

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

*An Investigation into Factors Motivating Students To
Enroll in Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of
Theology Extension Division*

BY
ANTHONY WAINAINA NZUGUNA

*A Thesis Submitted To The Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Divinity in Christian Education*

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Approved:

Supervisor:



Rosemary Mbogo, M Phil.

Second Reader:



Suellyn Glidden, Ph D.

External Reader:



Mary Getui, Ph D.

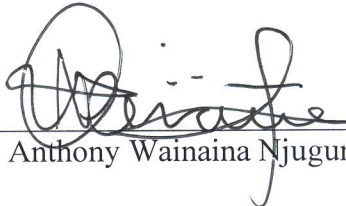
July, 2008

Student's Declaration

AN INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO
ENROLL IN NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY EXTENSION DIVISION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted
to any other College or University for Academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed)  _____
Anthony Wainaina Njuguna

July, 2008

ABSTRACT

In the last four years, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) has seen exceptional growth in its student population. This has largely been attributed to the large number of students who enroll into the Extension Division. This Division is charged with the responsibility of making NEGST's regular program courses available through a different (extension) mode.

The purpose of this study was to investigate reasons why this large number of students chose to pursue their studies through the Extension Division. More specifically, the study sought to uncover and understand the motivating factors that influenced the students into making the decision to join the Extension Division.

The research was a qualitative study, and data was collected using focus groups. Three different focus groups met and the researcher himself acted as the moderator of the sessions. There were a total number of twelve male and six female students from different parts of the country who participated in the focus group sessions. Data recorded during these sessions were then transcribed, and analyzed.

The findings revealed that there were twenty motivators that influenced the student as they wrestled with the question of whether or not to join the Extension Division for studies. These reasons were then categorized under three theoretical constructs namely: Factors related to internal motivators, factors related to external motivators and finally, those factors that were related to the program itself. The study revealed that the interplay of any number of these reasons was ultimately responsible for informing the student's decision to join the Extension Division.

Based on these findings, recommendations were made that would help NEGST's Marketing Division target potential students with a greater awareness of their preferences. Recommendations were also made that would help the Extension Division remain sensitive and responsive to the unique needs of the adult learners who made up their customer base.

To

Edwinah Wanjiru, my wife and my all.

Now I know what it means to be loved, to be helped, and to be cherished.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| ABSTRACT | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | vi |
| TABLES | ix |
| FIGURES..... | x |
| CHAPTER ONE..... | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Background Information..... | 1 |
| Research Problem | 3 |
| Purpose of the Study | 3 |
| Significance of the Study..... | 3 |
| Research Questions..... | 4 |
| Limitations and Delimitations | 5 |
| Definition of Terms | 5 |
| CHAPTER 2 | 6 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 6 |
| Adult Learner Characteristics..... | 6 |
| Adult Learners and Motivation..... | 9 |
| Learners and their Challenges in Africa | 13 |
| CHAPTER 3 | 17 |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND PROCEDURES | 17 |
| Research Design | 17 |
| Entry Procedure | 19 |
| Population..... | 19 |
| Instrument Design..... | 21 |
| Validation and Verification Strategies | 21 |
| Pilot Testing..... | 21 |
| Data Collection Procedure..... | 22 |
| Data Analysis and Data Interpretation..... | 23 |
| CHAPTER 4 | 25 |
| DATA ANALYSIS | 25 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Factors Related to Internal Motivators | 27 |
| The Need for Advancement..... | 27 |
| The Need to be a Better Worker | 28 |
| The Need to Follow One’s Heart..... | 30 |
| Factors Related to External Motivators | 31 |
| The Need to Respond to Life’s Challenges..... | 31 |
| The Need to Respond to God | 33 |
| Factors Related to the Program Offered | 34 |
| The Reputation of the School | 34 |
| The Delivery of the Content | 36 |
| The Cost of the Program..... | 38 |
| The Content of the Courses | 38 |
| Research Findings and Interpretation | 39 |
| CHAPTER 5 | 44 |
| SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 44 |
| Areas for Further Research..... | 48 |
| REFERENCE LIST | 49 |
| APPENDIX A..... | 54 |
| APPENDIX B..... | 56 |
| APPENDIX C..... | 57 |
| APPENDIX D..... | 58 |

TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Age of Female Participants..... | 20 |
| 2. Age of Male Participants..... | 20 |
| 3. Marital Status of Participants..... | 20 |

FIGURES

| Figure | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Factors that Motivate Students to Join NEGST Extension Division..... | 26 |
| 2. Factors Related to Internal Motivators..... | 27 |
| 3. Factors Related to External Motivators..... | 31 |
| 4. Factors Related to the Program Offered..... | 34 |
| 5. Interplay of Motivational Factors Influencing Students to Join NEGST Extension Division..... | 43 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology is a school that was begun in Kenya in 1983 as the result of the vision of Dr. Byang Kato, the first African General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar (AEAM). “The first class of four students began their studies in October of 1983 and in July of 1986, NEGST granted its first four graduates the Masters of Divinity (M. Div) Degree” (Catalogue 2006-2008, 7). At that time, the stated purpose was “to create a graduate school higher than the existing evangelical theological schools in Africa” (Catalogue 2006-2008, 1).

In 2005 NEGST had “one hundred and sixty seven students enrolled in its various programs on offer, and had graduated over four hundred men and women who were serving God across the continent mainly as pastors (48%), teachers (40%) and 10% were church and school administrators” (Mungathia 2005, 1). In the introduction section of her thesis, Mungathia makes an informed comment that “The school is consequently enlarging its scope of training as the demand rises”. That observation stemmed from the fact that in the year 2004, NEGST had launched its Extension Division (a shift from its usual full time and mostly residential study mode) with immediate and astonishing effects. In that year alone, student enrollment shot up to three hundred and two students, something that the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Douglas Carew termed as “unprecedented growth” (Annual Report 2005, 5) and stated that this

was “the highlight of the 2005/2006 academic year”. Dr. Carew in the same interview also noted, “NEGST saw her income grow by 72% in large measure due to the introduction of the extension mode of course delivery”. This type of growth is quite unusual for any organization to experience anywhere in the world. So, just what is the Extension Division all about?

In one of their brochures, the Extension division states that:

NEGST’s Division of Extension Studies does not offer its own programmes. Rather, it endeavors to make all NEGST’s undergraduate and post-graduate programmes more accessible by offering evening and Saturday courses at various off campus locations, as well as on-campus holiday courses and courses that meet one or two days a week. (NEGST to YOU 2006)

In a nutshell, all the programs on offer at NEGST in the regular full time program are made available to the student through a different mode of study. That is to say that the student does not need to be a full time student who attends all classes on the main campus in Karen, Nairobi. The courses not on offer through the Extension mode are: The Master of Divinity (all concentrations), Master of Theology and the Master of Philosophy courses.

In the undated “Get to know us” Brochure, the Extension Division says that:

Busy Christian leaders now have a reason to smile because NEGST now offers its programs where and when they are needed, and at a pace that fits their busy schedules. This program is designed for ministers and lay Christians who cannot relocate into the full time program at the institution. It is carried out at various locations within the city of Nairobi, and expanding elsewhere (1).

In short, it would appear that in a bid to make their training accessible to more people, the policy makers at NEGST thought of setting up a division that would offer the courses that the regular, full time programs offered, but in a different format. This study will focus on the factors that are motivating students to enroll in the Extension program in such high numbers.

Research Problem

Three years after NEGST initially began to train students it graduated its first four graduates. In contrast, only two years after the Extension Division began to train ministers, it graduated twenty-seven trainees. In July of the year 2007 (a mere three years after the program started), eighty-six extension division students graduated. This was nothing short of astonishing considering that in 2005, the regular program graduated sixty-one students, and this was considered the biggest batch of graduating students in NEGST's history (NEGST 2006 Graduation Magazine, 10). These figures ought to get the attention of even the casual observer, and their curiosity ought to be raised enough to get them to attempt to investigate various aspects of the Extension Division program. Usually, high graduation figures presuppose high enrolment rates. This researcher therefore investigated why students were enrolling into the extension division and more specifically, the factors that were motivating them to do so.

Purpose of the Study

It has been said that "Judging from the number of journal articles, dissertations and studies devoted to it, the topic of participation in adult learning is probably the most enduring research concern since investigations in the field began" (Brookfield 1986, 3). It is to this subject that this researcher focused his attention. With such large numbers of extension students leaving NEGST as graduates, the purpose of this study was to understand why these students enrolled in the programme in the first place.

