

**Exploring Adults' Needs and Motivation to Participate in Lifelong Education Programs.**

**Guldana Yessetova**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Educational Leadership

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

April, 2025

Word count: 19,943

## Author Agreement

By signing and submitting this license, I Guldana Yessetova grant to Nazarbayev University (NU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, convert (as defined below), and/or distribute my submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video.

I agree that NU may, without changing the content, convert the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation. I also agree that NU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, back-up and preservation.

I confirm that the submission is my original work, and that I have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. I also confirm that my submission does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.

If the submission contains material for which I do not hold copyright, I confirm that I have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant NU the rights required by this license, and that such third-party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission.

IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN NU, I CONFIRM THAT I HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT.

NU will clearly identify my name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.

I hereby accept the terms of the above Author Agreement.

Author's signature:

Date: 28.04.2025



### Declaration

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been submitted for the award of any other course or degree at NU or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis. This thesis is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated, and the views expressed here are my own.

Author's signature:

Date: 28.04.2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that are difficult to decipher but appear to start with 'E' and 'S'.

## Ethical Approval



53 Kabanbay Batyr Ave.  
Astana 010000  
Republic of Kazakhstan  
Date: XX of Xxxxxx, 2022

Dear Guldana Yessetova,

This letter now confirms that your research project titled “Exploring adults’ needs and motivations to participate in lifelong education programs” has been approved by the Graduate School of Education, pending the minor changes as specified by the reviewer with final official approval to be given by the advisor.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely,

**Ahmet Aypay**

Professor  
Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University  
Phone: +7 (705)186-9784  
Email: [ahmet.aypay@nu.edu.kz](mailto:ahmet.aypay@nu.edu.kz)  
Address: 53 Kabanbay Batyr Avenue, Astana, Kazakhstan  
Office: Block C3, Room M031

**On behalf of:**

Dr Syed Abdul Manan, *PhD*-  
Chair, GSE Ethics Committee  
Graduate School of Education  
Nazarbayev University

Block C3, Room 5011  
Office: +7(7172)6016  
Mobile: +77079240053  
email: [syed.manan@nu.edu.kz](mailto:syed.manan@nu.edu.kz), [gse.irec@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse.irec@nu.edu.kz)

## CITI Training Certificate



Completion Date 28-May-2024  
Expiration Date 28-May-2028  
Record ID 56668819

This is to certify that:

**Guldana Yessetova**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of  
certification through CME.

**Responsible Research Training**

(Curriculum Group)

**Social, Behav, Edu, Etc**

(Course Learner Group)

**1 - Basic Course**

(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**Nazarbayev University**

**CITI**  
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US  
[www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)

Generated on 28-May-2024. Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wece83b4c-e1d5-47c4-9171-6fe63af4a1eb-56668819](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wece83b4c-e1d5-47c4-9171-6fe63af4a1eb-56668819)

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Professor Ahmet Aypay, for his invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this research journey. His insightful advice and belief in my work have been a constant source of motivation. I am also deeply grateful to Professor Andrew Drybrough for his thoughtful feedback and academic support, which helped me to refine and strengthen this thesis.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my family for their unconditional love and encouragement. To my parents, whose support and faith in me have always been my foundation; to my husband, for his patience, understanding, and unwavering support throughout this journey; and to my daughter, Aisha Yesset, whose achievements and resilience inspire me every day. Watching her determination and success has been a powerful reminder that with passion and perseverance, anything is possible. Her example motivated me to keep striving toward my own goals, even during the most challenging moments.

This thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement, love, and belief of all these wonderful people. I am deeply grateful for their presence in my life.

## **Abstract**

### **Exploring Adults' Needs and Motivation to Participate in Lifelong Education Programs.**

Continuous education affects not only the professional and personal development of adults but also the development of the country's economy as a whole. With the rapid development of technology and globalization, some professions are being replaced by technology or require constant updating of skills and knowledge. To adapt to this, adults need to be flexible and constantly learning. According to these data from surveys by the OECD, there is a need to increase the level of involvement of adults in Kazakhstan in lifelong learning to address the low level of literacy, mathematical and digital skills. There is also a lack of data on the involvement of people in lifelong learning and the assessment of their competence. The purpose of this study is to determine what needs adults aged 25 to 65 in Kazakhstan have to continue learning, what motivates them to study, what difficulties they encounter along the way and how they overcome them. A qualitative method was used, based on a purposive snowball sample of seven people who were interviewed using a phenomenological approach. All interviews were conducted online, since the participants were from different cities of Kazakhstan. The research data showed that people involved in continuous education have both external and internal factors that influence their decision to continue their education, and internal and external motives help them during the learning process, and their family, managers, colleagues and developed time management skills, financial literacy and delegation help them cope with barriers such as lack of time and finance. The findings can be used to inform policy and practice to encourage and enhance further opportunities to develop continuous education in Kazakhstan.

**Key Words:** continuous education, lifelong learning, Kazakhstan

## Аңдатпа

Үздіксіз білім беру ересектердің кәсіби және тұлғалық дамуына ғана емес, жалпы ел экономикасының дамуына да әсер етеді. Технологияның қарқынды дамуы мен жаһандану жағдайында кейбір мамандықтар технологиямен алмастырылуда немесе дағдылар мен білімді үнемі жаңартып отыруды талап етеді. Бұған бейімделу үшін ересектер икемді және үнемі білім алуы керек. ЭЫДҰ сауалнамасының осы деректеріне сәйкес, сауаттылық, есептеу және цифрлық дағдылардың төмен деңгейін шешу үшін Қазақстандағы ересектердің өмір бойы білім алуға қатысу деңгейін арттыру қажет. Сондай-ақ адамдардың үздіксіз білім алуға және олардың құзыреттілігін бағалауға қатысуы туралы деректердің жетіспеушілігі байқалады. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты – Қазақстандағы 25 пен 65 жас аралығындағы ересектерге оқуды жалғастыру үшін не қажет екенін, оларды оқуға не итермелейтінін, бұл жолда қандай қиындықтарға тап болатынын және оларды қалай жеңетінін анықтау.

Феноменологиялық тәсілді пайдалана отырып, сұхбат жүргізілген жеті адамнан тұратын мақсатты қарлы кесек әдісіне негізделген сапалы әдіс қолданылды.

Қатысушылар Қазақстанның әртүрлі қалаларынан келгендіктен, барлық сұхбат онлайн режимінде өткізілді. Зерттеу деректері үздіксіз білім берумен айналысатын адамдардың оқуын жалғастыру шешіміне әсер ететін сыртқы және ішкі факторлардың болатынын көрсетті, ішкі және сыртқы мотивациялар оларға оқу процесінде көмектеседі, ал отбасы, менеджерлер, әріптестер және дамыған уақытты басқару дағдылары, қаржылық сауаттылық және өкілдік оларға уақыт пен қаржы тапшылығы сияқты кедергілерді жеңуге көмектеседі. Нәтижелер Қазақстанда үздіксіз білім беруді дамытудың одан әрі мүмкіндіктерін ынталандыру және кеңейту үшін саясат пен тәжірибені ақпараттандыру үшін пайдаланылуы мүмкін.

**Түйін сөздер:** үздіксіз білім, өмір бойы оқу, Қазақстан

## Аннотация

Непрерывное образование влияет не только на профессиональное и личностное развитие взрослых, но и на развитие экономики страны в целом. В условиях стремительного развития технологий и глобализации некоторые профессии заменяются технологиями или требуют постоянного обновления навыков и знаний. Чтобы адаптироваться к этому, взрослым необходимо быть гибкими и постоянно учиться. Согласно этим данным опросов ОЭСР, необходимо повысить уровень вовлеченности взрослых в Казахстане в непрерывное обучение для решения проблемы низкого уровня грамотности, математических и цифровых навыков. Также наблюдается отсутствие данных о вовлеченности людей в непрерывное обучение и оценке их компетентности. Целью данного исследования является определение того, какие потребности у взрослых в возрасте от 25 до 65 лет в Казахстане для продолжения обучения, что мотивирует их учиться, с какими трудностями они сталкиваются на этом пути и как они их преодолевают. Был использован качественный метод, основанный на целенаправленной выборке «снежного кома» из семи человек, которые были опрошены с использованием феноменологического подхода. Все интервью проводились онлайн, так как участники были из разных городов Казахстана. Данные исследования показали, что у людей, занимающихся непрерывным образованием, есть как внешние, так и внутренние факторы, которые влияют на их решение продолжить обучение, внутренние и внешние мотивы помогают им в процессе обучения, а семья, руководители, коллеги и развитые навыки тайм-менеджмента, финансовой грамотности и делегирования помогают им справляться с такими барьерами, как нехватка времени и финансов. Результаты могут быть использованы для информирования политики и практики, чтобы поощрять и расширять дальнейшие возможности для развития непрерывного образования в Казахстане.

**Ключевые слова:** непрерывное образование, обучение на протяжении всей жизни,  
Казахстан

## Table of Contents

Author Agreement .....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Ethical Approval .....	iv
CITI Training Certificate .....	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
Аңдатпа .....	viii
Аннотация.....	ix
Table of Contents .....	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study .....	8
Research Questions .....	8
Significance of the Study .....	9
Definition of Key Concepts and Terms .....	10
<i>Lifelong Learning</i> .....	10
<i>Motivation</i> .....	11
Conclusion .....	11
Chapter 2. Literature Review .....	12
Lifelong Learning .....	12
Motivation.....	14
Self-Determination Theory as an explanation for Participation in Lifelong Learning .....	14
Rates of Participation in Lifelong Learning by Country .....	16
Lifelong Learning, Human Capital and Economic Growth.....	17
Human Capital Theory and Lifelong Learning.....	18
Summary of Theoretical Framework Relevance .....	18
Reasons for Continuing Learning .....	19
Outcomes of Lifelong Learning Participation .....	20
Barriers in Lifelong Learning .....	21
Solutions to Overcome the Barriers to Lifelong Learning.....	22
Gap in Literature .....	24
Conclusion .....	25
Chapter 3. Methodology .....	27

Research Design.....	27
Research Site and Selection of Participants.....	28
Data Collection Tools .....	29
Data Collection Procedure .....	30
Data Analysis .....	31
Ethical Issues .....	32
Summary .....	33
Chapter 4. Findings.....	35
Introduction.....	35
Themes and Categories .....	36
<i>The Need to Continue Learning</i> .....	39
<i>The Main Goal in Continuous Learning</i> .....	40
<i>The Impact of Environment to Learn</i> .....	41
<i>Factors Influencing Motivation to Study</i> .....	42
<i>The Impact of Post-Training Success on Motivation to Continue Learning</i> .....	43
<i>Motivation Loss Moments</i> .....	44
<i>The Role of Available Resources in Maintaining Motivation for Learning</i> .....	45
<i>The Impact of New Skills and Knowledge on Professional Activity</i> .....	49
<i>Positive Impact of New Skills and Knowledge on Everyday Life</i> .....	50
<i>Improvements in Communication with Colleagues or in Solving Work Problems</i> .....	51
<i>Changed Perception of Future Prospects</i> .....	52
<i>Challenges During Studying</i> .....	55
<i>Overcoming Difficulties During Studying</i> .....	55
Conclusion .....	56
Chapter 5. Discussion .....	59
Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning .....	59
<i>The Need to Continue Learning</i> .....	59
<i>The Main Goal in Continuous Learning</i> .....	60
<i>The Impact of the Environment to Learn</i> .....	60
Motivation for Continuous Learning .....	61
<i>Factors Influencing Motivation to Study</i> .....	61
<i>The Impact of Post-Training Success on Motivation to Continue Learning</i> .....	62
<i>Motivation Loss Moments</i> .....	63
<i>The Role of Available Resources in Maintaining Motivation for Learning</i> .....	63
Expected Outcomes From Continuous Education .....	64

<i>The impact of New Skills and Knowledge on Professional Activity</i> .....	65
<i>Positive Impact of New Skills and Knowledges on Everyday Life</i> .....	65
<i>Improvements in Communication With Colleagues or in Solving Work Problems</i> .....	65
<i>Changed Perception of Future Prospects</i> .....	66
Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning.....	66
<i>Challenges During Studying</i> .....	66
<i>Overcoming Difficulties While Studying</i> .....	67
Conclusion .....	68
Chapter 6. Conclusion.....	70
Introduction.....	70
<i>RQ: Why do Adults Aged From 25 to 65 Choose to Participate in the Lifelong Learning Process in Kazakhstan?</i> .....	70
<i>SQ1: What Reasons did Adults Give to be Involved in Lifelong Learning?</i> .....	70
<i>SQ2: What are the Motivating Factors for Adults to Pursue Lifelong Learning?</i> .....	71
<i>SQ3: What Outcomes do People get After Developing or Acquiring New Skills?</i> .....	71
<i>SQ4: What Difficulties do People Face in Lifelong Learning and How do They Overcome Them?</i> .....	71
Recommendations.....	72
<i>Expand Research in the Local Context</i> .....	72
<i>Establish a National Adult Learning Strategy and Monitoring System</i> .....	73
<i>Promote Employer Engagement and Incentives</i> .....	73
Limitations of the Study.....	73
Reflection.....	73
References.....	75
Appendix A: AI Declaration Form .....	81
Appendix C: Consent Letters.....	82
Appendix D: Recruitment Emails.....	83
Appendix E: Data Collection Instruments .....	84
Appendix F: Data Analysis – Transcript and Coding Samples .....	86

**List of Table**

Table 1. Themes and Sub-theme.....	34
Table 2. Descriptive Information about Participants Categories.....	35
Table 3. Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning.....	36
Table 4. Motivation for Continuous Learning.....	40
Table 5. Expected Outcomes from Continuous Education.....	45
Table 6. Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning.....	52

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter introduces the thesis on Exploring Adults' Needs and Motivation to Participate in Lifelong Education Programs. First, it provides the background to the study, outlining the personal and societal factors that underline the growing importance of adult learning. It then describes the statement of the problem, focusing on the low level of adult participation in lifelong education both globally and in Kazakhstan. Following this, the chapter explains the purpose of the study, which aims to explore the needs, motivations, barriers, and outcomes associated with participation in adult learning. The central research question and sub-questions are then presented. Finally, the significance of the study is discussed, highlighting its potential contribution to adult education research, practice, and policy development.

