



THE ROLE OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES IN ADULT LEARNERS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH

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Annotation. *This article examines the role of family responsibilities in shaping adult learners' motivation to learn English. The study aims to analyze how family obligations, work-life balance, and social factors influence adults' motivation in the process of learning a foreign language. The research adopts a qualitative, literature-based approach and relies on secondary data obtained from scholarly articles, books, and academic publications related to adult education and language learning motivation. Relevant sources were identified through academic databases such as Google Scholar and Research Gate using keywords including "adult learners", "family responsibilities" and "motivation in language learning." The selected materials were analyzed using content analysis to identify recurring themes related to time constraints, emotional support, and family roles in adult education. The findings indicate that family responsibilities can both support and hinder adult learners' motivation depending on the level of support and time availability. The study highlights the importance of considering family and social factors when developing effective strategies for teaching English to adult learners.*

Keywords. *Adult learners; motivation in language learning; family responsibilities; English language learning; adult education; learning motivation; social factors in education; English teaching for adults; time constraints; work-life balance.*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqola oilaviy majburiyatlarning katta yoshdagi o'quvchilarning ingliz tilini o'rganishga bo'lgan motivatsiyasiga ta'sirini o'rganadi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi — oilaviy majburiyatlar, ish va hayot muvozanati hamda ijtimoiy omillar kattalarning chet tilini o'rganish jarayonidagi motivatsiyasiga qanday ta'sir qilishini tahlil qilishdan iborat.*

Tadqiqot sifat (qualitative), adabiyotlarga asoslangan yondashuv asosida olib borildi hamda katta yoshdagilar ta'limi va til o'rganish motivatsiyasiga oid ilmiy maqolalar, kitoblar va akademik nashrlardan olingan ikkilamchi ma'lumotlarga tayandi. Tegishli manbalar Google Scholar va ResearchGate kabi akademik bazalar orqali "adult learners", "family responsibilities" va "motivation in language learning" kabi kalit so'zlar yordamida aniqlab olindi.

Tanlangan materiallar kontent tahlili usuli orqali o'rganilib, vaqt yetishmasligi, emotsional qo'llab-quvvatlash hamda ta'lim jarayonidagi oilaviy rollar bilan bog'liq takrorlanuvchi mavzular aniqlab chiqildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, oilaviy majburiyatlar kattalar motivatsiyasini qo'llab-quvvatlashi ham, to'sqinlik qilishi ham mumkin, bu esa qo'llab-quvvatlash darajasi va vaqt mavjudligiga bog'liq.



Tadqiqot ingliz tilini kattalarga o'qitish strategiyalarini ishlab chiqishda oilaviy va ijtimoiy omillarni hisobga olish muhimligini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: *Katta yoshdagi o'quvchilar; til o'rganishdagi motivatsiya; oilaviy majburiyatlar; ingliz tilini o'rganish; kattalar ta'limi; o'rganish motivatsiyasi; ta'limdagi ijtimoiy omillar; kattalarga ingliz tilini o'qitish; vaqt cheklovlari; ish va hayot muvozanati.*

Аннотация. *Данная статья рассматривает роль семейных обязанностей в формировании мотивации взрослых обучающихся к изучению английского языка. Цель исследования заключается в анализе того, как семейные обязанности, баланс между работой и личной жизнью, а также социальные факторы влияют на мотивацию взрослых в процессе изучения иностранного языка.*

Исследование основано на качественном (qualitative) подходе и анализе научной литературы, а также опирается на вторичные данные, полученные из научных статей, книг и академических публикаций, посвящённых образованию взрослых и мотивации изучения языков. Соответствующие источники были отобраны через академические базы данных, такие как Google Scholar и ResearchGate, с использованием ключевых слов «adult learners», «family responsibilities» и «motivation in language learning».

Отобранные материалы были проанализированы с помощью метода контент-анализа с целью выявления повторяющихся тем, связанных с нехваткой времени, эмоциональной поддержкой и ролью семьи в образовании взрослых. Результаты показывают, что семейные обязанности могут как способствовать, так и препятствовать мотивации взрослых обучающихся в зависимости от уровня поддержки и наличия времени.