Significance of the Study

When one looks in the library at the list of theses that relate to NEGST as an institution, it is quickly discernible that no researcher has attempted to investigate why the members of NEGST student population join the school. It is also quite

apparent that no research has been undertaken on any aspect of the three-year old NEGST extension program. This researcher therefore anticipated that the findings of this research would be significant in the following ways:

1. NEGST policy makers would be able to plan for future expansion of their programs with knowledge of the students they are targeting, and with a renewed capacity to meet their educational needs. Gall, Gall and Borg say, "...research has helped shape educational policy and initiatives to improve existing conditions" (2007, 301).
2. NEGST marketing department would make informed choices of how to advertise their products and services because this study would inform them about their target group, a matter that is of prime importance. Fujita-Starck and Pamela (1996) say, "As the field of continuing education develops, it has become obvious to program planners, curriculum specialists, and administrators that there is a need for empirical data describing both participants and potential participants in their programs".
3. Attention would have been given to this evolving phenomenon at NEGST and in the African context that will increase the available literature on the subject.

Research Questions

Because the intent of the researcher was to gain an understanding of underlying motivations as to why students enrolled in the NEGST Extension program, he developed the following research question:

R. Q. Why are students enrolling in the extension division?

Under this single question, two sub-questions were explored:

Sub-question 1: What internal motivators influence the students' decision to join their selected program?

Sub-question 2: What external motivators influence the students' decision to join their selected program?

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited to the student's motivations and did not seek to enumerate, understand and discuss the distinctiveness of the programs that NEGST offers. The study was delimited to students who were currently enrolled in some of the extension division programs and did not seek to survey the students who had already graduated. In addition, the study did not cover all the extension students currently enrolled in the programs offered by the extension division.

Definition of Terms

Internal motivators: All the factors that drive the learner to decide on a course of action so as to fulfill innate needs.

External motivators: All the factors in the environment and context of the learner that drive him/her to decide on a course of action.

Motivation: "a person's aroused desire for participation in a learning process" (Curzon 2004, 224).

Adult learners: All post-secondary school level individuals who enroll in a learning program for credit.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adult Learner Characteristics

The field of Education is very wide. Educators concern themselves with issues such as learning styles, content, the learning environment, teaching methods, tests and evaluations and this list can go endlessly. However, at the heart of education, is the learner, that individual who is taught something. Who is he? Where is he from? Why does he come into a specific learning situation? In relation to this research, these questions can be focused even more sharply on the adult learner. Research into the matter revealed that many have attempted to characterize the adult learner in many various ways. Knowles, in his well known and oft quoted 1980 book *The modern practice of adult education* says, “adult learners are those who perform adult roles (of a social kind) and at the same time see themselves as responsible for their own lives” (24).

This definition of course opens up the door of discussion amongst educators about the differences that are characteristic of learners. Some like Schuetze and Slowey (2002, 314) suggest that “adult learners are all different in terms of their previous education experiences, their social and family background, gender, age, life situations, motivation to study, current and future occupational profile” (313). Wonacott (2001) characterizes the adult learner as a modern-day-juggler who “juggles competing demands on his time from studies, family, work and other commitments”. Jokingly, Jarret (2001) says that adult learners are “all the students with grey hair”

before going to add a bit more helpfully that these are the individuals who “...employed (part or full time)... have one or more kids, serve on community committees, volunteer regularly and are responsible for their own lives”. Richardson and King (1998) define the adult learner as “the individual who enters into higher education above the age of twenty in the USA and the individual who does the same thing in the UK while above the age of twenty five”. The important thing to note as they point out in the article is that definitions of adult learners “do vary across national systems of education”.

In 1987, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed a list of four definitions of who adult students are. Schuetze and Slowey quote these definitions as:

Adult students are

1. Those who enter or re-enter higher education after a break in learning.
2. Students enrolled in academic studies but represent chronological age categories (e.g. above 25 years).
3. Those who enter higher education on the basis of mature life experiences
4. One who has previously completed a higher education course(s) and wants to update themselves (2002, 14).

When looking at the types of adult learners there are, a NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) report typifies the adult learner in three ways: they are “goal, learning or activity oriented individuals” (1999). The report further suggests that these three categories can be further collapsed into two main categories into which adult learners will fit i.e. intrinsic oriented and instrumental oriented individuals. Brookfield on his part said that what was typical of adult learners in the USA (in the late 1980’s) is that they are “relatively affluent, well educated, Caucasian, middle aged people, or young, well educated affluent professionals” (1986, 5). He makes this observation in relation to students in the American context and at a time when Caucasian students appeared to make up the bulk of adult learners.

The University of Iowa looked at adult learners from the perspective of the programs they enrolled in and the student status (part or full time). They discovered that whereas 12% of their Masters students were part time, 82% were full time. In the Ph D program, whereas 70% were part time, only 30% were fulltime students (University of Iowa 2005). They explained that the difference in student status is dependent on if the student is working elsewhere as they pursue their studies. These percentages clearly indicate that there is a relationship between the program a student enrolls in and their availability. Even so, this by no means suggests that it is impossible for some students to work full time at their jobs, and still take on a full course load.

Finally, it is important for us to mention something about how Cross (1986, 52) in an early but comprehensive work classifies her 'adult learners'. She puts them into three categories as follows:

1. Participants in organized learning activities (1/3 of all adult learners).
2. Participants in self directed learning (almost all learners).
3. Participants in adult learning for academic credit (10% of adult learners)

This last group is of particular interest to this researcher as his population can for every purpose and intent be classified in the same way that Cross has done.

All these authors show us one thing, that in trying to construct the profile of the adult learner, it is of vital importance that one takes into consideration their sex, age, marital status, number of children, socio-economic status, educational background, job status, career, and even the ethnic group (depending on one's purpose of inquiry). To this list, the previously quoted NIACE report would add "cultural norms, existence of the learning opportunity, external pressures and influences, and place of residence" (1999). Let us now turn our attention to the matter of motivation and the adult learner.

Adult Learners and Motivation

The question of what motivates a person has fascinated psychologists and researchers over the course of many years. Child has it right when he points out that “what people do can be (easily) observed; why they do it is still a matter of speculation” (2004, 177). Some people would define motivation as that which “consists of internal processes and external incentives that drive us to satisfy some need” (Child, 176). Others would say that motivation is “the phenomenon involved in a person’s drives and goal seeking behavior...the arousal, direction, regulation and sustaining of a pattern of behavior (Curzon 2004, 224). Curzon however chooses to refer to motivation as “a person’s aroused desire for participation in a learning process”. To this researcher, this is a very agreeable definition because it opens up the possibility of certain quantifiable and observable reasons of why adult learners want to enroll in a learning activity or program.

In a discussion of adult learners and motivation, Brookfield (1986, 11) postulates that “The fact that adults engage in an educational activity because of some innate desire for developing new skills, acquiring new knowledge, improving already acquired competencies or sharpening powers of insight has enormous implications for what facilitators do”. He is correct in his assessment of the grave importance of understanding what motivates the adult learner. Perhaps it is because of this truth that many educators have researched into the matter of adult motivation with interesting results.

Houston and Cook (2003) state the following as reasons various students gave for coming to University:

1. Because of academic demands
2. Because of the exciting social life
3. To escape from reality

4. Its like going to holiday camp
5. To escape from friends
6. To gain a place in society
7. It's the normal thing to do
8. To find a marriage partner
9. To postpone the need to work
10. To enjoy myself before I start working

Some of the above reasons may not seem like “ideal” reasons for enrolling in higher education, but this just goes to show that people can be very different in their motivations. For example, another 1997 NIACE report showed that there are four motivators for learning for adults; “one wants a promotion; one is moving house and home; ones marriage or relationship has broken down and finally one has lost their job”.

Dowling and Wolfgang (1981) enumerate the following six factors that feature in the motivation of adult learners: His social relationships; external expectations from others; his social welfare; personal advancement; escape/stimulation and cognitive interest. Entwistle (1987) in his article discusses the work done by Gibbs, Morgan and Taylor who categorize motivation for adult learners into four distinct categories which they further sub divide into extrinsic and intrinsic interests. The four categories are “vocational, academic, personal and social orientations” (137). Reflecting on this research, Entwistle concludes, “Whereas adult learners showed predominantly personal orientations, school leavers showed predominantly academic, social and vocational orientations”. In other words, there are more personal reasons than there are academic, social and vocational reasons as to why an adult learner wants to go back to school.

In a major study, Kember et al (2003) also investigated the question of what motivates adult learners to participate in learning activities and came up with the following results:

The adult learners interviewed enrolled in school because

1. They wanted training before shifting careers
2. They wanted to develop an already established career
3. They had not had the opportunity to study at the tertiary level
4. They had not done well enough in their previous course of study to gain direct entry into the university
5. They saw it as an alternative to mainstream education
6. They were learning for the pleasure of it

Again, from this list as in the previous ones, there appears to be an overlap of reasons and motives whether they are personal, social, academic, vocational, external, or internal. However, matters are not always so complex for all people. Take for example the unnamed author of the article *Black baby boomers...are flocking to college*. They say, “The realization that has come to African Americans later in life is that college education is necessary to get white man’s jobs and white man’s incomes...it is an observable phenomenon, that America’s black population start college later” (*Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 1998). In short, ‘Do you want more money? Go back to school’!

