Chapter 3
Application of Equity Theory on Adult Learning

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ABSTRACT

Learning is a complicated process, notwithstanding the fact that the individual learners, particularly adults, are complicated beings. Adult learning is a subject of ever-growing interest. With the changing demographic situation of the developed world, there has been a focus on the concept of lifelong learning. Studying adult learning theory is rapidly growing across the globe in the context of human resource development. The application of equity theory and its impacts are rarely considered in studies of adult learning and human resource development, and the link between the two theories are remains unclear. In fact, the role of equity theory and its impacts are rarely considered in studies of adult learning and human resource development. Hence, through the structured literature review, this chapter explores the role of equity theory in the context of adult learning theory and through that identifies the theoretical gaps and gives suggestions for future research.

INTRODUCTION

The adult learner is a social presence who in relation to learning has to contend with his individual person and the social and societal environment he belongs to. As an individual, the adult learner would have his individual priorities and value system in life which is a product of previous years experience or life, influence by his environment and his individual preference and priorities. Furthermore, the adult learners'interaction with social and societal forces also affects his value system, priorities and views about life and learning in this particular context.

The emergence of the knowledge society, rapid overview of new technology and the changing work place increases the importance of adult learning. Moreover, in the integrated literature review related to motivation in training and development, scholars discussed about the Adult learners who have their particular personal biography, view of the world, what is needed to survive and succeed in their own endeavors and they even have their own personal opinion of success. Internal and external impacts on the adult learner both in their past and present experiences form

these views. These views in turn form the adult learners' motivation and obstacles to learning. Theses Adults learners can be defined either based on age, cognitive maturity or a nontraditional learner. Each definition has there own strong points but it is much more pragmatic to define an adult learner based on age. Several international organizations such as the UNESCO, OECD and EC have denoted to adult learners in various documents within the age group of 24 to 65. Additionally the selection, evaluation and classification of an adult learner become a lot simpler if it were based on age.

In the organizations learning intention of employees bring up their readiness, willingness and also their plans to overcome a gaps that they are experiencing in between their existing skills, attitudes and knowledge which related to their job and those that are vital or assumed to be needed for a person in order to keep that position, by following a specific educational track or through training (Kyntd et al., 2011). According to many scholars formation of a learning intention plays a vital role and takes up a central duty within the process of decision making and it always with respect to the any arrangement in learning activities (Kyntd, 2012).The objective to take part in learning activities was a reliable forecaster of actual participation in those learning activities (Maurer et al., 2003) and in addition to that, a learning

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