### **Background of the Study**

My interest in this topic emerged from personal observations in the workplace, where I noticed that younger employees under 30 years old demonstrated greater flexibility, digital literacy, and creativity compared to their older colleagues. I also began to notice that my cognitive skills began to decline, and because I also needed to take care of family affairs and a child, in addition to work, I had an acute lack of time for self-development and continuing education. When I tried to combine my work and family responsibilities with education, I felt very stressed and depressed. I began to ask adults who are older than me why they do not continue their studies to improve their professional competencies and improve their quality of life, to which I received the same answer: lack of time and because of family responsibilities.

Illeris (2003) divides adults into three age categories based on their attitudes towards education: young adults aged 18 to 25–30, average adults aged 25–30 to 40, and the older age category aged 40–50 and above. In this study, I will use the same categories

to demarcate my study. My focus will be on adults who are in the 25 - 65 age group who have been involved in continuous education. According to Illeris (2003), young people aged 18-25 are most affected by globalization and rapidly developing information technologies. They do not view education as preparation for a specific profession, but rather as a means of personal development, while for middle-aged and older adults, the purpose of education is professional development. Young adults are freer to choose courses and can attend programs that interest them, unlike adults over 25, and are also demanding of educational programs so that education is valuable for everyone.

According to Toimbek (2022), in 2017, Kazakhstan took part in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), although it is not an OECD member country. The goal of PIAAC is to assess adults aged 16 to 65 years in three key skills: literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving in a technology-enabled environment. This helps countries identify gaps in education, develop human resource development policies, and help adapt education and people to the rapidly changing digital economy.

The government of Kazakhstan is trying to improve the quality of human capital through the creation of a knowledge economy with the goal of long-term development for the country. But despite all the efforts of the state, according to the results of PIAAC (2017), in which about 5,000 adult Kazakhstanis participated, Kazakhstan adults aged 25 to 35 showed little difference in skills compared to people aged 55 to 65. In Kazakhstan, 25 to 35-year-olds adult literacy was 33 points higher than among 55 to 65-year-olds. This compares to an OECD average difference of 61 points for the same age groups. In Kazakhstan, for mathematical literacy, the 25 to 35-year-olds were 19 points higher than the 55 to 65-year-olds, while the OECD average difference between these two age groups was 70 points in mathematics. Notably, adults aged 25 to 34, despite having more recent

exposure to higher education, demonstrated similar productivity levels to those aged 55 to 65. This suggests that even a higher level of education of the population does not have a significant impact on the skills of the population, so the country needs to work to improve the quality of not only traditional education but also lifelong learning to implement its grandiose and ambitious strategies on long-term and sustainable development of the country's economy (Toimbek, 2022).

The latest OECD reports (2019), conducted among OECD member countries and partner countries, indicate that there is an increasing need for skills such as critical thinking, digital literacy, flexibility, and communication. Also, according to the report (OECD, 2019), the unemployment rate has been growing in recent years, mainly for those jobs that employ adult workers with low or average levels of education. This is due to digitalization and automation of work processes, and in the future, this could lead to the disappearance of approximately 9% of jobs in Europe. Due to the automation of work processes for people with a low level of education, the number of jobs may be reduced by 1 out of 2, for adult workers with an average level of education, 1 out of 10, and no layoffs are expected for highly qualified employees. In the future, this could lead to greater inequality between adult workers with different levels of education (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

Due to the development of technology, the world is changing rapidly. Many professions are disappearing since their jobs can be done by machines, and some professions require constant updating of knowledge and skills by keeping up with new research and developments. People need to have the skill of learning quickly and retraining in order to keep up with the rapidly changing world, where the need for lifelong education is only growing, which also affects the economic growth of the country.

According to the Future Jobs report 2025, the global economy is expected to create 170 million new jobs, or about 14 percent of the current workforce, while 92 million jobs are expected to disappear by 2030. With approximately 39% of current workers' skills projected to become obsolete by 2030, global retraining efforts will become increasingly necessary, for example 59 out of 100 workers will need training by 2030, 29 of them will need upgrading in their current role, 19 workers will need retraining to perform new tasks, and 11 of them may find themselves without employer support. About 39% of current workers' skills will become obsolete and be replaced between 2025 and 2030. The most prioritised skills by 2030 will be AI and big data, cybersecurity, technology literacy, creative thinking and flexibility, and the roles that will be most in decline will be routine and low-skilled jobs (World Economic Forum, 2025).

According to PIAAC (2017) results, this could happen in Kazakhstan as well, as the Future of Jobs report 2025 predicts that by 2030, 40 percent of skills will be displaced in Kazakhstan, as technology and process automation are developing here at the same rapid pace as elsewhere in the world (Toimbek, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2025).

Digitalization now covers not only the work sphere, but also everyday life. All processes are moving to online processing, for example, instead of paper newspapers, people now read electronic newspapers online. Also, the time of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that adults need to be digitally literate and flexible in their learning to cope with large amounts of data. Therefore, adults with a low level of education are less active in digital processes than adults with a high level of education (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

Continuing education is the professional and personal growth of a person's potential throughout his/her life. Continuing education helps improve the quality of life and maintain mental and physical health. Knowledge acquired by people once cannot be

used forever (Ateş & Alsar, 2012). According to the research by de Greef et al.,(2015), it has been shown that the integration of adults with insufficient education into society improves after they undergo training. Fouarge et al. (2012) showed that adults who participate in continuing education earn more money than adults who do not participate. This suggests that continuing education produces positive outcomes and benefits adults to develop both professionally and personally, improving the quality of their lives (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

According to the Illeris (2003), many adults also have an ambivalent attitude towards education; they seem to have the motivation to learn, gain new knowledge, grow personally and professionally, but on the other hand they feel resistance and reluctance to learn, since they are forced to do so by their bosses or the government. Van Nieuwenhove and De Wever (2021) suggest that adults with low levels of education do not typically attempt to continue learning, whereas adults with high levels of education continue to learn throughout their lives.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Globally, the level of adults above 25 years old continuing in education is very low. For example, the European Commission planned to have 12.5 percent of adults involved in educational processes by 2010, but the goal was not achieved. Also, the European Commission in 2009 set a new goal by 2020 to have 15 percent of European adults aged 24 to 64 years in lifelong education, but the involvement of adults in education remained low. Many factors negatively affect adults' involvement in lifelong learning. Some of the main ones are a lack of financial resources, family obligations, and a lack of time (Kitiashvili & Tasker, 2016). In turn, the OECD annually emphasizes lifelong learning in its "Education at a Glance" reports, and this indicator is also reflected in the PIAAC report. These international organizations, such as the OECD and the European

Commission, are actively raising the issue of lifelong learning primarily for economic reasons, as technological progress requires constant updating of skills, and the low level of involvement of adults in continuing education leads to an increase in social inequality (Boeren, 2017).

The problem of low adult involvement in lifelong learning also exists in Kazakhstan. This is confirmed by the data of the international OECD study for 2018, which shows that only 17% of the adult population (16–65 years old) participated in non-formal education in Kazakhstan. This shows that adults' skills are not reaching Kazakhstan's goal to become one of the top 30 most competitive countries by 2050 (Omirbayev et al., 2021).

Also, according to the Future Jobs Report 2025, currently the lack of qualified personnel in the labor market is one of the main problems for 7 out of 10 companies in Kazakhstan, and 40% of skills in Kazakhstan will be displaced by 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2025). For long-term sustainable development of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to develop human capital, thereby increasing the level of the knowledge economy. According to the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) 2017, the level of information literacy of the adult population of Kazakhstan is below the OECD average, and the data also show little difference between people with higher education and people with secondary education, which indicates the low quality of higher education in Kazakhstan. All this leads to low labor productivity, which in turn negatively affects the socio-economic development of the country. In Kazakhstan, in addition to this OECD study, there is no data on the external assessment of the skills of the adult population of the country (Toimbek, 2022).

There is a lack of data on the assessment of adult competencies in Kazakhstan, especially those conducted by international organizations, except for the only results of the

PIAAC study (2017) conducted by the OECD, which showed a low level of skill proficiency of adults aged 18 to 65 in literacy, mathematical literacy and problem solving in a technological environment (Toimbek, 2022).

According to the research of Lee and Desjardins (2019), various factors influence the likelihood of adults continuing education, such as social factors, gender inequality, and the level of education received, but despite these factors, education usually has a positive impact on a person's life and economic development. This study also shows the inequality between countries in adult participation in lifelong learning. For example, according to the OECD report (2014), in Scandinavian countries, more than 60 percent of adults participate in lifelong learning, while in South Korea, the number of adults learning is 50 percent, and in Italy and Russia, the figures are below 30 percent.

In Kazakhstan, there is limited research on lifelong learning, the involvement of middle and older aged adults in learning processes, and the factors that may hinder adult participation in lifelong learning (Toimbek, 2022). Since the main problem is the lack of involvement of adults in lifelong learning, my research aims to explore why adults aged 25 to 65 years old in Kazakhstan, who continue their education, participate in lifelong learning processes. It aims to further investigate what influences them to continue their education, what motivates them to go through the entire learning process, what benefits they have after completing the study, what difficulties they face, and how they overcome them.

This leads to the need to conduct research among adults from 25 to 65 years old in Kazakhstan, who continue to participate in lifelong learning to determine the reasons that influence them to continue learning, the motives that drive them during their study, the outcomes they receive after completing of the study, the barriers they face and ways to overcome these challenges (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the motivations for why adults above 25 years of age participate in lifelong learning. My research included 7 adults aged 25 to 65 years, of different genders, levels of education, work experience, and the most basic criterion was that they all must participate in lifelong learning processes.

The research was based on a phenomenological approach and the main phenomena were the needs that influence adults to continue education, the motivation of people to participate in lifelong education, the barriers that they face, and how they solve the problems. This approach helped to better understand how people of different ages and with different work experience internally perceive and experience the process of lifelong education, and what factors motivate them to continue learning (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

## **Research Questions**

The central research question of this study is:

Why do adults aged from 25 to 65 choose to participate in the lifelong learning process in Kazakhstan?

What factors motivate adults aged from 25 to 65 to be involved in continuous learning in Kazakhstan?

Sub-questions:

What reasons did adults give to be involved in lifelong learning?

What are the motivating factors for adults to pursue lifelong learning?

What outcomes do people get after developing or acquiring new skills?

What difficulties do people face in lifelong learning and how do they overcome them?

This study is based on the use of qualitative research method and using interview as a data collection tool with the help of phenomenological approach to find the answer to the central research question and its sub-questions, which should help to determine the reasons for continuing education of adults aged 25-65 years in Kazakhstan, the factors motivating them to study, the problems they face on the way of learning and how they solve these problems.

### **Significance of the Study**

According to Sloane-Seale and Kops (2008), adult participation in continuing education has a positive impact on their physical, social, mental, psychological, and emotional well-being. Also, one of the main benefits of lifelong learning is that it has a positive impact on both individuals and the country's economy. Individuals develop their skills and gain new knowledge, raising the level of the economy, and with a strong economy, people will be able to earn more money and improve the quality of their lives (Laal et al., 2014). Also globally, international organisations such as the OECD, the European Commission, UNESCO, and the World Bank are taking action to involve more adults in lifelong learning to improve the economies of their countries (Boeren, 2017).

The importance of this study is to determine why adults continue to study or not. I believe that the results of this study will make a theoretical contribution to other researchers, and also, in the future, it will help to develop certain methods, programs, and policies at the state level to attract more adults to continuous education (Boeren, 2017). The collection and processing of such data on the assessment of competencies among adults in the middle and older age categories, as well as a larger number of studies on the topic of lifelong learning in Kazakhstan, in the future can help to develop high-quality policies on the involvement of adults in lifelong learning in the country.