At about the same period of time and in the same nation (America), one interesting study delimited itself to 235 mature age female students and found that for ladies, matters were not so “cut and dry”. Scott et al (1998, 221) report that for the ‘fairer sex’ the motivation to enroll in school again was influenced by factors including “level of previous education; the secondary school attended; one’s age; marital status; change in marital status; family life cycle; family support for the study attempt; present job satisfaction and job career potential”. This would be more in keeping with the opinion of many educators that many things influence the adult learner’s decision to enroll in school again.

Zemke and Zemke (1984) bring in a different perspective when they write about adult learners and say,

Life changing events such as marriage, starting a new job, divorce, promotion, getting fired and losing a loved one, are prime motivators for adult learners to enroll in learning activities. In fact, the more the life change one encounters, the more the motivation to learn. Adult learners see learning opportunities as ‘a means to an end and not as an end in itself’. In addition to this however, self-esteem and pleasure are also strong motivators of adults who pursue learning opportunities.

It would therefore appear that what is going on around the learner, what is going on in the learner’s life, and whatever context surrounds the learner each in some way affects their choice of whether or not to pursue higher education. These factors also appear to influence the choice of what way they will seek to fulfill this need.

Is it wise to separate external and internal motivators as Glass and Harshberger (1974) do? In their article, they say that students are motivated to learn by external motivators only - namely cultural, societal, communal and economic motivators. No mention is made of internal factors in their study. The evidence from other studies indicates that the internal motives are just as strong (if not stronger) than external motivators. “Most observers of human behavior”, say Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000, 159) “agree that both external and internal factors influence individuals motivational learning....Both these can co-exist because they ‘kick in’ at different times during the educational life of the Adult learner”. One thing that all the above authors convince us of is this: When an adult learner makes the decision to go back to school, this is merely the result of a complex array of factors that have influenced that decision. If this is so, are there any distinctly different factors that may influence a student on the African continent? It is to this matter that we now turn.

Learners and their Challenges in Africa

When it comes to issues related to life, many people in the world hold to the philosophy that we can make this world a better place. At the forefront of the task of ‘healing the world and making it a better place’, has been the United Nations Organization (UN). In 1948, the UN adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 of the document says, “Everyone has the right to education” (UNO 1998). Many years after that declaration, the United Nations listed what they termed as Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s). These MDG’s were targets that the UN set for nations around the world in terms of improving the lives of their citizens. Second on this list of MDG’s was the promise that “education (at primary level) would be free for all” (UN 2005). At the secondary and tertiary levels, the UN has campaigned to make education available for all. The Jomtien Declaration states in one section “Every person - child, youth, and adult - should be able to benefit from opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs (UNESCO 1990). These sentiments were echoed in the Dakar consultation, and the Amman affirmation further pressed the case for education at all levels to be made available for all people.

One cannot ignore the fact that the world has become a global village. This reality has also affected how we view education, and how countries go about educating their citizens. There have been changes in how learners are viewed and defined; changes in terms of who qualifies to teach; and changes in modes of delivery of content and in the content itself. MacIntosh (2005, 10) notes, “As globalization advances, education is increasingly crossing borders - national, regional, sectoral and institutional”. Today, people speak of ‘life long learning’, describing it as “the need for people to continue their education throughout life because they will face multiple

careers in changing economies and enjoy longer lives in evolving societies” (11). MacIntosh continues to say that “higher education and lifelong learning are at a critical juncture because traditional universities (nationally based, registered, regulated and accredited) are under many pressures...resources to sustain existing structures, the challenge of new education models and research breaking down old categories and divisions....” (12). The same author adds that because of the changing nature of the learners, they are “increasingly demanding a type of education that allows them to update their knowledge whenever necessary and to go on doing so through out their working lives” (12). However, even as they do so, they face numerous challenges.

Commenting on the educational situation of students on the African continent, MacIntosh says, “The chances of a young person born in sub Saharan Africa to accede to higher education are roughly eighteen to twenty times lower than those of a young person from an industrially developed country” (11). Perhaps this is because Africa faces challenges that in some ways are unique to her context. “HIV and AIDS, poor governance, mounting debt burdens, the threat of economic stagnation and decline, rapid population growth, widening economic disparities amongst and within nations, war, occupations, civil strife, violent crime” (MacIntosh 2005, 13). To this list add “time, mobility and financial constraints because of their career and family circumstances” (14). It does not take long before one begins to realize that getting an education in Africa is no mean feat. In fact, statistics from UNESCO indicate, “by the year 2000, 880 million adults were illiterate” (2000). A large number of these ‘illiterates’ were on the African continent, and “many of them were women” (United Nations 2007). These statistics are very sobering and they indicate that inasmuch as the world has pledged to eradicate illiteracy, there remains much to be done in terms

of turning ‘declarations, promises and pledges’ into tangible results. They also inform us that inasmuch as the world has promised to raise the status of women by “promoting gender equality and empowering them” (UN 2005), much remains to be done in that area.

However, the picture is not as bad as some would seek to portray it. In spite of the many problems a student would encounter as they attempt to get higher education on the continent, there have been quite a few wins. Firstly, between 1970 and 1997, Africa saw “a 1,623 percent increase in female enrollment in tertiary institutions” (Damtew and Altbuch 2003, 24). This is amazing considering the challenges women have to overcome in Africa. There has also been “great support from organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, Carnegie Corporation, Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation” (26). Through the moral and financial support these organizations have provided, the African continent is much better equipped to face up to the challenges of their context. Finally, leaders on the continent have also taken cognizance of the fact that the development of the continent is tied in to the education of the people on the continent. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa said,

If the next century is going to be characterized as a truly African century, for social and economic progress of the African people, the century of durable peace and sustained development in Africa, then the success of this project is dependent on the success of our education systems. For nowhere in the world has sustained development been attained without a well-functioning system of education, without universal and sound primary education, without an effective higher education and research sector, without equality of educational opportunity. (UNESCO 1999)

One can only hope that the promises and pledges that Africa’s leaders make will translate into tangible action that changes the life of Africa’s people, and brings about desperately needed development. Nevertheless, even with these wins, our question

remained. If the context in which the African student finds himself in is so difficult, why would some of them enroll in higher education? What motivates their decision to do so? It was hoped that this study would act as a piece in the larger puzzle of trying to understand the motivational factors behind students' decision to seek higher education in such harsh circumstances as those to which the African Continent plays host.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND PROCEDURES

Research Design

The research method used was qualitative research using the focus group. Qualitative research has been defined as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting” (Creswell 2002, 1-2). The aim of this study being to discover why students were enrolling at NEGST, the qualitative approach was deemed sufficient in obtaining their opinions and motives as to why they were doing so.

The focus group is not without its own history. “This methodology has evolved greatly from its beginnings during WW II when citizens were exposed to propaganda advertising in small groups, and even during the 1960's and 70's when groups were held in the living rooms of suburban America. However, the success of the traditional focus group has led to its being copied, thus giving birth to the telephone focus group, the Internet focus group and even the video conference focus group”(Silverman 2005).

Litosseliti notes that “in the 1980’s, researchers primarily chose the quantitative methodology while in the 1990’s researchers shifted to the qualitative research tradition. Another shift has occurred in the recent years, with researchers using more and more of focus groups to gather their data and then interpret that data to construct theory ”(2003, 2-13). Commenting about how people view the method

differently, Silverman (2005) says “the focus group has gone from a controversial method, to high acceptance in certain industries, then fallen out of favor, and is now enjoying a resurgence that probably makes it the fastest growing research methodology”. Focus group is “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment...participants share and respond to comments, ideas and perceptions...and use a synergistic approach to produce a range of opinions, ideas and experiences thus generating useful information” (Litosseliti 2003, 1-2). This method of gathering information is recommended for “discovering new information, examining peoples habits, obtaining different perspectives on the same topic in participants own words and gaining information on participants views, attitudes, beliefs, responses, motivations and perceptions on a topic”. Silverman counsels that focus groups be used especially when the researcher is “exploring, investigating or attempting to understand motivations, and should be avoided if the researcher wants to draw exact percentages, discover complex relationships or project the extent of future actions” (2005).

Focus groups “typically consist of between six and ten participants, but can range to as few as four people depending on the research purpose (Litosseti 2003, 3). Again, depending on the purpose of the study, as many as six groups can meet but Litossetti recommends a minimum of three groups. The focus group is usually “facilitated by a moderator who guides the discussion using a number of predetermined and carefully developed open-ended questions, with minimal intervention” (4).

