learning objective do play an important role, so that each individual who carries out the educational process can determine for herself the efforts she takes. The learning objectives of mature students at PKBM Insan Madani based on the results of interviews include getting a diploma, adding insight to support relationships and increasing knowledge as an asset to educate their children. As such, mothers' trajectories through secondary school have the potential to improve their children's academic skills [15].

From the results of the interviews, it can also be seen that the learning success of mature students at PKBM Insan Madani is related to the problem they face. This can be seen from the results of the interviews which show that there are different reasons put forward by each informant with the background of the problem. That is, their motivation to learn is strongly influenced by themselves so that they succeed in getting out the problem and can increase their self-actualization.

#### B. *An Alternative Way to Gain Employment Qualification*

The mature students in PKBM Insan Madani acknowledge the hope they want to achieve by entering the EEP. From the interview with informants regarding their expectations/ideals after completing the program. The majority of these mature

students wanting to pursue the dream of becoming a teacher and hoping to be appointed as a permanent employee in the original job. This is the push factor coming from the job qualification. This motivation sound positive in which the mature students in this study have an expectation related to their career development and quality improvement that can be used in the future. According to Edward as cited in Lopez [16] hope is a positive mentally that will increase one's ability to achieve goals in the future. So, it can be understood that expectations can be formed and reflected by individuals in order to achieve change. While ideas can be interpreted as a desired condition so that the impact can provide positive values.

It can be concluded that mature students have high expectations that the EEP offer an alternative way to gain employment qualification. From the data obtained, this expectation led to their actions. There were several informants who stated that there was still a desire to achieve their goals. This this is in accordance with the andragogical theory that adults who have hopes or aspirations will carry out the learning process as part of their efforts to achieve these expectations. Furthermore, Marshall, Mejia and Claudia [17] mentioned that mature students who reenrol in education focus on actual skills and the future economic return, and their motivation concerns obtaining school certificates or credentials. For these mature students, the focus of motivation is more about the future economic return rather than the learning experiences. In this regards, mature students have a clear goal and strong motivation when they re-enter education [18].

#### C. *Social Pressure*

Wanting to be appreciated often appears in every individual as a social being. The majority of mature women students in this study commented that they felt wanted to be respected when they received a high school diploma. The credential is a form of recognition by the society. Through the level of education they achieve, these mature students who the majority are housewives feel confidence and put them in better position in the society. Social environment is a society that closely affects humans. The urge to participate in education can be described the demands of social roles of these students. For many women mature students the social pressure as a push factor is not a one-off-event, rather it is a process stretching over time so that various factors may have salience at different points in decision making process.

#### D. *Knowledge Awareness*

The adult's need for knowledge demonstrates the importance of lifelong learning activities. The mature students' learning need will encourage themselves to learn so that they can respond consciously to new and developing knowledge. Even though they are in adulthood, housewife students consider it still necessary to carry out learning activities in order to increase and develop their knowledge. This is in line with Sudjana [19] explained that one of the principles of lifelong education, which is adult's learning activities mostly

aims to acquire, renew, and increase the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are already owned. Students who re-enrol expect to increase learning, obtain useful skills and 'get ahead' [20]. For these returnees, the focus of motivation is more about the experience rather than the future economic return. Mature students in this study are able to achieve academic satisfaction as they aware on how to gain knowledge during learning with support from family and community member. Ouimby and O'Brien stated that mature student can get secure attachment from their peers and family and it gives them confidence in managing the student role [21].

The inevitability of lifelong learning in knowledge-oriented societies implies that non-traditional school systems should have different objectives and characteristics that of traditional education. Adult learners in this study are able to take responsibility for their own continuing, life-long learning that the Equivalency Education Program facilitate this purpose. Glorieux, Heyman and Taelman [22] explains that in Belgium, the number of adults enrolling in the Secondary School for Adults as part of the regular education system that organizes courses, however with an adult approach, is growing every year. Dropout youth and adult, with an average age of 24 years, are enrolling in second chance pathways after dropping out from traditional schooling. The possibility of continuing their study in higher education was the major motivation to enrol.

#### *E. Adult Learning Environment*

Unlike traditional school, the EEP is more independent and less structurally linked to the local government, especially those belonging to community. EP provides an 'adult environment' contributes to decision-making about returning, especially for adult returning after a long absence. Non-traditional school program have appeared across the notion in an attempt to adjust the schools to the needs of the mature women students rather than requiring the mature students to the traditional school system. EEP practice 'one-size-fits-all' approach to school knowledge, where everybody can enter EEP, youth and adult and make easy for dropout people to entry the system.