## **Definition of Key Concepts and Terms**

### ***Lifelong Learning***

The term continuing education has become widely used since the 1980s. Lifelong learning, continuing education and professional development have the same meaning and are synonyms. There is also the term further education, which is used in England and Ireland (Laal et al., 2014). The concept of lifelong learning is the activities that people undertake throughout their lives to improve their competence, acquire knowledge and develop skills, both professionally and personally, to meet specific social or employment needs (Laal, 2012). According to the research of Chițiba (2012), the definition of the concept of lifelong learning is the personal desire to improve or update one's professional and personal skills through formal and informal types of learning. In their study, Lindqvist's et al. (2023) describe the term "lifelong learning" as the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills by versatile adults from different age categories. Based on all three of the above definitions, lifelong education is a learning process that must take place throughout life to maintain and develop personal and professional skills in order to satisfy people's needs and desires in different areas of their lives.

Also in both studies by Chițiba (2012) and Lindqvist's et al. (2023), lifelong learning is defined as a process that is founded on four educational pillars, namely: Learning to know—using effective learning tools; learning to do—training human capital with the necessary skills to adapt to future professional changes; learning to live together—developing the ability to work in teams while supporting diversity and inclusion; and learning to be—development of personal qualities such as spirituality, intelligence, aesthetics, empathy, as well as physical development of body and mind.

### ***Motivation***

The term motivation, in turn, defines the internal state of a person that encourages action to achieve certain goals, based on inner desires and needs (Yılmaz & Kaygın, 2018). The term motivation comes from the word "motive" and includes concepts such as aspirations, needs, desires and impulses of a person (Iqbal et al., 2023).

### **Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, and significance of the study on lifelong learning among adults aged 25 to 65 in Kazakhstan. Rapid technological change, globalization, and the evolving labor market require adults to constantly upgrade their skills to remain competitive and maintain a good quality of life. However, Kazakhstan faces significant challenges: low adult participation in continuous education, insufficient research on lifelong learning, and limited data on adult competencies.

Drawing on international research and Kazakhstan's participation in the PIAAC study, this chapter highlighted the urgent need for greater investment in adult education to support the country's ambitions for sustainable economic growth. The discussion also emphasized the importance of understanding individual motivations, barriers, and outcomes associated with lifelong learning, which serve as the foundation for this research. By identifying these factors, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights that may inform policies and practices aimed at fostering a more dynamic and inclusive learning culture among adults in Kazakhstan.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

This chapter first reviews several key concepts, specifically lifelong learning and motivation, which are central to understanding how adults engage in continuous education. It then examines two major theories — self-determination theory and human capital theory — that provide a framework for explaining adult learning behavior (Bülbül & Yalçinkaya, 2024; Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021). A clear understanding of these theories and concepts is essential for conducting quality research. The chapter further analyzes the reasons that influence adults' decisions to pursue further education, as well as the outcomes they experience after completing their studies. Common barriers to participation in lifelong learning are identified, along with solutions proposed in the existing literature. Finally, the chapter highlights the limited research on lifelong learning in Kazakhstan and emphasizes the need for further investigation in this area.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong learning is divided into three types of learning: formal, non-formal, and informal (Laal, 2012). Formal type of learning is traditional education, which is provided by universities and institutes, or training provided by organizations, upon completion from which people receive a diploma or certificate of completion; Non-Formal is the process of training and development of skills by an organization among employees in the workplace; and Informal learning is a learning process where skills are developed through daily interactions at home or work (Laal, 2012).

Lifelong learning helps people develop their skills, improve their quality of life, and adapt quickly to a rapidly changing world. Using an international example, it can be seen by research by Boeren (2017) and Desjardins and Ioannidou (2020) that countries with integrated policies across these three types of lifelong learning achieve higher participation rates. For example, Desjardins and Ioannidou (2020) demonstrate through

comparative analysis that the Nordic countries successfully blend formal, non-formal, and informal education into coherent lifelong learning systems, increasing adult participation and social inclusion. Another strong example of an integrated lifelong learning strategy can be seen in Singapore. The country has made significant investments in education, including continuing education, and has taken measures to promote it. Singapore created the SkillsFuture movement in 2015, which has become an integral element of the integrated education system. Various funds were created by the government to support low-skilled workers with low wages, and after 2010 universities began to support lifelong learning and training programs because this brought profit to universities. Universities played a key role here; new institutions for continuous education were created, and universities developed lifelong learning courses. Thanks to the development of human capital, Singapore is the most competitive country among Asian countries (De Meyer & Ang, 2021).

Just like children, adults also need to acquire new knowledge and skills in order to exist, adapt and survive in a constantly changing world. Human learning occurs at different periods of their lives in different ways. For example, between the ages of 0 to 5 years, children try to copy the behavior of people around them, usually parents and peers; between the ages of 6 to 24 years, people receive academic knowledge through educational institutions, and values are also formed through their families and social environment. The focus of my study is the age of 25 to 64 years, where adults receive knowledge through their colleagues, acquaintances, relatives, and information media. At this stage, it is important for adults to constantly update or learn new skills. Older people over 65 should also continue their development through everyday life, sports, art and communication (Laal et al., 2014).

## **Motivation**

According to Rothes et al. (2014), there are several types of motives for adults to continue learning, the main ones being: extrinsic motives, which include goals such as professional development and financial opportunities, as well as intrinsic motives, such as the desire to develop themselves and meet new people. The motivation of adults to be involved in the learning process is also divided into two types such as autonomous and controlled motivation.

Internal motivation is manifested in the voluntary form of people participating in training and brings internal satisfaction to the participants of the training from participating in the process. This is a process of interaction between a person and an activity that he/she likes and brings him/her pleasure. This type of motivation forms the foundation for sustainable learning behaviors, transforming external motives into internalized values in the development of one's self-concept (Sunu & Baidoo-Anu, 2023).

External motivation is not related to internal drivers such as interest in learning and enjoyment of the learning process. External motivation is driven by coercion, necessity, rewards, or punishments. External motivation can, to some extent, influence the processes of achieving certain goals in learning, but it is not as effective as internal motivation, and there is a need for checks and control in this type of motivation (Zhou & Zhang, 2023).

### **Self-Determination Theory as an explanation for Participation in Lifelong Learning**

This section presents self-determination theory as a framework for understanding adults' participation in lifelong learning. It highlights the role of basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—in sustaining motivation. Different types of motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic, are discussed to show how they influence learning behavior. The theory provides important context for analyzing the motivations identified among adult learners in this study.

Self-determination theory was developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). This theory emphasizes the importance of satisfying basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—which influences the enhancement of intrinsic motivation (Bülbül & Yalçinkaya, 2024).

Autonomy implies that a person, when making decisions, acts according to internal feelings consistent with personal values. Autonomy in learning implies the manifestation of independence in setting goals, making decisions, to developing according to one's interests. The manifestation of readiness for learning in adults leads to further success in learning (Bülbül & Yalçinkaya, 2024).

Competence is demonstrated when adults feel effective in solving certain tasks. As skills develop, competence increases, which in turn helps overcome difficulties and achieve progress in learning, which brings inner satisfaction from life (Bülbül & Yalçinkaya, 2024).

Relatedness brings a sense of acceptance, value, and belonging among adults to other people. Relatedness not only has a positive effect on motivation but also on people's psychological well-being. It is also a desire for supportive and reciprocal relationships with people around you - friends, family, colleagues, teachers, or fellow students (Bülbül & Yalçinkaya, 2024).

According to Self-Determination Theory, adult learners who combine their studies with family life and work show higher academic results than younger learners. This is one of the main theories studying motivation in education. It includes autonomous and controlled types of motivation. Internal or autonomous motivation is based on the fact that a person expresses his/her own desire to learn something new, whereas external or controlled motivation comes from the need to learn, since, for example, this is one of the requirements of company management (Rothes et al., 2014).

There are some different studies about the different leading motivations of adults for learning. Research by Clark (1990) suggests that career advancement is the primary motivation for adult participation in continuing education, whereas Storm (1990), as cited in Lee and Pang (2014), emphasizes that cognitive interest—the desire to learn for its own sake—is the leading motivator. Building on these findings, empirical studies such as Lee and Pang (2014) have applied self-determination theory to further explore adult learners' motivations, revealing that adults who balance work and study with intrinsic goals tend to perform better academically than those driven by external factors.

In summary, self-determination theory provides a useful framework for understanding adults' participation in lifelong learning. By satisfying the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, individuals are more likely to develop and maintain intrinsic motivation, which positively influences their learning outcomes. Research shows that while some adults are primarily motivated by career advancement, others pursue learning for personal interest and growth. Overall, intrinsic motivation tends to result in stronger academic performance and deeper engagement, emphasizing the importance of supporting internal drivers in adult education initiatives.

### **Rates of Participation in Lifelong Learning by Country**

This section discusses the rates of adult participation in lifelong learning across different countries, with a particular focus on the Nordic region. It examines how participation varies depending on skill levels and explores the motivations behind adult engagement in education. By comparing the experiences of low-skilled and high-skilled adults, this discussion highlights important factors that influence lifelong learning participation, including both external pressures and intrinsic interests.

In the Nordic countries, adult participation in lifelong learning is high due to effective lifelong learning policies. However, despite the high level of adult participation

in education in these countries, the level of low-skilled adults in lifelong learning remains low in both formal and informal types of learning. Analysis of the Norwegian Adult Education Survey found that only 26% of low-skilled adults had participated in any form of structured learning, compared to over 60% of those with higher qualifications. The study further differentiates between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The main motivation for low-skilled employees is external factors such as employment and financial need, but in addition, this study showed that internal factors such as the desire to study a topic of interest for all groups of both highly and low-skilled adults remain at a high level. However, the data also showed that a significant proportion (almost 40%) of low-skilled respondents cited intrinsic motivations such as personal interest in the subject or enjoyment of learning as reasons for participation. This suggests that even low-skilled adults who are forced to continue studying, may show interest in learning (Dæhlen & Ure, 2009).

### **Lifelong Learning, Human Capital and Economic Growth**

The need to develop human capital should be one of the key priorities of companies, as this has a positive impact not only on productivity, professional growth of employees and improving their quality of life, but also on the success of companies, as well as the economic growth of the country as a whole (Toimbek, 2022). This goal is also reflected in the “Kazakhstan-2050” strategy - to enter the top 30 most developed countries in the world with the help of a lifelong education system, which is the main tool for achieving this goal. Kazakhstan needs to take measures to involve adults in the process of lifelong education, since according to Toimbek’s (2022) research, the level of productivity of Kazakhstan’s adult population aged 25 to 65 years is on average below the OECD’s countries’ average productivity level in numeracy, literacy, and technology skills.

## **Human Capital Theory and Lifelong Learning**

There is an economic theory of human capital, which explains participation in education through cost-benefit analysis. It determines that a person decides whether to continue his/her studying based on the benefits that this education can give to the person, such as a promotion at work or an increase in wages, and also considers the costs or investments in education, both financial, energy, and time. Here, all the benefits and costs are weighed, and when the benefits are greater than the costs, the person decides in favor of continuing education. And perhaps there is a possibility that adults with a low level of education cannot afford education, since they may suffer more losses than those adults who have a high level of education and resources such as financial, time, and energy (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

Dæhlen and Ure (2009) highlight that economic motives, such as improved employment prospects and increased income, are the dominant factors influencing low-skilled adults' participation in continuing education. However, their findings also point to the importance of intrinsic interests, including the desire for personal development and enjoyment of learning itself. Thus, while economic considerations largely drive participation, the importance of intrinsic motives reflects the complex and multifaceted nature of adult learners' decision-making processes.

## **Summary of Theoretical Framework Relevance**

Both Self-Determination Theory and Human Capital Theory are directly connected to the core variables of this study: reasons, motivations, barriers, and outcomes of adult participation in lifelong learning. Self-determination theory helps to explain the internal processes that drive adults to continue their education, particularly through the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In this study, these three needs are used to interpret how participants experience motivation and how their learning engagement is

sustained over time. Special attention is given to examining levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, since these distinctions provide deeper insight into adults' decision-making and persistence in education.

Human capital theory complements this perspective by explaining external, economic motivations—how adults weigh the costs and benefits of continuing education, and how financial resources, time, and energy influence their choices. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the balance between personal fulfillment and economic necessity that shapes adult participation in lifelong learning. They will guide the analysis of why adults in Kazakhstan choose to learn, what challenges they face, and what outcomes they achieve.

### **Reasons for Continuing Learning**

Most adults make decisions to continue learning for specific reasons, often triggered by life events or changes. These changes, referred to as “learning triggers,” may include changing jobs, relocation, marriage, divorce, childbirth, retirement, or even illness and the loss of loved ones. Such events create new challenges or roles that require the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Kungu & Machtmes, 2009).