Entry Procedure

The researcher got a letter from the Academic Dean, which introduced him to the Registrar, the Extension division staff, faculty, and students. This letter also clarified the scope of the research and included an appeal that any assistance possible be accorded to the researcher. This enabled the researcher to access valuable data, official information, records, classes where the students were located, and which were deemed necessary in ensuring the success of the investigation. The researcher, being himself a full time student at NEGST, had also shared classes with some of the target population and so had easy access to them.

Population

The population for this study was a sample of the students enrolled in the various courses in the Extension division. Information from the Extension office placed the number of students enrolled in these courses at about one hundred and forty. Candidates were selected because of the age bracket they fell into, their sex and their marital status. The researcher was also careful to ensure that there was a mix between urban and rural candidates. Finally, the availability of the participants and the course they were enrolled in was considered.

One group was made up of four female participants, one group was made up of four male participants and the last group was made up of eight individuals (two females and six males). The researcher hoped that separating the participants into all male and all female groups, then having one mixed group would allow for different dynamics to occur that relate to the ability of the different sexes to ‘see’ things differently, have different perspectives and allow the participants to comfortably share their views while amongst “people like them”. The researcher also deliberately targeted students of different ages because, as the literature had shown, different aged

adult learners have different motives for enrolling in educational programs. A deliberate attempt was also made to include in the groups the single, married who have children, and the married who have no children. The researcher, extension department staff and the faculty who teach them also vetted these individuals in terms of their ability to share openly, honestly and objectively. The following tables show the ages of the participants, and their marital status.

Table 1. Age of female participants

| AGE GROUP | NUMBER OF FEMALE PARTICIPANTS |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 20-30 years | 1 |
| 30-40 years | 2 |
| 40-50 years | 2 |
| Above 50 years | 1 |

Table 2. Age of male participants

| AGE GROUP | NUMBER OF MALE PARTICIPANTS |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 30-40 years | 4 |
| 40-50 years | 4 |
| 50-60 years | 3 |
| Above 60 years | 1 |

Table 3. Marital status of participants

| MARITAL STATUS | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Single | 3 |
| Married | 15 |

Instrument Design

With reference to the seven factor structure of motivation catalogued by Boshier in his 1991 study (Fujita-Starck and Pamela 1996), and after duly considering the information derived from the literature review, the researcher designed a nine-question topic guide that covered seven factors (Appendix A). These seven factors included those related to social relationships, external expectations, professional advancement (external motivators), social welfare, cognitive interest, personal stimulation and religious reasons (internal motivators). Additional questions were added to the topic guides for the second and third focus groups (Appendix B) because new information from the first group demanded further exploration, confirmation or verification in the second and third focus groups.

Validation and Verification Strategies

The researcher used triangulation and member checks to verify the data. Triangulation involved “collecting data across multiple and different data sources and employing constant comparative method thorough out the collection, analysis and interpretation process” (Starcher 2003, 69). This was achieved by collecting data from cohorts in two different locations. Member checks involved sharing of the results of the data collection and analysis with focus group participants to see whether they concurred with the researcher’s findings.

Pilot Testing

The researcher pilot tested the discussion questions at NEGST campus with three regular and one extension student before he attempted to use them in the actual focus group. The purpose of this ‘test run’ was to get feedback on unclear questions

that need to be reviewed, deleted, or restated with greater clarity. Adjustments were made to the questions as was suggested by the students in a bid to make them clearer.

Data Collection Procedure

First, the researcher identified the participants of the three focus groups after consultations with some lecturers and staff in the extension department. Another factor put into consideration at this stage was the demographics of the participants. The researcher tried to strike a balance between male and female, different age categories, marital status, location and availability of the participants. The researcher contacted the participants at least one week and at most one month before the intended date of meeting through their e-mail addresses and phone numbers. This was to allow enough time to get confirmation from the participants, and then arrange for the time and place of meeting.

The first focus group was held at NEGST on 10th December 2007 with four male participants who were part of the Eldoret Cohort. It was needful for the researcher to travel to Eldoret in Rift Valley Province for the second focus group held on 14th December 2007. This group comprised of eight participants of both sexes. The final focus group was held on 17th December 2007 at NEGST. This time the participants were all female.

For all the meetings, the researcher selected an environment that was as natural as possible to the participants (classrooms in which they took normal classes) and recorded all the sessions using a digital voice recorder. These session recordings were then transferred to the computer, transcribed and analyzed manually. The researcher hoped to develop a theory of why students were enrolling in the NEGST

extension programme that was based on the data that was collected from the focus groups.

Data Analysis and Data Interpretation

In qualitative research, data is collected in relation to the research questions that have been formulated and “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected” (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 203). This data is then examined, compared, conceptualized, categorized and summarized. This researcher followed the steps of data analysis in qualitative research recommended by the University of Texas

Coding - the process of translating raw data into meaningful categories for the purpose of data analysis. Coding qualitative data may also involve identifying recurring themes and ideas. **Initial coding** - the first stage in classifying and assigning meaning to pieces of information for data analysis. Numerous codes are generated while reading through responses without concern for the variety of categories. **Focused coding** - the second stage of classifying and assigning meaning to pieces of information for data analysis. Coding categories are eliminated, combined, or subdivided, and the researcher identifies repeating ideas and larger underlying themes that connect codes (University of Texas 2006)

Analysis of the data was an ongoing activity throughout the process of research. Even as the various focus groups took place, the researcher was evaluating the incoming data, and at the same time keeping a record of thoughts, questions and reflections in memo's which were “the researchers record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions and directions for further data collection” (Starcher 2003, 68). The final step involved interpreting the data collected. It was here that “the lessons drawn from the research would be drawn and enumerated, with affirmation or divergence from available literature being noted” (Rotich 2007, 28). Initially, the researcher wanted to use a computer program to analyze the data but opted to follow

the advice of Auerbach and Silverstein who say “we suggest that you first learn to do the analysis by hand, so that you can experience being fully in contact with your data. Only then will you be in a position to make an informed choice about whether to use a QDA (qualitative data analysis) program” (2003, 132). This being his first attempt at a qualitative analysis project, the researcher therefore thought it needful to take the longer “manual” road, which though harder, promised to build competency in him for future projects.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The number of students who join the NEGST Extension Division is significantly higher compared to the students joining the regular, full time program. This researcher sought to investigate the motivations and reasons behind the extension student's decision to join that program. The researcher found from the literature reviewed that adult learners enrolled in educational programs because they were motivated to do so. It was suggested in the literature review that these motivating factors were either internal (within the learner) or external (in the context and environment of the learner). Because the intent of the researcher was to gain an understanding of underlying motivations as to why students enrolled in the NEGST Extension program, he developed the following research question:

R. Q. Why are students enrolling in the extension division?

Under this single question, two sub-questions were explored:

Sub-question 1: What internal motivators influenced the students' decision to join their selected program?

Sub-question 2: What external motivators influenced the students' decision to join their selected program?

To collect data, three focus groups were held in two different locations. The participants were carefully selected, contacted and the meetings successfully held and recorded. The data was then transcribed, analyzed, and repeating ideas were isolated.

The researcher then went on to construct themes and finally the theoretical constructs were formulated as is illustrated in Appendix C and the following figure.

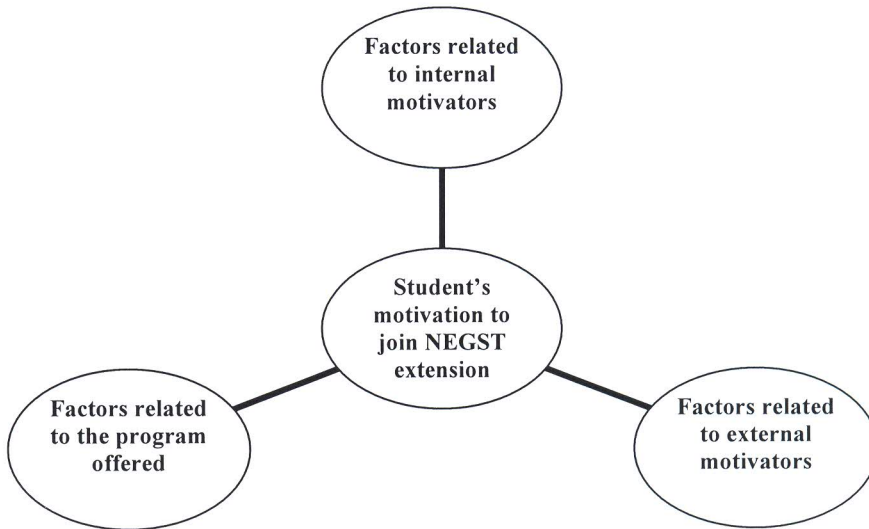


Figure 1. Factors that motivate student's to join NEGST Extension Division

Twenty distinct factors influenced the students as they made their decision to join the extension program at NEGST. The researcher was able to categorize these reasons into nine distinct themes. The researcher then further categorized the nine themes under three theoretical constructs, that is, factors related to internal motivators, factors related to external motivators and finally factors related to the program offered. The first two constructs (factors related to internal and external motivators) were derived from the literature reviewed. The final one (factors related to the program offered) was constructed from the gathered data. This was because a lot of the data that was collected indicated that this was a significant area of the student's consideration as they joined the extension program. The researcher will now proceed to unpacking each of the theoretical constructs, the themes and the reasons under them.