Adult learning environment in the EEP influences woman mature students in this study to develop self-concept about their view of the important of EEP for their life. Keliat [23] suggests that self-concept is all the feelings and thoughts of an individual about himself which includes abilities, self-character, needs, and appearance. Based on the study, it can be seen that the self-concept of women mature students is the ability to manage a dual role as a student and housewife to achieve the learning goals. The self-concept possessed by the housewife students create self-management patterns to be balanced between the task of managing the household and learning. The teachers in the EEP help these students to maintain their roles as students and housewife by respecting the students. Occasionally, some students bring their kids to the school or have leave class early when something urgent happen in their house. This learning environment support the students' attitude of independency. Consciously, woman mature students

in this study design their own concepts to achieve this learning process through their attitude toward learning.

#### *F. Adult Learner Learning Readiness*

The push factor of returning also come from mature students' initiated. The majority of housewife students in this study are ready to learn. This is important factor toward their decision to re-participate in education after long hiatus. Indeed, in adult learning process, there are several things that are considered, include adult learning needs, self-concept, the role of experience, learning readiness and learning orientation. This study reveals how the decision of returning to education is based on student's learning readiness. The individual interview indicated that the mature women students in this study were very enthusiastic about participating in the learning process in the EEP and have good learning readiness and orientation.

Learning readiness is based on research results related to the psychology of students. The housewife students in this study behaviourally feel ready to learn that is expressed by bringing learning completeness as an effort to follow the learning process well. Furthermore, learning orientation of housewife students at Insan Madani leads to solving their respective problems. In the aspect of learning readiness, the mental and physical readiness of students influence students to be able to carry out learning activities. Adult will not be able to carry out learning activities when they are not ready to do so. In learning readiness, the social role of society also influence the view of learning changes into a necessity. In accordance with the level of development, adults are assumed to have mature learning readiness, because they have multiple role as workers, parents, or educators in their families. Adult are said to be ready to learn when they have a need and provide positive values. The more adults think that learning can solve problems, the higher the readiness to learn, this because of efforts to achieve the learning process.

#### *G. The Role of Experiences*

The majority of women mature students failed in their first attempt at schooling, which is mainly from traditional school when they were young. This unpleasant experience influence the decision of returning to education as a push factor. The mature students in this study acknowledged that the EEP give them a second chance derived from the belief that everyone has the right to try again and to ensure that their failure cannot be regarded as final. In addition, the mature students apply their experiences as a learning resource. During their study, the mature students show their enthusiastic in learning. This can be seen from the students who were instructed to provide examples in the lesson, the answer was not far from what they experienced.

Notoatmodjo as cited in Saparwati [24] stated that experience is an observation which is a combination of sight, smell, and hearing as well as past experiences. Experience can be obtained from anything that has been experienced, lived, and felt by each individual. Adults, in this case, housewife students certainly have a lot of experience to support their

learning. The learning process using their experiences can be seen from the examples in the subject matter presented by students according to their lives. This means that consciously or unconsciously, students have played the role of their experience as a learning resource. A person's experience greatly affects knowledge, the more someone experiences about something, then the knowledge will also increase.

Apart from that, it was also found that the tutor who delivered material by developing the potential experiences of students was assumed to be easier to accept. The suitability of life experiences causes the students' way of thinking not to be forced. The experiences that housewife students have are very varied, meaning that each individual has a unique experience with one another. Here, each individual who is dealing with other individuals will be able to learn together with confidence. In addition, the role of experience that housewife students have also affects their learning attitudes. Some informant said that learning process in the classroom will more joyful if the tutor use class discussion method rather than lecture as they wanted to talk more and give their opinion.

The learning process of adults is very much influenced by life experiences. According to Kolb [25], the adult stages in the learning process consist of four stages, includes; *first* concrete experience, where this stage is the use of experiences of students or providing new experiences to be learned; *second*, processing, which discuss the experience that has been owned as a reaction and observation in the learning process; *third*, generalizing, where experience is confronted with general truths which are then concluded; and *fourth*, applying, which is modifying old experiences and then applying them in everyday life. In this regards, the learning process in EP classroom are in accordance with the experiences of housewife students. These experiences are then used as discussion material to be solved in group assignments, this can provide understanding to students to develop and modify their experiences as new experiences.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Non-traditional school such as EEP provides other avenues for those who may be excluded from the traditional school system on the basis of gender, poverty, geographical location, or for other reasons. The pull factors relate to especially to the availability, relevance and quality of non-traditional school such as EEP. Schooling, even though for mature women, should increase the life chances of them. It should enable them to find better life, work, and to lead a healthier life. The push factors explain which drive student's journey to non-traditional school as a result of personal and society initiated. Most push factors of adult students returning to school are intangible and intrinsic desire, while pull factors emerge as a result of the attractiveness of the EEP as non-traditional pathway of education.

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