For example, according to a study Aslanian and Brickell (1980), change was the main reason for engaging in learning. The most common life changes related to career (56%), family (16%), and leisure (13%), as cited in Kungu and Machtmes (2009). This indicates that adult learning is typically instrumental and goal-oriented—adults tend to learn not merely for general development, but to address a specific need or adapt to a changing situation.

Moreover, these life changes occur throughout adulthood, which means that the need for learning also recurs across the lifespan. Therefore, learning triggers should be

seen as an essential part of the lifelong learning process, making it not only a formal but also a continuous and necessary activity (Kungu & Machtmes, 2009).

However, as Boeren (2017) highlights in his study, participation in lifelong learning cannot be fully explained based on individual circumstances alone. Adults' decisions to continue their education can also be divided into three levels. The first level is the micro level, which depends on a wider range of factors such as previous educational experiences, self-confidence, socio-economic status, and the perceived usefulness of learning. The second is the meso level, which includes factors such as the availability, flexibility, and relevance of the educational programmes offered. And the third level is the macro level, which points to national policy characteristics such as funding models, labour market conditions, and social justice strategies. This multi-level approach shows that adult learning is not only a personal choice, but also a process deeply embedded in institutional and societal conditions that either facilitate access to learning or restrict it throughout life.

### **Outcomes of Lifelong Learning Participation**

Participation in lifelong learning provides adults with a range of lasting benefits across economic, cognitive, social, and personal domains. Economically, it improves their employment prospects and income by upgrading their skills (Lattimore et al., 2023). Cognitively and psychologically, it enhances critical thinking, memory, and emotional well-being, helping adults manage stress, build self-confidence, and maintain a sense of control over their lives (Nikolov & Yeh, 2021). Lifelong learning also promotes civic engagement, encouraging participation in volunteering and social initiatives, particularly among vulnerable groups (Boeren, 2017; Bolzonella et al., 2023). Additionally, it fosters cultural and personal enrichment by inspiring curiosity, new interests, and personal growth (UNESCO, 2016). Taken together, these outcomes show that lifelong learning supports not only individual advancement but also broader social development.

## **Barriers in Lifelong Learning**

In addition to human capital theory, there is a wealth of research on barriers to adult participation in lifelong learning. There are several types of barriers to adult learning: institutional, situational, dispositional, and informational (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

Institutional barriers cannot be controlled by the participant in education, but are created by those parties who provide educational services. This may, for example, be an inconvenient place and time for teaching courses for a working person or a family person, if the employer does not particularly support the educational development of employees. The impact of this type of barrier depends on what skills the adult participant has, what position he occupies and what level of education he or she already has (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009).

Situational barriers are also beyond the control of learning participants. This type of barrier includes the personal situations of the adult participants in the study, for example, such as an insufficient level of certain skills needed for training, financial difficulties in paying for courses, and certain family obligations that do not allow the person to find time for self-development. Most often, this type of barrier is faced by women who, in addition to their workload, have family responsibilities, such as running a household, raising children, and caring for elderly parents (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009).

The third barrier is a dispositional barrier, which includes adults' attitudes towards lifelong learning. This can be influenced by various feelings, such as fear of learning something new, low self-esteem, bad memories of learning, and doubts about the value of lifelong education. This type of barrier occurs most often in people with insufficient education and the elderly (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009).

Also, an information barrier occurs among adults who do not have information about available educational institutions, programs, courses and trainings, as well as about the opportunities that lifelong education could bring (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

The economic theory of human capital determines whether a person decides to continue his/her studying based on the benefits that this education can give to the person, such as a promotion at work or an increase in wages. It also considers the costs or investments in education, both financial, energy, and time. Here, all the benefits and costs are weighed, and when the benefits are greater than the costs, the person decides in favor of continuing education. And perhaps there is a possibility that adults with a low level of education cannot afford education, since they may suffer more losses than those adults who have a high level of education and resources such as financial, time, and energy (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

### **Solutions to Overcome the Barriers to Lifelong Learning**

While many adults are willing to continue their education, various barriers often stand in the way. This section discusses potential solutions aimed at addressing the main obstacles to lifelong learning. It focuses both on technological innovations, such as open learning models and networked learning, and on community-based strategies that support adult learners beyond formal education structures. Together, these approaches seek to make learning more accessible, flexible, and supportive for a diverse range of adults.

Nowadays, the labor market is becoming more competitive, and technology and the Internet allow people to study without leaving home, saving time on travel (Laal et al., 2014). According to Kalz (2015), in recent years, many educational institutions have focused more on providing knowledge, ignoring the barriers that adults face to learning. There is a growing need to train people to use technology for independent learning, but

there are several barriers that prevent adults from participating in continuous education, such as: family stereotypes about learning, the inability of family people to study at home, lack of information about the educational services provided, lack of time, financial opportunities, and one of the main ones is the lack of an approach to each adult learner.

Kalz (2015) also suggests considering the following four solutions to overcome these barriers. The first is open learning models and learning analytics. Open learning models and learning analytics are the process of collecting data about a student, from reading a book in the morning to taking an evening course. All this data is collected into one model and analyzed to personalize the learning process for learners, to prepare specific recommendations for effective learning.

The second is learning networks and networked learning. Learning networks and networked learning allow people to gain knowledge regardless of time and place. For example, a person can communicate with colleagues via the Internet, find educational resources, and take online training. This method helps to create learning networks through which people can exchange information. It also helps to personalize the learning process of the learner (Kalz, 2015).

The third is open educational resources and practices. The goal of open educational resources and practices is accessible learning. Educational materials that were available only to students of certain educational institutions are now provided in the public domain and are becoming available on the Internet. For example, universities such as MIT began to post materials in the public domain, and then certain databases began to be created to search quickly for educational resources. This helps to overcome barriers such as financial and accessibility of education (Kalz, 2015).

The fourth solution is mobile and contextualized learning. Mobile and contextualized learning is a tool that helps learners learn anytime and anywhere, allowing

formal and informal learning to be combined. For example, it allows learning to be done on the way to work or home. It also helps make the learning process more flexible and is especially suitable for those who do not have the opportunity to study at home. All four of these methods are still being researched and require more study to be effectively implemented and used (Kalz, 2015).

In addition to technological and structural solutions, the importance of social and community support mechanisms should not be overlooked. Moreover, De Greef et al. (2014) emphasize the role of community-based initiatives that successfully integrate formal educational programs with informal support systems. By fostering a supportive learning environment beyond traditional classrooms, these initiatives help to alleviate dispositional barriers such as low self-confidence, fear of failure, and feelings of social exclusion. When adult learners are embedded within networks of encouragement and peer support, their motivation to participate in education significantly increases, leading not only to greater educational engagement but also to broader social inclusion and personal development.

In summary, overcoming barriers to lifelong learning requires both technological innovations and strong social support systems. Open educational resources, mobile learning, and personalized learning analytics offer flexible ways for adults to engage in education despite time, financial, or logistical constraints. At the same time, community initiatives play a crucial role in building confidence and reducing psychological barriers to learning. Addressing both structural and dispositional challenges is essential for creating more inclusive and effective lifelong learning opportunities for adults.

### **Gap in Literature**

Despite international advancements, Kazakhstan lacks empirical studies exploring adult motivations, barriers, and learning outcomes, which makes it difficult to develop

effective policies in this area. Current national data rely heavily on PIAAC reports without deeper qualitative analysis (Toimbek, 2022; Omirbayev et al., 2021).

In Kazakhstan, there is a lack of data and research on lifelong learning, which makes it difficult to develop effective policies in this area. Toimbek (2022) notes that despite the country's participation in international studies, such as PIAAC, Kazakhstan does not have its own analytical reports and analysis of the results. This limits the long-term vision in educational planning and reform development. A similar problem is highlighted by Omirbayev et al. (2021), who point out that non-formal and informal education in the country is underutilized, and the state does not monitor the quality of such educational services or keep official statistics on the organizations providing them.

Thus, there is a need for research that integrates international theoretical models with local realities, explores micro-, meso-, and macro-level influences on adult participation, and captures the lived experiences of adult learners in Kazakhstan.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, continuing education not only can have a positive effect on human development, both professionally and personally, but also can affect the economic growth of the country in a positive way, where human capital is one of the main resources that requires investment and development (Laal, 2012). Due to the rapid development of technology and globalization, artificial intelligence is constantly improving and is beginning to replace more and more professions. People need to be able to quickly relearn and acquire new skills to continue to support their life needs (Matygov et al., 2023). One way of doing this is through lifelong learning.

This chapter reviewed key concepts, theoretical frameworks and empirical research related to lifelong learning. It was shown that adult participation depends on personal,

institutional and societal factors and leads to numerous benefits. However, the gap in Kazakhstani research on adult lifelong learning highlights the importance of this study.

It is important to consider how developed countries with high levels of adult participation in lifelong learning have structured their policies, particularly for adults aged 25 to 65. In the Nordic countries, such as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, lifelong learning is supported not only through accessible education opportunities but also through strong social security systems and active labor market programs. These policies recognize that continuing education should not rely solely on individual initiative; instead, it must be supported at the state level to promote both economic development and social inclusion (Boeren, 2017).

At the same time, research by Dæhlen and Ure (2009) highlights that many low-skilled adults engage in formal education primarily because of external pressures, such as employment requirements or welfare conditions, rather than personal interest. However, their study also shows that even under external pressure, many adults still express a genuine interest in learning new things, reflecting the complex and sometimes ambivalent nature of adult motivation. Together, these findings underline the importance of combining structural support with efforts to foster intrinsic motivation, creating a more inclusive and sustainable lifelong learning environment.

### **Chapter 3. Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodology used to examine the motivations for why adults above 25 years of age participate in lifelong learning. It begins by describing the research design. It then presents the research site where data collection takes place, followed by the sampling process used to select participants. The chapter further explains the data collection tools and procedures employed to gather information for the study. Next, it describes the data analysis process, which is used to process and interpret the collected data to answer the research questions. Finally, it discusses the ethical considerations that ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being.

#### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative method. One tool was used to collect data - interviews through a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach was used to understand how adults perceive their needs and motivation for lifelong learning, what results they have, what difficulties they encounter during learning, and how they overcome them. The interview questions were designed to find answers to the central research question and its sub-questions.

After collecting the data through interviews, an inductive coding method was used to analyze the data. This coding method was designed to group the responses into themes, namely: previous reasons for participating in lifelong learning courses of study, and motives for pursuing further lifelong learning. The aim is to understand the reasons why adults continue learning, what motivates them to learn, the barriers that adults face in the learning process, and the results obtained after completing the training. An abductive method was then used to find explanations for the different responses of the interviewees, which varied significantly and contradicted each other (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

## **Research Site and Selection of Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants, since this is a qualitative study. Participant characteristics included adults aged 25 to 65 who are continuing their education, and this type of sampling helped to find people who fit the interview criteria and agreed to participate in the study voluntarily (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Also, according to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), criterion-based sampling was used for qualitative data collection to select people based on specific criteria required for this study. The interviewees were selected according to the following categories: gender (male and female); age (25 to 35 years, 36 to 45 years, 46 to 55 years, and 56 to 65 years); educational level (no degree, secondary vocational education, bachelor's, master's, and PhD); work experience (5 to 15 years, 16 to 30 years, and 31 to 40 years). A mandatory criterion was that all study participants had to be involved in continuing education or have completed some training, courses, or internships. This selection of criteria was made to determine how factors such as level of education, work experience, age and gender can influence motivation and barriers to continuing education. The number of respondents I interviewed was 7 people, to try to cover all criteria.

The initial plan was to find participants through two Kazakhstani companies that provide lifelong learning services both in Kazakhstan and abroad. The negotiation process was carried out through verbal communication or email with the directors of continuing education companies regarding the possibility of finding interview participants relevant to the research topic. The company recruited interview participants by sending out an online offer to participate in a study on lifelong learning through Whatsapp groups to its clients, but since it was not possible to select volunteers according to all the necessary criteria, a snowball sample was used for the remaining number of required respondents, the rest of

the people for the interview were recommended by the respondents themselves (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Since the respondents were from different cities of Kazakhstan, the interview was conducted online, via the Zoom platform. The duration of the interview ranged from 30 to 70 minutes. There were cases when the interview was not completed at the agreed time, in such cases, an additional interview was scheduled with the respondent on the day and time appointed by him. All interviews were recorded on video and audio for further high-quality data processing.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The interview questions were semi-structured. The number of main interview questions was seven, in addition to which follow-up questions and probes were prepared and asked. The questions were designed in such a way that the respondents' answers reflected the central research question and its sub-questions. When compiling the probes, several versions of the questions were prepared so that the interviewer could ask one of the probes immediately, depending on how the respondent answers the main or subsequent question. This helped to conduct the interview confidently and quickly. Also, the questions were composed in a logical order to obtain high-quality data (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

The key interview questions directly reflected each research sub-question and were structured as follows, which should answer the central research question:

Why did you decide to continue your studies?

What factors influence your motivation to continue your studies?