Factors Related to Internal Motivators

The definition of internal motivators in this study is ‘all the factors that drive the learner to decide on a course of action so as to fulfill innate needs’. The literature review suggested various internal motivators that influenced adult learners for example the need to acquire new skills, new knowledge, and the need to build competency. The presence of internal motivators was confirmed as true by the research that was carried out. Three themes captured the experiences of the students: The need for advancement, the need to be a better servant and the need to follow ones’ heart. These are illustrated in the following diagram.

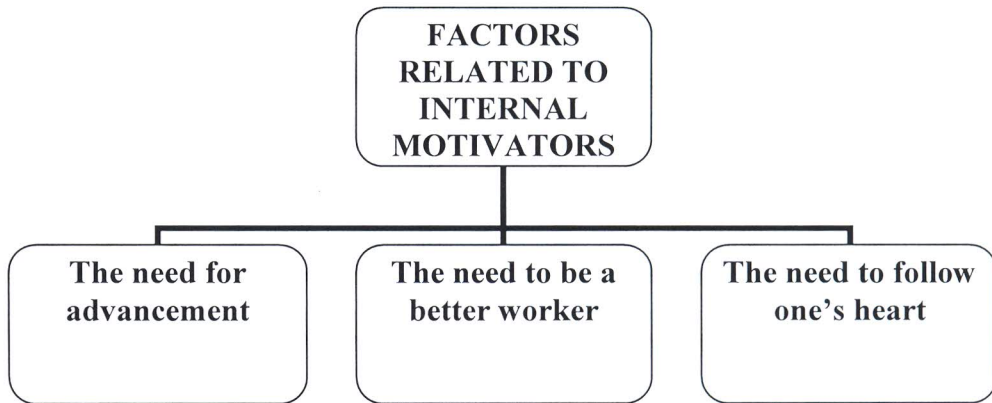


Figure 2. Factors related to internal motivators

The Need for Advancement

Under the need for advancement (first theme), it became clear to the researcher that as the students considered whether they should enroll in school again, one of the things that pushed them to do so was self advancement. This was captured in the words of A. He said: “I needed to advance personally, you know to help me in the future because I was seeing myself being able to serve better even if not in the same profession or in the school system”. Another student C said that as he read devotional books he needed “something that was beyond the mere

reading...something that can help me advance”. Student F said, “Coming to school really is creating a way to move upwards”.

Under the same theme, the need for promotions in the workplace came to the fore. For some of the students, they had realized that if one was to get a better paying job, or perhaps a better pay package, then a way to achieve this was by presenting their papers to their employers who would then be obligated to consider improving their terms of service. Two examples are J who said, “...personally I used to work as a secretary before and in the course of my work I really needed a promotion and I could see every time the promotion would come through training”. P helps us see how critical this aspect for him was when he says:

You can look at it from like a pyramid...you know the base of the pyramid is so wide so you can find so many people at a lower level so if you want to advance...to go upwards...I mean if you want more room to maneuver, to help yourself then it is good to move upwards so to me that is how I was looking at it...you know...to escape from this base where everybody seems to be there...so that you are in a place where opportunities are available and then they say opportunity will find somebody who is prepared so this course we are taking me I see it as a way.

For P, he seems to have realized that the way to advance in his workplace was not just a matter of merit or good fortune. He had to have the right papers and this would guarantee his upward mobility.

The Need to be a Better Worker

Under the second theme, that of being a better worker, five aspects were evident: To be effective as one worked, to manage time better, to be a better leader, for personal growth and to serve longer. All these were innate to the students. First, some students felt that they needed to make an impact in their assigned areas of ministry. G said, “I wanted to have an impact in the church...”, and L said “I realize many people come to me for advice and things like that so I thought it would help me

to, you know, to give a better impact. Second, some students felt that they needed to be better stewards of their time and this could be done by enrolling in a school and through the educational program use time that would otherwise have been ‘wasted’. E captured this for us when she said, “when the course was coming I knew that I was not going to waste time anymore. I knew this course would keep me busy, keep me doing something instead of wasting time”.

Third, some students wanted to be effective leaders. They had analyzed their effectiveness and had judged themselves as wanting. “I was not effective in my ministry because I was inadequate in so many ways, so I thought it wise to come to NEGST and learn,” said H. She further said, “I had been appointed to be a school chaplain but I actually felt very inadequate. I needed to delve more into the word of God”. D compliments this thought with her words “so I just wanted to be able to lead effectively and learn so that I can lead effectively”. Coming to school was the vehicle that would carry them to a place of effectiveness in leadership. Fourthly, the students said that they just had the urge to improve themselves through constant growth otherwise referred to as ‘lifelong learning’. “I was like...I needed more life than where I was because where I was I was feeling I am not challenged enough” (C). This feeling of ‘needing more’ appears to have stirred the student positively. On the same issue, Q said

Church is growing and knowledge is increasing and there are so many issues that are coming up in communities the issues of AIDS, the issues of poverty, the issues of you know immorality and all this and this leaves you at a situation where you want to be knowledgeable enough and better placed to handle these contemporary issues.

Lastly, as they looked at the future, the students wanted to be capable of serving God for as long a time as possible. They did not want to be ‘dull-spent instruments in the master’s hands’. M had it that

I would want to be productive not just when I am young but even when I will be in those years of 50 and 60 something and you see for you to be productive, then you need to prepare now. Otherwise if you don’t prepare now properly...if you are not properly equipped, properly prepared now...your usefulness will come to an end even before you reach that end.

Another student looked at their denomination and where it was headed and said:

I knew that maybe in future we may be asked to play a part...play a big role in putting some of these structures into place...structures like administration, structures like...guiding how the theology and the doctrine of the ministry and so I felt that I needed to get more (F).

These examples show that the student’s eyes were on the future as they decided to join NEGST. They were conscious that in time, they would be called upon to take up certain tasks and responsibilities in their churches. They therefore saw their time at NEGST as a time of preparation and equipping to handle the tasks ahead.

The Need to Follow One’s Heart

The final theme under factors related to internal motivators had to do with following one’s heart. D put it quite simply that “I think mine is to say it was just a personal conviction”. Concerning the internal battle G faced in trying to decide whether to join NEGST Extension program or not, “that which would override is the conviction of my heart when deciding...” For others such as J, this conviction in the heart had begun much earlier. She said, “I had always wanted to go to Bible school and I’ve had a conviction since I’ve been very young and I have never made it. So when I heard of the introduction of this extension program...in Eldoret, it was like an answered prayer”. However, not all convictions are so clear. K said that for her “(she)...felt there was always an urge in me of wanting to go back to school, and by

the way when that urge was coming I didn't know what kind of a school to come to I mean like I didn't know it was to be a theological school". For some of these students, their hearts desire was one of the keys that unlocked the doors to furthering of their education.

Factors Related to External Motivators

As indicated in the introduction on page five, external motivators are 'all the factors in the environment and context of the learner that drive him/her to decide on a course of action'. Examples of such motivational factors that came up from the literature reviewed included expectations of one's employer, death of a loved one, and marriage. At the end of the research process, the researcher was able to identify two distinct themes that emerged from the data as to why students enrolled in the extension program. They were the need to respond to life's challenges better and the need to respond to God as is illustrated below.

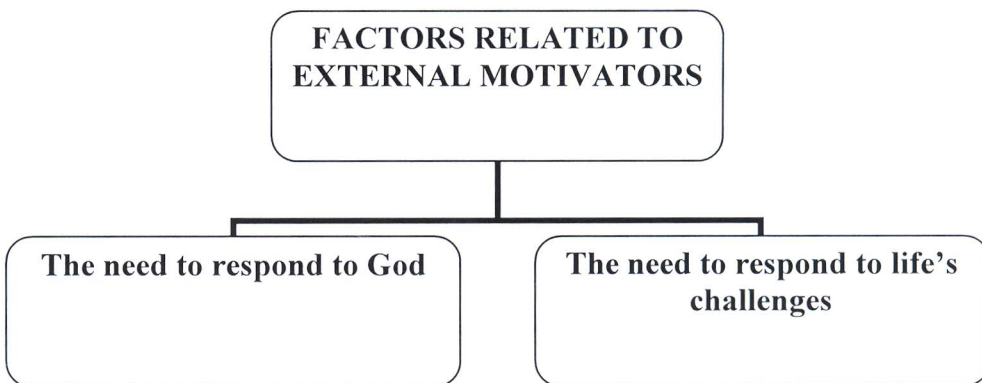


Figure 3. Factors related to external motivators

The Need to Respond to Life's Challenges

Under this theme, three motivators were discernible: These were relevance, ministry challenges and relationships. On relevance to one's context, respondent A

said that the dynamism of modern day societies caused him some concern. “You know things are dynamic and with the dynamism of our society you cannot be stagnant”. For B, he said “what is happening is things are evolving very fast and at times you need enough tools to enable you be relevant and to be able to respond appropriately”. Another participant added “in the years to come...you must have a degree...you must at least go back to school it will be a requirement and so years will come when people will be irrelevant if they don’t advance in their education” (P).