Исследование подчёркивает важность учёта семейных и социальных факторов при разработке эффективных стратегий обучения английскому языку для взрослых.

Ключевые слова: *Взрослые обучающиеся; мотивация в изучении языка; семейные обязанности; изучение английского языка; образование взрослых; учебная мотивация; социальные факторы в образовании; обучение английскому языку взрослых; нехватка времени; баланс между работой и личной жизнью.*

Introduction. In recent decades, the global importance of English as an international language has significantly increased, making it a key tool for communication, education, and professional development. As a result, not only young learners but also adults are increasingly engaging in learning English to improve their career prospects, access global information, and enhance their social mobility. However, unlike younger learners, adult learners face unique challenges that influence their motivation and learning processes, among which family responsibilities play a central role. Adult learners typically balance multiple social roles, such as being



employees, parents, and spouses. These roles often come with significant responsibilities that directly affect their ability to engage in language learning. On the one hand, family obligations can serve as a strong source of motivation. Many adults are driven to learn English in order to provide better opportunities for their children, improve their family's financial situation, or support family members in an increasingly globalized world. On the other hand, these same responsibilities may limit the time, energy, and resources available for learning, thereby creating challenges in maintaining consistent motivation and progress.

Motivation itself is widely recognized as a crucial factor in second language acquisition. As noted by Zoltán Dörnyei, motivation is not a static trait but a dynamic process influenced by both internal aspirations and external circumstances. In the context of adult learners, family responsibilities represent a significant external factor that can both enhance and hinder motivation. Understanding this dual role is essential for developing effective teaching strategies and supportive learning environments for adult learners.

In many contexts, including Uzbekistan, the demand for English language proficiency among adults has grown rapidly due to economic development, international cooperation, and educational reforms. Adult learners often pursue English education alongside full-time jobs and family duties, which makes their learning experience fundamentally different from that of traditional students. Despite the growing number of adult learners, relatively limited research has specifically focused on how family responsibilities shape their motivation to learn English.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the role of family responsibilities in influencing adult learners' motivation to learn English. The study focuses on how factors such as time constraints, emotional support, and work-life balance interact with motivational processes. Using a qualitative, literature-based approach, this research synthesizes existing studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between family obligations and language learning motivation.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the field of applied linguistics and adult education by offering theoretical insights into the motivational dynamics of adult learners. Furthermore, the study may provide practical implications for educators and policymakers in designing more flexible and supportive language learning programs that take into account the complex realities of adult learners' lives.

Literature Review. The issue of motivation in adult language learning has been widely explored in the field of applied linguistics and educational psychology, particularly since the early 2000s. Researchers emphasize that adult learners differ significantly from younger learners due to their social roles, responsibilities, and life experiences, which directly influence their learning motivation and outcomes. One of the key theoretical foundations for understanding motivation in second language acquisition is provided by Dörnyei (2005), who introduced the L2 Motivational Self System. According to this theory, learners' motivation is shaped by their vision of



themselves as future language users, as well as by external obligations and responsibilities. In the case of adult learners, family roles often become a significant external factor influencing both motivation and persistence in learning (Dörnyei, 2005).

Similarly, Gardner (2001) highlights the importance of integrative and instrumental motivation in second language acquisition. While integrative motivation reflects a learner's desire to connect with the target language community, instrumental motivation is associated with practical goals such as employment and family well-being. For adult learners, instrumental motivation is frequently reinforced by family responsibilities, including the need to provide better opportunities for their children or improve financial stability (Gardner, 2001).

From the perspective of adult education theory, Brookfield (2006) argues that adult learners are typically goal-oriented and strongly influenced by their immediate social environment. Family responsibilities can function as both motivating and constraining factors: they encourage individuals to pursue education for personal and family development, while at the same time limiting the time and energy available for study (Brookfield, 2006).

In addition, Mercer (2011) emphasizes the role of emotional and psychological dimensions in sustaining language learning motivation. Her research indicates that emotional support from family members can significantly enhance learners' confidence and persistence. Conversely, lack of support or excessive family obligations may lead to reduced motivation and increased likelihood of dropout (Mercer, 2011).