What results do you get after developing or acquiring a new skill?

What difficulties did you encounter during your studies and how did you overcome them?

Consent forms, interview protocol, and interview questions were prepared in three languages: Kazakh, Russian, and English, and the respondent had the right to choose the language of the answer convenient for him/her (Appendix C, D, E).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

First, an interview protocol was written, including an introductory statement, a background question (descriptive), a structured, open, neutral main, follow-up, and control questions (Appendix E). Together with the consent form and interview protocol, all main questions of the interview were sent to each interview participant in advance to reduce the interview time for the respondent to recall facts. The interviews were conducted online at the request of the interviewees, as the participants were from different cities in Kazakhstan. All responses were recorded using an audio and video recording program via the Zoom program for further qualitative data processing (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). All interviews were conducted in Russian and then the interview recording scripts were translated into English for further processing and data analysis. The interview took approximately 50 minutes. The data was collected and processed during December 2024 and January 2025.

All interview participants signed a consent form before the interview and sent it back. During the interview, some participants did not answer the question asked, answered unrelated to the question, at such moments, questions were asked several times with clarifying sub-questions. At other times, they gave too many examples from life, which increased the time of the interview, and some respondents did not fully disclose the answer, giving short answers; at such moments, additional and clarifying questions were asked. According to the interview assessment, the interview participants were satisfied with the interview and were glad to reflect and make some discoveries rising their self-esteem.

## **Data Analysis**

The data analysis of this study began with the first interview, which was conducted and analyzed by the author of this study. During each interview, the participants' responses were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were sent to the interviewees for confirmation to ensure the accuracy of data collection. Then, the coding process was done, which translated the individual segments of text into descriptive words or category names. Different types of coding, such as InVivo, values, descriptive, and emotional were used in the coding process. Since values and emotional coding types can help to better understand how the respondents perceive motivation in lifelong learning through their values and emotional perception, InVivo and descriptive helped to preserve the meaning of the participants' responses and identify the main parts of the responses. Then, all the coding for each interview was recorded in a coding book and analyzed (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

In order to group the responses into themes, an inductive coding method was used. This approach is one of the processes of qualitative data analysis so that the data can carry meaning and significance, and it is designed to distill large amounts of information into meaningful patterns and themes through coding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

After the groups were formed, an abductive coding method was used, since some of the respondents' responses were not similar to each other and contradicted each other, and this method is aimed at helping to explain such responses. The purpose of the abductive process is to find a way to act in a given situation, and then these actions are tested in practice, where theories and methods are tools, which then show whether they solve the problem or not (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

## **Ethical Issues**

After obtaining ethics approval from the Graduate School of Education of Nazarbayev University in November of 2024, I started negotiations with the directors of Kazakhstani educational companies providing continuing education services regarding the recruitment of interview participants. After receiving their approval, I began the recruitment process that same month and asked the companies' administration to send out a letter to their clients inviting them to take part in my study, and if people were interested, they could contact me using my contact details.

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the approximate time required for the interview (50-70 minutes). Participants read and signed a consent form for the interview and further processing of answers in one of three languages, Russian, English, or Kazakh, before giving me an interview. After signing the consent form, one copy was left with them. The place and time of the interview were agreed upon with the participants.

When conducting research where data is collected directly from people and their responses, it is extremely important to remember that one of the important issues in the research is the treatment of the research participants. The questions were designed in such a way as to minimize any emotional or psychological harm to the interviewees. There was no pressure to complete the interview; each participant was informed that he/she had the right to stop the interview at his/her convenience. There were no judgmental comments after the responses were received. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality and privacy of the responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Interviews were conducted in the language of the participant's choice in Russian language in November and December 2024 and January 2025. Transcripts of the interviews conducted in Russian were translated into English for further analysis and

presentation of the results of this study. Data collection procedures were conducted following Nazarbayev University requirements and ethical standards.

The confidentiality of the participants and the collected data was ensured per the requirements of Nazarbayev University and ethical standards. We could not guarantee 100% anonymity, but the confidentiality of the data, including audio recordings and transcripts, is protected by a strong password on my personal laptop, and personal identifiers such as names or any potentially identifying details were removed from the transcripts wherever possible, and all names were replaced with pseudonyms. Three years after the completion of this thesis, all data will be permanently deleted. Additionally, all files were encrypted to prevent unauthorized access. Only I have access to the data. No third parties will be involved in handling the information unless explicitly agreed upon by the participants. Information about confidentiality and anonymity was also indicated in the consent form in three languages: Russian, Kazakh, and English, and provided to the participant in one of the three languages convenient for him/her before the interview, and their consent was obtained before any data was collected.

### **Summary**

In this study, I position myself as an insider because I am also in the process of a formal type of continuous learning as a Master's student in Educational Leadership in Higher Education at the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University, which may have helped me build a more trusting relationship with my interview respondents. This understanding helped me formulate the interview questions appropriately so that the interviewees' answers led me to the answer to the central research question. I also position myself as an observer because I know how to look and see around me, and I know how to show empathy and sympathize. Perhaps these qualities and the understanding that I am the main research instrument helped me conduct the research qualitatively. Although my

position as an insider and my empathetic approach helped establish rapport with the participants, I also acknowledge that this proximity could have introduced potential biases, such as confirmation bias and social desirability bias. To minimize these risks, I took several measures: maintaining a neutral stance during the interviews, using open-ended, non-leading questions; audio-recording and verbatim transcription of the interviews to ensure that interpretations were based solely on the participants' own words; and member checking, sending transcripts back to the participants for confirmation and correction, ensuring that their perspectives were accurately represented (Bourke, 2014).

## Chapter 4. Findings

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore individual perceptions of motivation and reasons why adults participate in long-term learning, how they experience these processes, what results they have after improving or acquiring new skills, and how they overcome difficulties on the path to learning in Kazakhstan.

The findings chapter presents the results of the qualitative analysis based on 7 interviews with adults aged 25 to 65 who had been enrolled in lifelong education. The sample included four women and three men. Participants had diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from secondary vocational education to master's degrees. Their professional experience varied from 3 to 40 years, with participants working in sectors such as business, public, education and catering. All participants were either currently engaged in lifelong learning programs or had recently completed courses, certifications, or additional training initiatives.

The findings are presented in sequential order according to Research Questions, themes, and sub-questions.

Research question is: What factors motivate adults aged from 25 to 65 to be involved in continuous learning in Kazakhstan?

Sub-questions:

What reasons did adults give for being involved in lifelong learning?

What are the motivating factors for adults to pursue lifelong learning?

What outcomes do people get after developing or acquiring new skills?

What difficulties do people face in lifelong learning, and how do they overcome them?

The sections of this chapter outline all the themes and categories that were identified by the data analysis, provide insight and perception into the reasons and motivations of adults continuing education, consider what results the study participants have after completing the study, what difficulties they encounter and how they overcome them during the studying. Finally, a summary of the results of the analysis is presented.

### Themes and Categories

Four main themes were identified following the thematic analysis. These themes and sub-themes are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Themes and Sub-Themes*

Research sub-question	Theme	Sub-themes
What reasons did adults give to be involved in lifelong learning?	Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning	<p>The needs to continue learning</p> <p>The main goal in continuous learning</p> <p>The impact of environment to learn</p> <p>Factors influencing motivation to study</p> <p>The impact of post-training success on motivation to continue learning</p> <p>Motivation loss moments</p>
What are the motivating factors for adults to pursue lifelong learning?	Motivation for Continuous Learning	<p>The role of available resources in maintaining motivation for learning</p> <p>The impact of new skills and knowledge on professional activity</p> <p>Positive impact of new skills and knowledges on everyday life</p>
What outcomes do people get after developing or acquiring new skills?	Expected Outcomes from Continuous Education	Improvements in communication with colleagues or in solving work problems

		Changed perception of future prospects
		Challenges during studying
What difficulties do people face in lifelong learning and how do they overcome them?	Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning	Overcoming difficulties during studying

Below are five tables with descriptive information about participants Table 2 and coding of interview responses Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Table 6:

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Information About Participants Categories*

Participant	Age category	Educational level	Gender	Work Experience	Specialty
1	25-35	Master degree	Female	Work experience 3 years, at the current place 2 years	Higher education. Administrative manager.
2	25-35	Master degree	Male	Work experience 8 years, at the current place of work 5 years	School education. Psychologist, primary school teacher
3	25-35	Vocational secondary education	Male	Work experience 10 years, 2 years at the current place of work	Secondary special education/Catering. Catering organization, cook, manager and barman, and teacher of laboratory practical classes
4	25-35	Master degree	Female	12 years of work experience, and 1.5 years at the current place of work	International recruitment and educational organizations. HR Director, PR and marketing manager and business development manager follows from the first two specialties. Currently works in all three areas.
5	36-45	Master degree	Male	Work experience 15 years, at the current place of work 4 years.	Private school education. PR Director in the civil service, A leadership position in the field of private education
6	56-65	Master degree	Female	Work experience 34 years, at current place 3 years	Continuous education. Teacher, HR director, Owner of own company
7	56-65	Master degree	Female	Work experience 40 years, 23 years at the current place of work	Secondary special education. Teacher-psychologist, Teacher in Management in restaurant and hotel service

Table 2 shows the descriptive information about the participants. The numbers indicating the respondents, with categories reflected their gender (male and female); age (25 -35, 36-45, 46-55, and 56-65 years); educational level (no degree, secondary vocational education, bachelor's, master's, and PhD); work experience 5-15 years, 16 to 30 years, and 31 to 40 years. A mandatory criterion was that all study participants have to attend continuing education or had completed some training, courses, or internships. This selection of criteria was made to determine how factors such as level of education, work experience, age, and gender can influence motivation and barriers to continuing education. The number of respondents interviewed was seven. This information is necessary for further qualitative analysis.

**Table 3**

*Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning*

Sub-theme	Interviewee Responses	Interviewees
	Learning a new profession, combining all skills in a new specialty. Be competitive and an expert	2, 7, 4, 5,6
	A dream profession since childhood, which requires constant training	3
3.1 The need to continue learning	I like to study	1
	Personal development first, and career and financial opportunities second.	2,7,4
3.2 The main goal in continuous learning	50 percent personal development and 50 percent career and financial opportunities	3,1,5,6
	Family and colleagues	2
	Family, colleagues, work	7
	Colleagues	3
	Friends, colleagues, experts	4
3.3 The impact of environment to learn	No one inspires	1

Director	5
Work, the need to develop own business and the experience of colleagues from other countries	6

Table 3. Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning provides an overview of the reasons that influenced participants' engagement in lifelong learning. It highlights three key areas: needs for continuing education, balance between personal and professional goals, and the influence of the social and professional environment. Most participants indicated that their learning decisions were shaped by career-related needs, such as acquiring new professional skills or maintaining a competitive edge. Some also highlighted the influence of encouragement from colleagues, family members, or managers. The table illustrates how external circumstances often intersect with individual aspirations to support the decision to continue education.

### ***The Need to Continue Learning***

According to the answers of seven respondents from Table 3 on sub-theme 3.1 The need to continue learning, most of them realize that we live in a rapidly changing world, where the labor and education markets are in constant development, technologies are also developing at a high speed now and some professions are becoming irrelevant, and some professions require constant updating of skills and knowledge. In order to remain competitive, it is necessary not only to constantly learn but also to be able to retrain for other specialties, as most respondents have shown from personal experience.

For example, such quotes from interviews confirm the need to be constantly learning. These reflections emphasize the deep personal meaning behind the need for continuous learning. Respondent 2 explained:

“It is very inspiring to gain new knowledge. You begin to improve yourself, and then you notice that the more you learn and develop, the more others are drawn to you. They want to know how you achieved certain things, how to do things better.

This is one of the best ways to grow. To reach something new, you need to keep learning, continuously improving, and working on yourself. This process can elevate your authority—you become respected, recognized, and people start turning to you for advice.”

Similarly, Respondent 4 shared:

“I feel like I’ve been learning my whole life. What excites me most is the learning process itself. I believe it’s impossible to know everything. Even those who have strong practical expertise must keep growing, especially now, when everything is changing so quickly — particularly with the rapid development of artificial intelligence. Learning, for me, feels like polishing a diamond. With every new skill or insight, I refine myself. Sometimes I go deep into one area; other times, I explore more broadly — both are valuable. I genuinely enjoy studying. For me, learning is like a journey — almost a form of discovery. It helps me understand the different facets of who I am. I also love that during the learning process, you meet new people, and through them, you grow. Finally, I believe that new knowledge almost always brings benefits — not only personally, but also professionally. It can increase your value, help you offer new services, and open new opportunities.”

Most participants acknowledged the need for continuous learning in an ever-changing world. For them, acquiring new skills is not only a way to stay competitive but also a process of personal enrichment and growth.

### ***The Main Goal in Continuous Learning***

For sub-theme 3.2 The main goal in continuous learning on Table 3, all respondents have two main goals of learning: personal development and career opportunities. Only three respondents answered that personal development comes first, and only then career opportunities. This suggests that the goal of studying has two inseparable

factors: self-development and career, but internal self-satisfaction is in first place for some respondents.