Ministry challenges were also found to be significant in convincing the student to enroll in the program. In the course of discharging their duties, the students met various challenges coming from children, youths, and adults. “I am dealing with university students... and they know many things...they have so many questions and to me it was so challenging because I am with them” (E). For this particular student, dealing with church members who have studied to the undergraduate level proved to be a challenge to her because the church she ministers in is located in the rural area. Handling people who had been ‘exposed’ to urban life yet found themselves in a rural church was quite a challenge. For H who ministers in an urban church in the new believer’s class, the challenge came from a member who had a Ph D and was actually a University lecturer

I remember we were teaching a professor from the university of Nairobi and that was quite challenging because he asked some questions...because you see his level of education is too high and sometimes he comes and challenges you with the kind of talk he gives you...so I remember Dr Ombati came up with questions and he really put us as the doctrinal teachers on the ground and we were saved by one of us who has also done the theological course (H).

On relationships, some of the students felt that they needed to extend the boundaries of their friendships. One said that there was the feeling that they were stuck “in the land of never, never in the middle of nowhere” (A). He felt that he

needed to go out, meet new people, interact with them, and learn from them. Another student said “You know when you are down there (referring to the rural areas) you may never get an opportunity to go outside and you don’t want to live in a world of your own...you don’t exist alone...you want to relate to others” (B). This longing to meet and interact with others stirred some of the students up and made them view the extension program favorably.

The Need to Respond to God

Under the second theme (need to respond to God), there was the issue of obedience to God. Many of the students narrated how God had worked in their lives to get them into the school. P said, “I felt God was giving peace to pursue these studies at this level and so I felt within me there was clearance, there was green light”.

For C,

God talked to me about my life, my family and he gave me a plan of 5 years...5 years and some other period...now the whole thing, I didn’t know what was happening and when it came to coming to here I was really like dragged...things happened and I was responding...things happened and I was responding until I came to NEGST so I think I am on God’s track.

For N, she was forced to come because, like Jonah the reluctant Old Testament prophet, she wanted to go her own way.

Personally I can say he hit me hard, if I may use that word because I was one of these people who did not want to go to a theological college and like I have told you I had gone to Nairobi University...so he [God] had to deal with me seriously...the Lord spoke and said ‘this is not where I sent you’...so the only alternative was now to join a Bible school and that’s how I came to join the NEGST program...I’m saying he dealt with me in a very...tough way... but he has been carrying me through....

Finally, E said, “it’s like this is what God was leading me to do and I felt like now I’m having that peace now that I am doing these courses, I’m feeling this is the right place God wanted me to be”. In short, there was external influence from (specifically) God.

It appears that with the obedient, he led them gently; with the disobedient, he pushed them into the school. Either way, the student found themselves in the program.

Factors Related to the Program Offered

As the data collection process proceeded, an aspect that kept coming up had to do with who was offering the courses (NEGST), what these courses were, and how these courses were being offered. This led the researcher to designate four themes: factors related to the reputation of the school, factors related to the delivery of the content and factors related to the costs and content of the courses as is illustrated below:

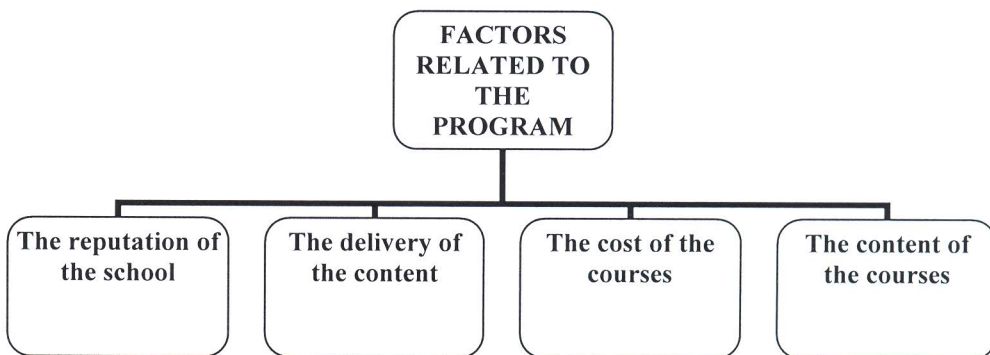


Figure 4. Factors related to the program offered

The Reputation of the School

Under the first theme (reputation of the school), the students said that one aspect they looked into as they considered joining NEGST was the school community. Some of them were comforted to know that “the lecturers are spiritual in a way because I had sort of refused to enroll in any theological college that was not spiritual according to my own way of understanding spirituality” (A). For K,

This college had...that spiritual foundation and the kind of teachers I was going to meet here were born again teachers who we could relate to and they were not going to either affect my faith and I was not going to cross with them because of the faith, because I really value my relationship with God.

For M, his concern was that all members of the community needed to be saved saying, “it is a spiritual college and people there are born again”.

Another factor was the knowledge that NEGST had good accreditation and very high academic standards. The students variously described the school as “fulfilling” (D), “credible, and of high academic standards” (N). F put it well when he said, “Of course the first question we ever asked when we wanted to come here was whether the college was accredited because accreditation is a real challenge...so it is good to be in an accredited college”.

The third aspect under this theme was the matter of the publicity done by NEGST and the school’s Alumni. The extension program made deliberate efforts to advertise the school through the media, by visiting various churches, schools and organizations. This is how some students came to hear about NEGST for the first time and this motivated them to join the program. They said, “The kind of publicity done was very good” (G). The research also revealed that to an even greater extent, former students of the school had marketed the school to their friends and associates, and their high level performance in the work place made their colleagues want to attend the same school. H said, “Our persuasion was some of the students who have come from NEGST... their performance was excellent”. Q added, “The people who went before us did a good job” (referring to the students who have completed their studies at NEGST and are now working in the ministry). If competence in the workplace was something to go by, then the kind of graduates that NEGST released into the society

functioned as a signpost to all. The message this signpost conveyed was that NEGST was a good place to prepare for the ministry.

The Delivery of the Content

As the students wrestled with the decision of whether or not to enroll in NEGST extension program, the way the school structured the delivery of the courses to them was a strong factor that won them over. Courses were to be offered on Mondays, Saturdays, evenings and during holidays on and off the main campus. This decision by the school had implications for three areas: the student's families, their jobs and their traveling arrangements.

A few years ago, NEGST had a condition that had to be fulfilled by all full time students. This condition was that 'all married students must come with their families'. Some of the participants in the focus groups said that this discouraged them from joining the school at that time. When the Extension division started, its mode allowed students to study and remain with their families. This made many students view this program favorably". F said

I had heard that NEGST was a very good college they were training well and they had a very hard condition that you must move there with your family and stay there. So I knew it was a good place but it was not easy to go there so when I heard about an extension program I was so grateful I said though I don't know what they are teaching but it must very good.

This issue of moving with the family was also a great concern to B who wanted his wife to be able to pursue her own interests. He said

The convenience that I can come and study right from my home and I'm not required to come with my wife as it was before...so that at least I'm able to pursue what I feel I need in life and she can pursue what she feels she is comfortable with in life I feel that is quite something

As a final example, L's comment on just how hard it would have been for him to study without his family is quite informative of the priority he places on his family. He said, "With so much business which is involved surrounding me... and with the family to take care of...surely...surely I wouldn't make it to stay away from my family...so the convenience worked a great deal to my benefit".

On the other hand, the format of the extension mode did not adversely affect the student's jobs, businesses and ministries. "It was that convenience of being grounded thoroughly in the word of God while I am still doing what I'm doing that helped me come (D). The extension program "gave me the opportunity of being able to advance in education and still be involved with the ministry...I think that made it to be of great benefit" (M). For H, "the convenience of not having to abandon what I am doing but at the same time develop myself was quite a motivator".