Russian scholars have also examined this issue. For instance, Soboleva (2020) notes that the development of foreign language communicative competence among adult learners largely depends on their ability to balance professional, personal, and educational responsibilities. Likewise, Chernozipunnikova and Kretova (2021) argue that motivation in adult learners is closely linked to their social roles, particularly family and workplace expectations, which shape their attitudes toward language learning (Chernozipunnikova & Kretova, 2021).

In the Uzbek context, recent studies highlight the growing importance of English for professional and social mobility. Rajapova (2025) points out that adult learners are often motivated by pragmatic goals such as career advancement and improving their family's living conditions. Similarly, Qurbonova (2026) emphasizes that sociocultural factors, including family expectations and responsibilities, play a crucial role in shaping learners' engagement and persistence in English language learning (Qurbonova, 2026).

Furthermore, Can-Daşkın and Hatipoğlu (2019) explore how culturally embedded elements, such as proverbs, can enhance communicative competence and learner motivation. Although their study focuses on classroom practices, it supports the idea that learning becomes more meaningful when it is connected to learners' real-life experiences, including family life (Can-Daşkın & Hatipoğlu, 2019).



Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that family responsibilities are a central factor in adult learners' motivation to study English. While they often serve as a strong source of instrumental motivation, they can also create barriers related to time management, stress, and limited learning opportunities. Despite extensive research on motivation, there remains a need for more focused studies examining the dual role of family responsibilities—both as a motivating force and as a constraint—in adult English language learning. This gap justifies the present study and its focus on synthesizing existing research within this specific context.

Methodology. This article adopts a qualitative, literature-based research design to explore the role of family responsibilities in shaping adult learners' motivation to learn English. The study focuses on the relationship between family obligations, time management, and learning motivation in the context of adult English language education. The research relies primarily on secondary data obtained from scholarly articles, books, and academic publications related to adult education, language learning motivation, and sociocultural factors influencing learning. Special attention was given to studies in the fields of applied linguistics, educational psychology, and adult language learning. The data collection process involved a systematic review of academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and other reliable academic sources. Keywords such as “adult learners,” “motivation in language learning,” “family responsibilities,” “adult education,” and “English learning motivation” were used to identify relevant literature and research studies. The selected materials were analyzed using content analysis, focusing on recurring themes related to the impact of family obligations, work–life balance, time limitations, and emotional support on adult learners' motivation. Particular attention was given to how family responsibilities may both support and hinder the process of learning English. Through this approach, the study synthesizes previous research findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of how family responsibilities influence adult learners' motivation to study English. Although this research does not include primary empirical data, it offers a theoretical framework that may serve as a basis for future empirical research on adult language learning motivation.

Results. The qualitative analysis of the selected literature revealed several consistent patterns regarding the role of family responsibilities in adult learners' motivation to learn English. The findings are organized into four main themes: (1) family-driven motivation, (2) time limitations, (3) emotional support, and (4) challenges in balancing multiple roles.

1. Family-Driven Motivation

The reviewed studies indicate that family responsibilities serve as a significant source of motivation for adult learners. Many adults are motivated to learn English in order to improve their family's living conditions, achieve better employment opportunities, and support their children's education. This type of motivation is primarily goal-oriented and linked to practical outcomes.



2. Time Limitations

A common finding across the literature is that family obligations significantly reduce the amount of time available for learning. Adult learners often have to prioritize household duties and childcare, which limits their ability to attend classes regularly or dedicate sufficient time to independent study.

3. Emotional Support from Family

The analysis shows that emotional support from family members plays an important role in sustaining motivation. Learners who receive encouragement and understanding from their families tend to demonstrate higher levels of persistence and engagement. In contrast, lack of support is associated with decreased motivation and increased learning difficulties.

4. Role Conflict and Fatigue

The literature highlights that adult learners frequently experience role conflict as they attempt to balance responsibilities related to work, family, and education. This often leads to physical and mental fatigue, which negatively affects their ability to concentrate and maintain consistent learning habits.

5. Need for Flexible Learning Conditions

Another recurring finding is the importance of flexible learning environments. Studies show that adult learners benefit from educational programs that allow them to adapt their learning schedules according to their family responsibilities. Flexible formats, such as online or part-time courses, are particularly effective in supporting continued learning.