As respondent 2 said:

“When you understand that you are gaining knowledge from foreign professors that you cannot get here, it allows you to improve yourself, and thus people begin to be interested in you, you gain respect, and then career opportunities open up.”

And respondent 7 noted, “I had a desire to combine the knowledge and experience of two specialties and help students gain knowledge in combination with my experience and specialty, which allowed me to give useful and unique knowledge to my students.”

These reflections indicate that adult learners often view education as a process with a dual purpose of promoting internal satisfaction and facilitating career advancement.

### ***The Impact of Environment to Learn***

In the sub-theme 3.3. The impact of the environment to learn, of Table 3, almost all respondents answered that the environment and work influence their decision to continue learning. Respondents 2, 7, 3, and 5 described their principals who work in the field of education as supporters of continuous education. Interviewee 5 quoted his supervisor as saying, “Colleagues, improve your professional competence, study, and I will always support you.”

These reflections indicate that adult learners often view education as a process with a dual purpose of promoting internal satisfaction and facilitating career advancement.

According to the Table 3 sub-topic 3.1 The need to continue learning, only two respondents answered that they study since they simply like it, but given that respondents 3 and 1 are younger and have less work experience than the other respondents, or more precisely, they are under 28 years old, and according to the sub-topic 2.3 The impact of continuing to learn, respondent 1 answered that no one inspires her to study. This may be

explained by their age and relatively limited work experience, which reduces the urgency to develop labor market competitiveness.

**Table 4**

*Motivation for Continuous Learning*

Sub-theme	Participant Responses	Participants
	First of all, internal factors such as self-realization and self-development, and secondly, external factors such as financial interest and career opportunities.	2,7,3,4,5
4.1 Factors influencing motivation to study	Both external factors 50 percent and internal factors 50 percent equally influence the motivation to continue studying.	1,6
4.2 The impact of post-training success on motivation to continue learning.	Success in learning motivates for further studying.	2,7,3,4,1,5,6
	Hasn't really encountered a decrease in motivation to study.	2, 3, 6
4.3 Motivation loss moments.	There are times when motivation decreases.	7, 4, 1, 5
4.4 The role of available resources in maintaining motivation for learning	Resources such as finances, time and support play a big role in maintaining motivation.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7

Table 4. Motivation for Continuous Learning reflects respondents' answers regarding motivation for learning, what external or internal factors influence their motivation to learn, whether there are moments of decline in motivation, how they regain motivation to continue learning and what role resources such as time, finances and support play in maintaining their motivation.

***Factors Influencing Motivation to Study***

Sub-theme 4.1 Factors influencing motivation to study of Table 4 presents the main motivating factors that influence adults to engage in lifelong learning. Five participants emphasized that internal factors, such as self-actualization, the desire for personal growth, and the joy of learning were their main source of motivation, but did not exclude external motivating factors. They viewed education as a tool for self-development and as a way to

become more confident and satisfied individuals. Only two participants reported that they were equally motivated by both internal and external factors such as financial gain and career advancement.

Respondent 4 highlighted that, “The knowledge gained must be immediately implemented. Knowledge provides the opportunity to become an expert and professional and helps to meet internal needs”. And interviewee 5 noted, “It is difficult to maintain motivation to learn based on external factors alone.”

Notably, respondents 1 and 6, representing different ages and professional backgrounds one younger with less experience, the other older and self-employed identified both internal and external factors as equally influential. This suggests that motivational factors can be complex and vary depending on an individual’s life stage and career context.

Overall, intrinsic motivation emerged as the strongest force behind continued learning. While some participants recognized the role of external incentives, most emphasized the importance of internal purpose and satisfaction.

### ***The Impact of Post-Training Success on Motivation to Continue Learning***

According to sub-theme 4.2 The impact of post-training success on motivation to continue learning of Table 4, all participants reported that achieving success during their studies significantly increased their motivation to continue their education. Success manifested itself in various forms – from academic achievement and external feedback to practical application of knowledge – and served as a strong internal incentive for further participation in education.

Respondent 7 reflected that, “Studying helps to identify weaknesses and strengths and work on them.” Similarly, Respondent 3 explained how learning outcomes translated into confidence, “After the knowledge gained during the internship, I teach students and

colleagues using the Italian and French systems. It gives me confidence and motivates me to continue developing.”

Respondent 4 emphasized the value of feedback in maintaining motivation: “It is very important to receive feedback from colleagues, management, and clients — it’s like fuel for continuing to improve.” Respondent 1, who achieved academic excellence, noted, “A high GPA in the master’s program motivated me to enroll in the PhD program.”

Respondent 5, who studied in a foreign language alongside fluent English-speaking peers, shared how academic recognition helped sustain his motivation, “This moment of success was recorded in my head, which reminded me that I can do it despite all the difficulties.”

Finally, Respondent 6, a business owner, described how the outcomes of training sparked innovation, “I get ideas for creating new projects in my business.”

For all the participants, post-training success was a powerful source of motivation. Whether through formal achievements, personal breakthroughs, or external validation, these positive experiences strengthened students’ belief in their abilities and encouraged them to continue their educational journey.

### ***Motivation Loss Moments***

In sub-topic 4.3 Motivation loss moments of Table 4, participants’ experiences with loss of motivation varied. Four of the seven respondents reported periods of decreased motivation during their studies, while three stated that they had not experienced such problems. Among those who had, reasons for decreased motivation were academic and work workload, family commitments, and lack of enjoyment of the learning process. Participants also described strategies they used to regain motivation and continue their studies. Respondent 7 emphasized the importance of self-reflection and support from others:

“If you have difficulties in your studies, you need to take a time out. Write down the pros and cons and determine what you need to work on. Don’t blame yourself. Surround yourself with people who support you — colleagues, friends — and think positively. Ninety percent of success in regaining motivation is provided by the environment, especially by colleagues. Helping others, like supporting students or colleagues to succeed, also feeds motivation.”

Respondent 4 highlighted that the goal of completing a degree or obtaining certificates helped maintain focus, “If learning is not enjoyable, don’t force yourself. But sometimes, just thinking about getting a diploma or certificate helps to regain motivation.” Respondent 1 experienced a dip in motivation during online learning and shared, “Professors were supportive, and I also used additional resources to help understand the material.” Respondent 5 described a more complex experience, linking decreased motivation to a combination of external stress and internal reflection:

“When you realize that you’ve changed your profession while your former colleagues have already moved up, it can be discouraging. In such moments, spiritual development and a sense of gratitude help. Positive thinking protects your energy, while negative thoughts only drain it. Changing careers helped me find balance between health, family, and personal growth.”

These responses indicate that moments of low motivation are common in adult learning, especially when juggling multiple responsibilities. Recovery often involves self-awareness, redefining goals, emotional support from others, and finding deeper meaning in the learning process through personal or spiritual growth.

### ***The Role of Available Resources in Maintaining Motivation for Learning***

In 4.4 The role of available resources in maintaining motivation for learning sub-theme of Table 4, all participants highlighted that access to key resources – particularly

time, financial stability, and emotional support – played a crucial role in maintaining motivation throughout their learning journey. These resources were described as essential for balancing the demands of work, family, and study.

Respondent 6, who owns her own company, was the only participant who did not experience difficulties in this area. She attributed her ability to stay motivated to strong skills in time management, delegation, financial planning and effective communication. Her example highlights how resourcefulness and control over one's environment can positively impact motivation.

The remaining participants reported various challenges, particularly with time management and prioritizing tasks. To address these challenges, they worked on improving their organizational skills and developing habits such as goal setting, discipline, and communication.

Respondent 1 reflected: “To improve time management, you need to work on discipline. And to develop discipline, you need to set clear goals.” Respondent 5 offered a more comprehensive perspective, combining time, financial, and social dimensions:

“Thanks to strong communication skills, I created a supportive learning environment with the help of my family, colleagues, and manager. It's important to know how to plan your finances and invest in personal development—no inflation can devalue knowledge and skills. Working in a bank gave me financial knowledge, which now helps me avoid learning-related obstacles. Time remains a challenge. To manage work, study, and family, you need strong time management skills. It's essential to prioritize, eliminate unnecessary tasks, and know when to take action or let go. Communication can sometimes compensate for poor time management, but a lack of time still lowers energy and efficiency.”

Availability and management of time, finances, and social support directly impact adult learners' ability to stay motivated. While some people have developed strong systems to cope with these demands, others continue to work on improving their skills to maintain balance and momentum in their learning.

**Table 5**

*Expected Outcomes from Continuous Education*

Sub-theme	Interviewee Responses	Interviewees
	All acquired knowledge is practiced on colleagues, then on school students.	2
	Understanding of competitiveness comes, increasing self-esteem and confidence.	7
	After receiving the knowledge, master classes are immediately held with colleagues and students. And this is very motivating to continue studying and working. Salary supplement, advanced training as an international specialist, certification as an international specialist, since there is a signed memorandum with European colleagues with whom you can exchange experience, being at the top of employees increases self-esteem	3
	New skills and knowledge allowed me to work remotely, travel, study the cultures of other peoples, develop language skills to meet and communicate with people of other nationalities, raise self-esteem sometimes knowledge of English helped out in bad situations of fraud	4
	For example, the last completed Excel course helped to reduce the time spent working with large data several times. You feel more confident after the knowledge and skills you have acquired.	1
	The study allowed for to expansion of professional competencies and made it possible to launch a communication course for high school students.	5
5.1 The impact of new skills and knowledge on professional activity	New skills expand career opportunities in ideas and educational projects, increasing expertise.	6
	They help to recognize and understand people other than colleagues, and new acquaintances appear thanks to the development of communication skills.	2

5.2 Positive impact of new skills and knowledge on everyday life	In everyday life, new skills and knowledge help to become more responsible in family matters, help to compensate grandchildren for what was not given to children, and it is necessary to work on time management so as to have time for family and self-development.	7
	Helps in communication with friends and colleagues who studied, worked abroad. It is possible to maintain a conversation with such a developing environment. Make new acquaintances, also abroad	3
	Soft skills help more, such as emotional intelligence, communication, while traveling and meeting different people. The most important skill that is needed in both personal and professional life is the skill of emotional intelligence. If a person is a good financier, but he does not have developed emotional intelligence, he will not get along in a team.	4
	Helps to plan trips. Make cost estimates with Excel formulas. Helps to build communication with people. Develops critical thinking, checks information. Research skills help to find the right information. Presentation skills help to convey information to people.	1
	In personal life, the psychology in education course is used in raising a five-year-old son. Also, the insights from the course and the experience of groupmates were taken and adopted.	5
	New skills, such as communication skills and competencies, help to expand your social circle, especially with foreign colleagues.	6
	New knowledge and new skills are used in work not only with colleagues, but also in teaching children.	2
	In communication with colleagues, the feeling of constraint in discussing any tasks has gone away	7
	The approach to solving work problems has changed after receiving new knowledge	3
	Knowledge of AI helps in solving problems, which has simplified the work many times over. Understanding new terms helps not to float in conversations with colleagues.	4
	New skills help in communication with colleagues, help each other in solving problems using the acquired knowledge, and reduce the time for completing tasks.	1
5.3 Improvements in communication with colleagues or in solving work problems	Theoretical knowledge is used to change the approach to work.	5
	The approach to solving problems has become better	6
	Views changed after gaining new knowledge on teaching inclusive children	2

5.4 Changed perception of future prospects	The need to develop time management skills, maintain a balance between all areas of life, develop critical thinking, and double-check information.	7
	After a trip to Europe, I thought that many people go there to work and stay, but after traveling I realized that there is no better place than Kazakhstan, and I want to go abroad to gain experience and implement innovations in Kazakhstan.	3
	I used to think that you need to grow and develop only vertically and master only one profession, but now I understand that you need to develop horizontally in order to stand out widely. You need to learn to create a personal brand and always remain human. The way a person dresses and behaves, how he shows his projects, such is his reputation.	4
	Before entering the university of my dreams, I thought I would be the weakest student, but I ended up with one of the highest GPAs, which changed my worldview, that if you try, you can do anything.	1
	If I used to think that it was very difficult to study abroad and it seemed impossible, now after completing the training I understand what the structure of studying abroad is, I have language skills and this has opened up new perspectives in terms of teaching.	5
	Knowledge of languages and communication increased intercultural competence	6

Table 5. Expected Outcomes from Continuous Education contain interview responses regarding the results they have after acquiring new knowledge and skills, what impact they have on the professional and personal lives of respondents, whether they affect communication with colleagues, solving work problems, and the perception of their future prospects.

### ***The Impact of New Skills and Knowledge on Professional Activity***

5.1 The impact of new skills and knowledge on professional activity of Table 5 shows that all participants reported significant improvements in their professional lives after acquiring new knowledge and skills. Specific results varied depending on individual goals, but most respondents mentioned increased competence, increased efficiency, and

higher levels of confidence. Some also received financial benefits or opportunities for international collaboration.