The final aspect under the theme of delivery of the content had to do with the location of the learning center. For many students, it was very gratifying to realize that they had the opportunity to access quality theological education without having to travel far from their homes. P said, "When the cohort was moved to Eldoret it gave some of us an opportunity because a place like Western Kenya...really to get such a college with such an opportunity it was very, very hard and therefore, when it came to Eldoret it enabled some of us to join it straight away". Even for those who live around the school, this was a motivating factor. K said, "To me it was very convenient because I came from Ngong and coming from Ngong to Karen is very easy". As such, the fact that the students could easily access the learning center motivated some to join the program.

The Cost of the Program

The final two themes are costs of the program and the content offered. On the issue of costs of the program, NEGST has subsidized the costs for the students, though the focus groups participants could not tell how this was worked out. K said, “We were told that the extension program was somehow sponsored and it’s like we were not paying the full amount and that also contributed to me coming even though I don’t know how it is worked out. In fact, B put it quite plainly when he said, “the fact that it (fees) is manageable is a motivating factor”.

The Content of the Courses

On the content offered in the program, one of the students who comes all the way from a neighboring country said

I was looking for an institution that offers good Greek courses and as I went through the internet I learnt that NEGST was offering Greek courses and because I didn’t want to take all the programs, then I had no need to come and stay for a whole year...that was good news that I heard from the extension that I could do this.

Another student, D, said “I also felt when I looked at the content specifically...I realized that most of them were geared towards leadership and I knew that having been chosen by God to go and lead his people I needed to know more on leadership skills and I felt that that was the right course for me and that’s how I came to join the course”. The same thing was also true for J who said, “I was looking for an institution and when I read about the content it also motivated me to come here”. Interestingly, in a different cohort, only one of the panelists said that they had any clue about the content of the courses. They put it very simply when they said, “we had no idea what would be taught”! However, when this question was put to the other two groups, they said that they were aware of the content of the courses before registering for the

program, and that it was an important matter to consider as they wrestled over the decision of whether or not to join NEGST.

Research Findings and Interpretation

This researcher set out to understand the motivations behind student's decision to join NEGST Extension Division. From the data that was collected, the researcher is convinced that a lot of thinking and soul searching precedes the step of filling in the application form. During this period of weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the course of action in question, the potential student wrestles with salient matters relating to their life.

As pertains to internal motivators, the data revealed that maintaining the *status quo* in terms of their lives was unacceptable to all the students. They wanted their careers, their economic status, their prestige and ability to exert influence to advance, progress and grow. They were dissatisfied by their current place in life and they wanted to move higher in terms of their social-economic standing. The students also wanted to be flexible enough to operate in wider spheres in life and at the workplace. This required that the students be more informed, efficient and effective in their ability to deliver services and perform tasks. The classes offered through the Extension Division were the means of attaining this higher level of productivity and efficiency. The data also showed that most of the students placed a premium on personal growth through lifelong learning. This directly affected the length of effective service possible. It was as though the students were saying, "education will keep me sharp all through my life". Their ability to accurately assess and critique their competency and time management skills is also seen in their concern to 'be better'. This suggests that the students had standards in terms of what they considered competence and incompetence, effective and ineffective use of time.

In relation to external motivators, the data revealed that the student's were quite sensitive and perceptive to their contexts. These contexts, though different, exposed them to unique problems and challenges. Finding themselves caught in situations that they could not handle or had not foreseen, they faced a choice between doing nothing and finding a way to handle the various challenges they faced. They chose to do something and in their assessment, joining the extension program was the key to unlocking their potential in handling the aforementioned situations. Had these challenges not presented themselves, it is doubtful that the student's would want to go back to school. As it were, their contexts seemed to push them in a direction (school) that they otherwise would not have taken.

Almost in the same vein is the influence that God seemed to exert on the life of the individual participants. They all appeared to be committed to what they considered God's call to them as servants in the church and in Christian ministry. This commitment showed itself in two ways. Firstly, the students desire to please their Maker made them willing to go the extra mile and join the extension program. It was almost as if they were saying "Your will be done". Secondly, the students acknowledged that they wanted to make a positive difference and contribution to the life of the church and its members. In their eyes, God had selected and called them for a reason and they were willing to go to great lengths to ensure that reason was fulfilled. On the other hand, for the few participants who confessed to have been against God's apparent leading to join Bible school, their acknowledgement that 'I fought the battle and lost' is suggestive that it is possible that one may have wanted to do other things in life but God eventually had his way with them.

Analysis revealed that the students were mostly cautious about the quality of the education that they were to receive, and this issue featured significantly, as they

considered NEGST as a place to pursue their studies. NEGST's good accreditation translated into an inviting factor in the eyes of the student. The values of the students are also revealed in their opting to join the program especially since it did not separate them from their spouses and children. This is indicative that one's personal interests may not be the over riding factor as adult learners consider if they should further their education. At least in the African context, the effects on one's family affects ones course of action.

These values also come to the fore again as is seen in the student's confession that "I wanted to study in a community of born again individuals". The students keenly considered qualities of who was teaching and who their fellow learners were going to be. One can also infer from the data that if the program were to be presented in a different format, there would be significantly fewer students who would join it since the program would be seen as an inconvenience to the student's families, jobs and travel needs. Many of the students said that NEGST's marketing strategy was good. On further investigation, the researcher did not find the existence of any specific measure or plan put in place where the school had concrete arrangements with its alumni to have them market the school wherever they were . It was the alumni's good performance in the workplace that "marketed" the school.

The ability of the student to pay his or her own school fees was also a matter that was taken into consideration. The students had compared the fees to be charged to them by NEGST, with fees charged in other institutions offering similar programs in other regions and had found NEGST to be 'most affordable' to them. One can conclude that since NEGST seemed to offer a better deal than 'the other schools' this helped convince the students to join the extension program. Students seemed to be

looking for the best deal possible. This ‘deal’ had to be affordable and convenient while at the same time promising the highest quality of education.

Can a single factor influence a student’s decision to join the extension program? It is highly improbable. The first focus group responded affirmatively to seven issues put before them but as the discussion continued, the participants added other factors the researcher had not considered. These ‘new’ factors were confirmed by the other focus groups and in fact, these other focus groups added other factors to the growing list of possible motivations. The final list of twenty factors is proof that coming to a final decision on whether to join the extension program is a complex matter. The data therefore showed a lot of interplay between factors influencing the different individuals. In addition, the difference in demographics notwithstanding, it was clear to the researcher that some motivators carried more weight than others did. It appears that internal motivators and motivators related to the program were greater influencers than external motivators were. However, the key thing is that these factors all interact and succeed in persuading the student in their decision to join NEGST’s extension program. This interplay of factors is illustrated on the following page:

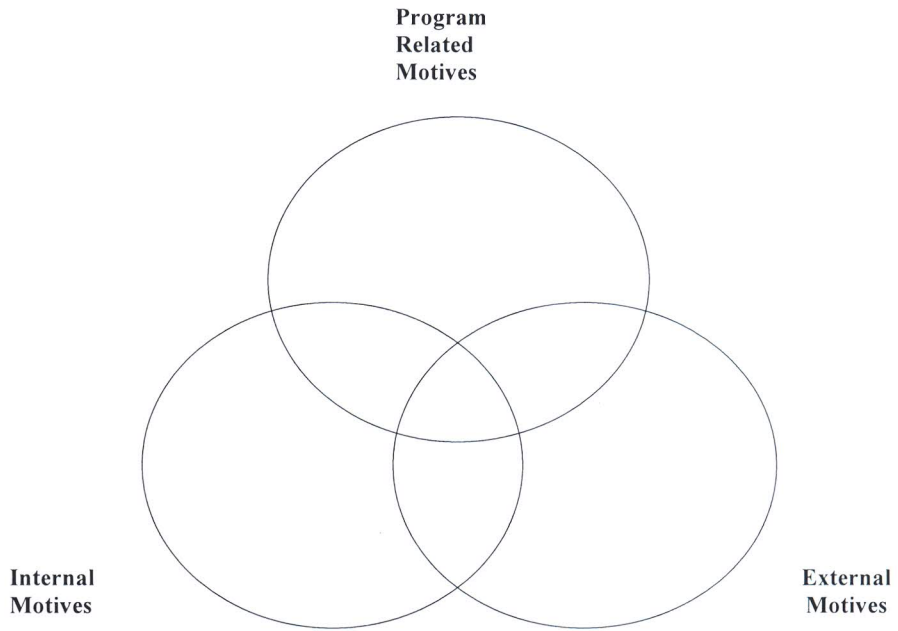


Figure 5. Interplay of motivational factors influencing students to join NEGST Extension Division

This researcher is therefore convinced that there are different reasons why students joined the extension program. These reasons relate to the program offered, the contexts of the students and their own need to improve themselves and their lives.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This researcher had observed that the Extension Program at NEGST seemed to have more students than the regular full time program. On inquiring from relevant sources and doing further preliminary investigations, the researcher indeed confirmed that since the launching of the Extension Program in 2004 a great number of students had enrolled in the program. The researcher then became curious as to what was motivating the student's decision to join the program. This qualitative study was then undertaken in a bid to understand the motives behind student's decision to join NEGST's extension program. To guide the research, one research question was developed. This question was then broken into two aspects as follows:

R. Q. Why are students enrolling in the extension division?

Sub-question 1: What internal motivators influence the students' decision to join their selected program?