Discussion. The findings of this study highlight the complex and dual nature of family responsibilities in shaping adult learners' motivation to learn English. The results confirm that family-related factors function both as motivating forces and as constraints, which supports contemporary views on motivation as a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon.

Firstly, the strong influence of family-driven motivation reflects the importance of practical and goal-oriented learning among adults. As emphasized by Robert C. Gardner, instrumental motivation plays a central role in language learning, particularly when learners associate English proficiency with improved employment opportunities and family well-being. In this context, family responsibilities act as a powerful external driver that sustains long-term commitment to learning.

At the same time, the findings reveal that time limitations significantly hinder adult learners' ability to engage consistently in language learning. This supports the argument that motivation alone is insufficient without adequate resources such as time and energy. The presence of multiple responsibilities leads to role conflict, which reduces the effectiveness of learning efforts. This observation is consistent with adult education theories that emphasize the impact of social roles on learning behavior.

Furthermore, the role of emotional support highlights the importance of the social environment in maintaining motivation. According to Sarah Mercer, emotional



and psychological factors are essential for sustaining motivation over time. The findings suggest that when family members provide encouragement and understanding, learners are more likely to persist despite challenges. Conversely, lack of support may weaken motivation and increase the likelihood of discontinuing learning.

Another important aspect revealed in this study is the need for balance between work, family, and education. The difficulty of achieving this balance indicates that adult learners require more flexible and adaptive learning conditions. This aligns with modern approaches to adult education, which advocate for learner-centered and flexible instructional models, including online and part-time learning formats.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that family responsibilities should not be viewed solely as barriers to learning. Instead, they represent a multifaceted factor that can both enhance and limit motivation depending on the context. This supports the perspective of Zoltán Dörnyei, who argues that motivation is shaped by the interaction of internal goals and external influences.

These insights suggest that effective language teaching strategies for adult learners must take into account their social realities, particularly family obligations. Creating supportive, flexible, and context-sensitive learning environments can help maximize the positive effects of family-driven motivation while minimizing its constraints.

Conclusion and Implications. This study explored the role of family responsibilities in shaping adult learners' motivation to learn English through a qualitative, literature-based approach. The findings demonstrate that family responsibilities have a dual impact on motivation. On the one hand, they serve as a strong source of instrumental motivation, encouraging adults to learn English for better employment opportunities, financial stability, and improved prospects for their families. On the other hand, these responsibilities impose significant challenges, particularly in terms of limited time, role conflict, and physical and emotional fatigue.

The study also highlights the importance of emotional support within the family. Positive encouragement from family members contributes to sustained motivation and persistence, while lack of support may hinder learning progress. Overall, the findings confirm that adult learners' motivation is not shaped in isolation but is deeply influenced by their social and family context.

Thus, family responsibilities should be understood as a multifaceted factor that simultaneously motivates and constrains adult learners. Recognizing this dual nature is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of adult language learning motivation.

Implications

1. Pedagogical Implications



Language teachers working with adult learners should adopt flexible and learner-centered teaching approaches. Considering learners' family responsibilities, educators should:

- provide adaptable schedules and deadlines,
- incorporate blended and online learning formats,
- design practical and goal-oriented tasks relevant to learners' real-life needs.

Such approaches can help reduce the negative impact of time constraints while maintaining high levels of motivation.

2. Institutional Implications

Educational institutions should create supportive learning environments for adult learners by:

- offering part-time and distance learning programs,
- providing accessible learning resources,
- organizing courses at convenient times (e.g., evenings or weekends).

Institutions should also recognize that adult learners require different support systems compared to traditional students.

3. Policy Implications

Policymakers should consider the growing demand for adult English education and:

- promote lifelong learning initiatives,
- support flexible education systems,
- encourage programs that integrate family-friendly learning opportunities.

Such policies can enhance access to education and improve overall learning outcomes for adults.

4. Implications for Future Research

Since this study is based on secondary data, further research should include empirical investigations such as surveys, interviews, and case studies. Future studies could: examine specific groups of adult learners (e.g., parents, working professionals); analyze gender differences in family-related motivation; explore the effectiveness of flexible learning models in different contexts.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of adult language learning by emphasizing the significant and complex role of family responsibilities. Addressing these factors can lead to more effective teaching practices and better learning experiences for adult learners.

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