Respondent 2 noted: "Knowledge about new technologies is passed on to School Leaders to implement in their work, as the world is rapidly developing technologically. Colleagues are interested, and that brings joy to sharing knowledge." Respondent 3 shared how learning resulted in motivation and recognition: "After receiving the knowledge, I immediately held master classes for colleagues and students. I was promoted, certified as an international specialist, and started working with European partners. Being at the top of my field increased my self-esteem."

Others, like Respondents 1 and 4, highlighted that their new skills helped them work more efficiently and independently, including remote work and global networking. Respondent 5 emphasized: "Studying expanded my professional competencies and allowed me to teach a communication course for high school students." Participants experienced increased self-confidence, professional growth, and practical application of skills. These results increased their motivation and sense of purpose in their careers.

### ***Positive Impact of New Skills and Knowledge on Everyday Life***

According to 5.2 Positive impact of new skills and knowledge in everyday life sub-theme of Table 5, all participants reported that the skills and knowledge they acquired through lifelong learning had a significant impact not only on their professional development but also on their daily lives. These improvements were evident in a variety of areas, including communication, time management, emotional intelligence, parenting, critical thinking, and personal relationships.

Respondents described how their improved communication skills helped them build stronger social connections both locally and internationally. Some noted that studying abroad or participating in multicultural programs increased their confidence in

communicating with people from different backgrounds. For example, Respondent 3 emphasized that the new skills made it easier to communicate with colleagues and friends who had studied or worked abroad.

Respondent 4 emphasized the value of emotional intelligence, “The most important skill that is needed in both personal and professional life is emotional intelligence. Even if someone is a great specialist, without emotional intelligence, they won’t succeed in a team.”

Respondent 5 shared how newly developed skills supported everyday problem-solving and planning, “Learning to use the Excel program helped me plan trips and budget efficiently. Research skills helped me find reliable information, and presentation skills made it easier to communicate with others.”

Some participants applied the knowledge gained directly to their family life. Respondent 2 mentioned that improved time management allowed her to balance family responsibilities with personal development, while Respondent 5 used parenting ideas from an educational psychology course to support his child’s development. Respondent 6 summed up the broader impact of the new competencies, “Communication skills and intercultural awareness expanded my social circle, especially with foreign colleagues.”

Continuous learning enabled participants to apply practical skills to a variety of everyday situations, from family life to financial planning and travel. These skills contributed not only to better organization and communication, but also to a greater sense of confidence, personal growth, and quality of life.

### ***Improvements in Communication with Colleagues or in Solving Work Problems***

In sub-theme 5.3 Improvements in communication with colleagues or in solving work problems, Table 5, all participants reported that continuous learning had a positive impact on how they communicated with colleagues and approached work tasks. Gaining

new knowledge and practical skills resulted in noticeable increases in work efficiency, collaboration, and confidence in solving complex problems.

Several respondents noted that their improved communication skills helped them interact more openly and effectively with team members. Respondent 7 shared that after gaining new knowledge, she felt more comfortable expressing ideas and participating in group discussions.

Respondent 6 also noticed a change in her interaction style, highlighting increased clarity and ease in coordinating tasks.

Respondent 4 highlighted how learning technical and conceptual tools helped her not only communicate better, but also understand and apply new terminology in the workplace, especially in areas related to new technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Beyond communication, participants described improvements in how they analyze and solve work problems. Respondent 3 explained that his approach to problem-solving became more structured and goal-oriented after the training. Respondent 1 indicated the direct applicability of the newly acquired skills: “The acquired presentation skills and research skills turned out to be useful in work.”

Respondent 5 also noted that theoretical knowledge gained during studying helped reshape how he approached her daily responsibilities and professional challenges. Results show that continuous learning strengthens both interpersonal communication and analytical skills in the workplace. Participants became more confident, collaborative, and effective in their professional roles, contributing to improved team dynamics and more effective problem solving.

### ***Changed Perception of Future Prospects***

Sub-theme 5.4 Changed the perception of future prospects in Table 5 shows that all participants reported that their involvement in lifelong learning had led to a change in how

they viewed their personal and professional future. These changes resulted in a return to confidence and a realization that previous limitations could be overcome through effort and growth.

For some, the change was driven by academic achievement. For example, Respondent 1 initially doubted her ability to succeed at a foreign university due to concerns about her GPA. However, her real-life experiences changed her beliefs, “Before entering the university of my dreams, I thought I would be the weakest student, but I ended up with one of the highest GPAs. That changed my worldview — if you try, you can do anything.”

Others expanded their view of what professional development could look like. Respondent 4 reflected on how her understanding of growth evolved from a purely vertical path toward a broader, more flexible model, “I used to think growth only meant climbing higher in one profession. Now I see the value in growing horizontally — building a personal brand, diversifying skills, and staying human in the process.” Respondent 3, after his international experience, shared, “I used to think that people go to Europe to stay there, but after traveling, I realized that I wanted to go abroad to gain experience and bring it back to Kazakhstan.”

Respondent 6 emphasized how language acquisition and intercultural competence opened doors to new forms of collaboration and broadened her global horizons. Lifelong learning not only equips people with knowledge and skills, but it also transforms how they perceive their potential and direction in life. For these participants, education changed their confidence, ambition, and understanding of what is possible in the future.

**Table 6***Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning*

Sub-theme	Interviewee Responses	Interviewees
6.1 Challenges during studying	Language barrier during internship abroad	2, 3
	Lack of time	4, 1, 5
	Difficulty with the material	7, 5, 6
	Develop communication skills, time management, and financial planning.	2
	Find professionals through colleagues, management, who will help to understand the material. Show creativity and communication in search of additional material, need to be able to plan finances, there were no problems with finances, also in the material help was provided by adult children, also it is needed to develop the skill of teamwork in studies, learn to delegate.	7
	Be creative using different tools, such as Google Translate when there is a language barrier	3
6.2 Overcoming difficulties during studying	Work on improving time management, develop creativity, if the material is unclear, look for additional material, or look for tools such as YouTube, ask a professor, ask colleagues, experts.	4
	To improve time management, use various time planning applications. If the material is difficult, look for additional materials through such tools as YouTube, ChatGPT. Even if you can't find solutions. You also need to know your learning style. Determine in what form the information will be remembered and understood.	1
	Don't give up, don't feel inferior even if you didn't have time to discuss the topic in class, go to the teacher after class, this affects self-esteem, it's important to be brave to voice your difficulties and complexities to the professor. Be creative and resourceful. Find and use different tools to overcome barriers. Use the device at hand, like Google Translate, to convey thoughts in English in a timely manner. Family and colleagues with the manager helped to cope with the lack of time; they created favorable conditions for learning, and to achieve such relationships with everyone, communication skills are needed. It is necessary to set priorities correctly	5
	Look for sources and study independently if the material is complex	6

Table 6. Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning reflect the difficulties that respondents face and how they overcome them during their studies.

### ***Challenges During Studying***

According to the answers to sub-theme 6.1 Challenges during studying of Table 6, participants identified three main challenges they faced during their lifelong learning: lack of time, language barriers, and difficulty understanding course materials. These challenges were particularly prevalent among participants juggling multiple responsibilities such as work, family, and school.

Respondents 2 and 3 reported struggling with language barriers during international programs or courses conducted in English. Respondents 1, 4, and 5 noted a constant lack of time to manage study commitments alongside other responsibilities. Additionally, Respondents 5, 6, and 7 shared that some course materials were difficult to understand, especially when they were presented in a format or language unfamiliar to them.

### ***Overcoming Difficulties During Studying***

6.2 Overcoming difficulties during studying in Table 6 showed that despite these obstacles, participants demonstrated resilience and resourcefulness in managing and overcoming their learning difficulties. A variety of strategies were used, including improving time management, improving communication, using digital tools, and seeking academic and emotional support.

Respondent 3 shared, “Be creative by using different tools like Google Translate when there is a language barrier.”

Respondent 1 shared how learning to use time management apps and understanding her preferred learning style helped make learning more effective, “To improve time management, I use different planning tools. If the material is difficult, I look for additional resources on YouTube or ask professors. It’s important to know how you learn best —

what format helps you understand and retain information.” Respondent 5 emphasized the role of open communication and support:

“Don’t be afraid to tell your professor about your difficulties. Not telling them breeds dissatisfaction, which is bad for your self-esteem. You need to be brave and resourceful – use whatever tools you have at your disposal and rely on the support of your family and colleagues. It’s also important to prioritize.”

Respondent 6 reflected on the deeper social and emotional support needed for success, “Without the support of your loved ones and colleagues, it’s hard to succeed. Relationships are a fundamental part of life, so you need communication skills to build those connections.” Adult learners face several challenges during their studies, but they overcome them with adaptability, digital tools, self-awareness, and support from others. Time management, emotional resilience, and communication have become key tools in removing barriers to successful learning.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presents the key findings from interviews with seven adult learners aged 25 to 65 who have participated in various forms of continuous education in Kazakhstan. The data analysis identified four main themes: Reasons and Influences Behind Adults’ Participation in Lifelong Learning, Motivation for Continuous Learning, Expected Outcomes from Continuous Education, and Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning, which align with the research questions and sub-questions guiding this study.

Participants reported a variety of reasons for engaging in lifelong learning. Most cited professional demands and the desire to stay competitive in a fast-changing labor market, while a few were motivated by personal interest or the pursuit of a long-held dream. Across the sample, all participants viewed continuous learning as a dual-purpose process involving both personal growth and career development. In addition, six of the

seven participants noted that their decision to pursue learning was influenced by support from their social or professional environment, including family, colleagues, or supervisors.

Motivation to continue learning was primarily internal for most respondents. Five participants emphasized self-realization and the joy of learning as their main drivers, while two described a balanced combination of internal and external motivators. All participants shared that academic or professional success—such as high grades or the application of new skills—significantly boosted their motivation. Four interviewees acknowledged experiencing periods of decreased motivation, usually due to workload or stress, but reported using strategies such as time-outs, emotional support, or reframing goals to regain focus. Every participant emphasized that access to resources like time, finances, and emotional support was essential for maintaining motivation throughout their learning journey.

The findings also highlighted numerous positive outcomes of lifelong learning. All seven participants reported improved self-confidence and professional growth, while six described noticeable improvements in communication and problem-solving at work. New skills and knowledge were applied not only in their careers but also in everyday life — from parenting and travel planning to financial literacy and intercultural communication. Each participant also described a shift in how they perceive their future, indicating that lifelong learning contributed to broader thinking, increased confidence, and greater willingness to pursue ambitious goals.

Despite these successes, participants also described real challenges in their learning process. The most common were language barriers, time constraints, and difficulty with course materials. Nevertheless, all seven respondents demonstrated resilience and adaptability by developing strategies such as better time management, creative use of

learning tools (e.g., Google Translate or YouTube), and seeking support from peers, family, and instructors.

In summary, this chapter shows that adult learners in Kazakhstan are highly adaptive, reflective, and motivated individuals who seek not only to improve their professional standing but also to grow personally. Their experiences with lifelong learning suggest that, when provided with the right support and resources, adults are fully capable of overcoming challenges and achieving meaningful results through lifelong learning.

## Chapter 5. Discussion

The discussion chapter describes all the results of this study in terms of the themes of Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning, Motivation for Continuous Learning, Expected Outcomes from Continuous Education, and Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning and their sub-themes related to lifelong learning of adults aged 25 to 65, supported by the results of scientific research from the literature review.

The aim of this study is to examine why adults aged 25–65 in Kazakhstan continue their education, what motivates them, what challenges they face during their learning, and what results they achieve after completing their education. This discussion relates the data to the existing literature and theoretical framework, particularly self-determination theory and human capital theory (Bülbül & Yalçınkaya, 2024; Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

### **Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning**

This section examines the main reasons behind adults' decisions to continue their education, focusing on three areas: the need to remain competitive, the balance between personal and professional goals, and the role of the social environment.

#### ***The Need to Continue Learning.***

My findings show that five out of seven participants chose to study in order to remain competitive in the labor market, upgrade skills, or combine previous knowledge in new professional areas. It shows that adults in Kazakhstan recognize the need to continue learning to remain competitive in the job market and improve their quality of life.

Similarly, previous research, including studies by Boeren (2017) and reports from international organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD, emphasizes that lifelong learning is essential for economic growth and reducing inequality. However, two younger participants indicated that their reason for study was personal interest or passion, rather than professional need—showing a different reason than most others. This difference in

motivation supports Illeris's (2003) idea that people's reasons to learn can change at different stages of life.

Taken together, these findings reinforce both the personal and economic significance of lifelong learning, underlining that the development of human capital through continuous education remains critical for both individual and societal advancement.