Sub-question 2: What external motivators influence the students' decision to join their selected program?

In order to collect data, three focus groups were held with sixteen participants. The participants of the focus groups were all carefully selected to represent different locales (urban and rural areas), different age groups, and sex. The sessions were all recorded and transcribed verbatim before the data was analyzed, coded and theoretical constructs developed by the researcher.

In answer to the first part of the research question, the internal motivators that influenced the student's decision had to do with the student's felt need to advance in life, the need to be a better worker and the need to follow one's heart. In answer to the second part of the research question, it was found that life's challenges and God's influence informed the student's decision to join the program. In addition, data revealed that the reputation of the school, the course content, course delivery and costs of the program greatly influenced the decision of the student.

From the data gathered, it was established that many different factors came into play as the students weighed the choice of whether to join NEGST's Extension program or not. It was also observed that there was a lot of interplay of the different factors. The interplay of these factors and the resultant effect on the student's perception of NEGST as a way to meet their needs usually worked towards the direction of convincing the student to join the extension division.

When this study was undertaken, it was anticipated that the findings would be significant to the extension department in terms of their ability to plan for future expansion, and in the marketing and advertisement of their products. The researcher can confidently recommend that in light of the findings of the study:

1. The Extension department needs to be strategic in terms of the towns they choose to open new cohorts in. One participant said, "They need to be strategic, not selective taking cognizance of populations in the town if they want to increase student enrollment" (J).
2. In terms of the number of people they reach with information about the school, the researcher agrees with the participants who said "they (NEGST) should put advertisements in the television, radio, newspapers and magazines". It is quite possible that people do not know about the program and it is the responsibility

of the department to ensure that clients know about their products. It is recommended that these advertisements focus on the unique ability of the program to fit the diverse needs of the potential students.

3. The need for programs offered in the 'extension mode' is quickly catching on in other institutions of higher learning. This researcher is of the opinion that a very small window of time remains before other institutions catch on to NEGST's innovative idea and begin to compete with them. As such, the department needs to take advantage of the head start they have in the market place by investing in expansion so as to secure their niche in the market place. A plan that systematically targets major towns, communities, churches and pastors needs to be drawn up and expeditiously implemented.
4. This researcher further suggests that an unambiguous plan, which utilizes the alumni in marketing the school and its products, be drawn up urgently. This is not restricted to the Extension department alone. So far, it would appear that the alumni market the school by default and/or goodwill rather than by design. Student enrollment may increase if the department uses the many NEGST graduates who are already in the field, and in positions of leadership, to influence colleagues and people in their sphere of influence. The school, through their alumni, already has a network that spans different districts, regions and continents. Taking advantage of this situation and exploiting its obvious advantages (in terms of the networks potential to reach many people) would be a manifestation of good marketing strategies.
5. As the Extension program enters its fifth year, it is hoped that there are plans to evaluate, appraise and assess it soon. Doing this will give the department the ability to meet the diverse needs of their students. This is because some of the

participants voiced dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the program. For example, some students said that they were not able to access some of the programs they were interested in. They wanted to do missions but they were compelled to stick to Biblical studies since the missions course could not be offered in their cohort. Another student cited challenges that come about when papers are submitted over the internet or by post. The department needs to reflect on their performance with a bid to renew themselves and remedy some of those aspects. Some possible questions the department will need to ask are (for example): How market driven are the courses we offer? What are our learners' needs? How relevant to our constituents are the courses we offer? How satisfied are our constituents? What can we do to maintain the high standards of scholarship that we are known for?

6. The number of educational institutions that have received their charters from the Government of Kenya is on the increase. If accreditation is a factor that makes students join a school, then NEGST needs to work hard to get its own charter lest it begins to loose students to these other institutions, or worse still, is unable to attract new students. It is evident from the data that accreditation is key as a student considers which school to join. NEGST needs to be on the same level playing field as its competitors.
7. The academic community also needs to takes note of the additional factors discovered as a result of this research. It is hoped that the insights gleaned from the participants of this study will help educators and administrators reconsider how to avail their courses to people who are interested in learning them but cannot do so within the framework of the traditional learning modes.

Areas for Further Research

In light of the findings of this research, the researcher recommends that further study be made on the following:

1. What factors motivate students who enroll in other programs for example the full time program (whether as a resident or as a day scholar), programs offered over the internet and programs done by correspondence? How are these factors similar to, or dissimilar to those ascertained in this study?
2. What specific distinctive of the extension program attracts students to enroll in it?

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APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUP TOPIC GUIDE

I welcome you all today. My name is Anthony Njuguna and I will be the facilitator of today's session. This focus group session seeks to investigate reasons why you decided to join NEGST extension division for your studies. Thank you all for coming and for showing such great willingness to participate in this research.

1. Briefly introduce yourself by telling me your name, where you are from and which course you are taking.
2. What influenced your decision to join NEGST extension division for studies?
3. What role did the content offered by NEGST in the courses play in your decision to register in the program?
4. What role did professional advancement play in your decision to join NEGST extension division for your studies?
5. Some authors from the West suggest that a significant number of students who sign up for extension studies do so because they want more stimulation in their lives. What role did the need to be more active and stimulated play in your decision to join NEGST for your studies?
6. What role did the need to be able to serve your community or church play in helping you decide to come to NEGST for your studies?
7. What role did the need to interact with new people, make new friends and establish new relationships play in helping you decide to come to NEGST for your studies?

8. Some organizations require their staff to pursue further studies if they are to remain in their employment. What role did the need to comply with such organizational requirements play in your decision to join the extension program?
9. What role did your faith and relationship with God play in your decision to go back to school?

APPENDIX B

Additional Questions for Focus Group 2 & 3

1. What role did the pricing of the courses play in your decision to join NEGST Extension division?
2. What role did course sequencing play in your decision to join NEGST Extension Division?
3. What role did the need to be with your family play in your decision to join NEGST Extension Division?

APPENDIX C

REPEATING IDEAS, THEMES AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

I. FACTORS RELATED TO INTERNAL MOTIVATORS

A *The need for Advancement*

1. "I needed to advance personally" (Forward mobility)
2. "I stood a better chance of being promoted in my workplace" (Promotion)

B *The need to be a better worker*

1. "I want to make an impact in my church" (Effectiveness)
2. "I did not want to waste any more time" (Time management)
3. "I just wanted to learn so that I can lead more effectively" (Leadership skills)
4. "There is that desire to improve myself" (personal growth)"
5. "If I prepare now I will be productive even in later years" (Longer service)

C *The need to follow one's heart*

1. "I have had a conviction in my heart since I was very young" (Conviction)

II. FACTORS RELATED TO EXTERNAL MOTIVATORS

A *The need to respond to life's challenges*

1. "You need to be relevant to the contemporary situation" (Relevance)
2. "I really felt the challenge every time I could not do something" (Ministry Challenges)
3. "You don't exist alone...you need to relate to others" (Relationships)

B *The need to respond to God*

4. "This is what God wanted me to do" (Obedience)

III. FACTORS RELATED TO THE PROGRAM OFFERED

A *The reputation of the School*

1. "The teachers are evangelical, spiritual and born again" (Born again community)
2. "The college has good accreditation and high academic standards" (Good Academic standards)
3. "Good publicity by the school & its alumni helped us decide to come" (Good marketing)

B *The delivery of the content*

1. "The program does not inconvenience me as I work" (Workplace)
2. "The program allows me to be with my family" (Family)
3. "The program is easy to access from home" (Distance)

C *The cost of the courses*

1. "The program is affordable in comparison to other programs" (Cost)

D *The content of the courses*

1. "The content of the courses is what I needed"

APPENDIX D



Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology

P.O. Box 24686 - 00502 Karen, NAIROBI, KENYA

Tel: 254 (020) / 882104/5, 862036
Fax: 254 (020) 882906
Mobile: 0722-882104/ 0734-123123
Email: info@negst.edu
Website: www.negst.edu

November 10, 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH WORK

The bearer of this letter, Mr. Anthony Wainaina Njuguna is a student at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and is doing research towards the completion of the Master of Divinity in Christian Education degree. The research is on **“An Investigation into Factors Motivating Students to Enroll in Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology Extension Division”**.

Any assistance that you can give to Mr. Njuguna will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

John Ochola, PhD
Academic Dean