### ***The Main Goal in Continuous Learning***

All participants expressed that both personal development and career advancement were important goals. However, three respondents answered that personal development comes first, and only then career opportunities. According to Bellare et al. (2021), in a rapidly changing world where automation and job losses are occurring, people need to constantly improve their knowledge and skills to remain competitive and flexible in a changing economy and labor market. There are external and internal factors that motivate adults to return to education. External factors include professional needs, such as career opportunities, changing specialties, acquiring new or improving existing skills to increase expertise, and obtaining certificates or diplomas to confirm expertise. Internal factors include the desire for personal growth, self-improvement, and gaining confidence and self-esteem (Bellare et al., 2021). According to the interview results, both external and internal factors generally influence adults' decisions to continue their education, showing that internal and external goals often coexist and reinforce each other.

### ***The Impact of the Environment to Learn***

Six out of seven participants reported that support from family, colleagues, or supervisors influenced their decision to pursue further education. This highlights the importance of encouragement and emotional support in adult learning, as described in Laal et al.'s (2014) stages of adult learning. It also reflects the relatedness component of Self-

Determination Theory, which emphasizes that feeling connected to others can enhance motivation (Bülbül & Yalçınkaya, 2024). In contrast, one participant mentioned having no external influence and preferred to study herself. This suggests that while social support is important for many, some adults may be more motivated by personal autonomy or may choose independent learning due to their personality or life situation (Bülbül & Yalçınkaya, 2024).

In summary, the results of the Reasons and Influences Behind Adults' Participation in Lifelong Learning theme show that most adult learners are motivated by a combination of external pressures, such as labour market demands, and internal aspirations for personal growth and self-fulfillment. Although career advancement is important, the desire for self-development remains a central goal for many participants. In addition, the influence of family, colleagues, and supervisors plays a key role in encouraging participation, although some learners choose to pursue education independently. These results highlight the complex interplay between personal ambition, social support, and economic necessity in motivating adult learners to pursue education.

### **Motivation for Continuous Learning**

This section examines various aspects of motivation among adult learners in Kazakhstan, focusing on four key areas: the types of motivation that influence learning decisions, the impact of successful learning experiences on ongoing motivation, moments when motivation declines, and the role of resources in maintaining motivation. These topics are discussed in the context of self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and supported by relevant research.

### ***Factors Influencing Motivation to Study***

Most participants were primarily motivated by internal factors self-realization, personal interest, and the joy of gaining knowledge. This directly supports Self-

Determination Theory's emphasis on autonomy and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is one of the main theories that studies people's motivation to learn. Autonomous or internal motivation is based on a person's desire for self-actualization, self-development without external influences, and the competence component is a desire to possess expertise (Rothes et al., 2014). Motivation plays an important role in an adult's decision to study or not. Two participants indicated that both internal and external motivations (like financial benefit or career goals) were equally influential. This balance also aligns with Rothes et al. (2014), who describe how autonomous motivation can coexist with controlled or external motivation, which often stems from the need to improve one's quality of life.

#### ***The Impact of Post-Training Success on Motivation to Continue Learning.***

According to the research of Bülbül and Yalçinkaya (2024), development does not end in adulthood, since the brain is neuroplastic in both children and adults, so development continues throughout their lives. There is a connection between lifelong learning and life satisfaction, as personal growth and self-development have a positive impact on people's quality of life and well-being. In turn, satisfaction and motivation are closely interrelated in lifelong learning, as satisfaction manifests itself as an assessment of a person's quality of life, and motivation as a process to achieve a goal. Self-determination theory also highlights the importance of satisfying three basic needs such as competence, autonomy and relatedness (Bülbül & Yalçinkaya, 2024).

All participants reported that successful experiences whether academic or practical strengthened their motivation to keep learning. This finding is consistent with Bülbül & Yalçinkaya (2024), who link personal growth and satisfaction to increased motivation. Success validated learners' competence, which is a key psychological need under self-determination theory.

### ***Motivation Loss Moments***

Four participants experienced temporary dips in motivation. These were often related to workload, stress, or lack of clarity about the relevance of the course content. Respondents described how they recovered by reassessing goals, asking for help, and maintaining social connections. These strategies reflect theory's emphasis on relatedness and competence as protective factors against declining motivation (Bülbül & Yalçınkaya, 2024).

All these needs, such as competence and relatedness to maintain motivation during adult learning, are supported by self-determination theory. If knowledge is not useful for increasing expertise and there is no support from colleagues for work tasks and relatives for family obligations, a person can easily lose motivation to study (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

### ***The Role of Available Resources in Maintaining Motivation for Learning***

Difficulties in accessing adult learning can be caused by various barriers, both personal and institutional. Barriers can also be caused by a lack of resources such as finance, time and support. For example, the cost of training may be too high, there is no flexible training schedule for working people and there is no support at work from colleagues, management, or relatives. All these barriers make adult learning difficult to access and are directly related to the motivation to continue learning (Boeren, 2017).

All participants agreed that time, finances, and emotional support were critical to sustaining motivation. While one respondent managed independently thanks to her organizational skills, others relied on workplace flexibility or family support. This confirms Boeren's (2017) claim that lack of structural resources is a key barrier to adult participation.

In summary, the Motivation for Continuous Learning findings show that internal motivation—driven by a desire for self-improvement, expertise, and personal growth—

was the dominant force for most participants. However, external factors such as career advancement and financial benefit also played an important complementary role.

Motivation was further reinforced through successful learning outcomes, which boosted learners' confidence and encouraged them to continue studying.

While some participants experienced temporary drops in motivation, their ability to reflect, seek support, and find relevance in their learning helped them recover. These moments highlighted the importance of relatedness and competence, two essential components of sustained motivation.

Crucially, access to resources such as time, financial support, and emotional encouragement played a significant role in whether learners could maintain motivation. Participants with strong support networks or flexible work environments found it easier to remain engaged. These findings align with Boeren's (2017) conclusion that adult learning is not only an individual effort but also shaped by the structural support systems that surround learners.

Overall, motivation among adult learners is complex and ever-changing. Supporting lifelong learning in Kazakhstan will require not only appealing to individuals' intrinsic goals, but also reducing external barriers and enhancing access to the resources they need to succeed.

### **Expected Outcomes From Continuous Education**

This section discusses the results related to the outcomes experienced by adult learners after participating in continuous education. The outcomes are categorized into four main sub-themes: professional development, personal development, improvements in communication and problem-solving, and changed perceptions of future prospects.

### ***The impact of New Skills and Knowledge on Professional Activity***

Participants reported significant professional growth as a result of lifelong learning. They described increased confidence in their work, improved technical and professional skills, and greater problem-solving competence. Several participants noted that acquiring new knowledge helped them adapt to the demands of a changing labor market and expanded their career opportunities. These findings are consistent with human capital theory, which posits that education is an investment that increases individual productivity and employability (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021).

### ***Positive Impact of New Skills and Knowledges on Everyday Life***

In addition to career advancement, participants reported positive changes in their personal lives. They reported improvements in parenting, interpersonal relationships, emotional regulation, and time management skills. These findings are consistent with those of Smidt et al. (2009), who highlight that the impact of adult learning extends beyond the professional environment and impacts on broader aspects of personal well-being. Participants' experiences indicated that skills such as emotional intelligence and self-management were as important to their success and satisfaction as professional competence.

### ***Improvements in Communication With Colleagues or in Solving Work Problems***

A recurring finding in the interviews was an improvement in communication skills and problem-solving abilities. Participants noted that their ability to collaborate with colleagues had improved significantly and they felt more comfortable solving work-related problems. The skills acquired, such as research, digital literacy, and critical thinking, contributed to more effective work practices and increased their confidence in a team environment. These findings further support the behavioral level of change discussed by Smidt et al. (2009) in the context of assessing learning outcomes.

### ***Changed Perception of Future Prospects***

Perhaps one of the most profound impacts reported was the transformation in how participants perceived their future potential. Many described a shift from doubt to empowerment after successfully completing their studies. They expressed a new openness to career changes, further education, and international opportunities. This finding strongly echoes Buren's (2017) findings that lifelong learning not only builds knowledge and skills but also changes individual identity and self-efficacy. Participants went beyond simply improving skills—they redefined what they believed was possible for themselves.

Overall, the results of the Expected Outcomes of Lifelong Learning study confirm that lifelong learning has positive effects on both professional and personal life. Participants not only improved their skills and careers but also experienced broader life transformations, including increased emotional resilience, stronger relationships, and a more optimistic outlook on their future. These results provide strong support for the integration of more flexible and accessible lifelong learning programmes into national education strategies.

### **Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning**

This section explores the main obstacles reported by participants, such as time constraints, difficulty understanding complex material, and language barriers. It also examines the strategies learners used to overcome these difficulties, highlighting the role of personal resilience, creativity, and external support systems. The findings are discussed in the context of existing research on adult and non-traditional learners.

### ***Challenges During Studying***

Participants faced common challenges such as time constraints, difficulty understanding course materials, and language barriers. These obstacles are well

documented in the literature. Chen (2013) points out that adult learners—non-traditional students—often struggle in systems built for younger, full-time learners.

According to Chen (2013), students are divided into two types depending on their age: those 18-24 years old are called traditional students, and those 25 years old and above are called non-traditional students. Due to the fact that higher education is more focused on traditional students and the higher education system is generally built more for these students than for adults, non-traditional students experience difficulties during their studies, since they put work first and study second.

Also, according to research by Bellare et al. (2021), in addition to the difficulty of adapting to young students and mastering the material, there are several common barriers that adults may face during their studies that can negatively affect their motivation to continue their studies. These include a lack of time when combining personal life, work, and study, a lack of support from family and management, and financial difficulties when income decreases.

### ***Overcoming Difficulties While Studying***

Despite these challenges, all respondents described effective strategies to overcome them. These included improving time management, using translation tools and digital platforms, developing communication skills, and seeking support from colleagues and teachers. The role of workplace and family support was particularly strong, with six participants stating that their employers or family members actively helped them succeed. Interestingly, responses from older participants (aged 36–65) revealed unique challenges with course material and balancing multiple roles, supporting Bellar et al.'s (2021) identification of age-related barriers to learning. However, the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by these participants were notable, particularly their creativity in finding tools and their persistence in seeking help.

The results of the Challenges in Doing Continuous Learning theme show that although adult learners face significant barriers, particularly related to time, academic demands, and language, they demonstrate strong resilience and adaptability in overcoming them. Participants used a variety of practical strategies, such as improving time management, seeking help from peers and mentors, and using digital resources. Importantly, workplace flexibility and family support were found to be key success factors. These findings are supported by the broader literature highlighting the importance of external support and personal resourcefulness in adult education, particularly for older learners juggling multiple roles. Addressing these challenges more systematically could further enhance adult participation and success in lifelong learning programs.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study reinforce the ideas of self-determination theory and human capital theory. Adults' decisions to engage in lifelong learning were strongly influenced by their need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and by the belief that education is an investment in their future career and personal growth. In Kazakhstan, internal motivation and social support emerged as particularly important in overcoming barriers to education, adding a local perspective to existing theories. These findings suggest that education policies should focus on making lifelong learning more flexible, affordable, and supportive to encourage wider adult participation and to contribute to national development.

This study has strengths, such as gathering rich, detailed experiences from adults of different ages and backgrounds. However, it is limited by the small sample size and the exclusive use of online interviews. Future research could involve a larger and more diverse group of participants, including those from rural areas, and study changes in adult learning

motivations over time. It would also be valuable to explore the role of informal and non-formal learning opportunities in expanding access to lifelong education in Kazakhstan.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

### Introduction

In this final chapter, I bring together the main findings of the study, answering each research question, and reflecting on the overall meaning of the results. I also discuss the study's limitations and offer recommendations for future research and practice to better support adult lifelong learning in Kazakhstan.

#### ***RQ: Why do Adults Aged From 25 to 65 Choose to Participate in the Lifelong Learning Process in Kazakhstan?***

The study found that adults aged 25 to 65 in Kazakhstan choose to continue their education for a mix of personal and professional reasons. Some want to keep up with the rapidly changing job market, while others seek personal growth and fulfillment. Many participants mentioned that both inner motivation (such as self-development) and external factors (like career advancement or financial improvement) influenced their decision. Support from family, colleagues, and employers also played an important role. These findings align with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in sustaining motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and Human Capital Theory, which views education as an investment in future productivity and economic stability (Van Nieuwenhove & De Wever, 2021). Overall, adults are motivated by the need to stay relevant, to grow as individuals, and to improve their lives, even if they have to overcome significant challenges along the way.

#### ***SQ1: What Reasons did Adults Give to be Involved in Lifelong Learning?***

Most participants noted that both professional reasons—such as staying competitive and mastering new skills—and personal growth were important drivers for their decision to continue learning. However, three participants emphasized that personal development was their primary motivation, with career goals being secondary, though they

did not exclude the importance of external factors. This suggests that adults often pursue lifelong learning for a combination of internal and external reasons, and the balance between these motivations can vary depending on an individual's age, career stage, and personal circumstances (Rothes et al., 2014; Illeris, 2003).

***SQ2: What are the Motivating Factors for Adults to Pursue Lifelong Learning?***

Internal motivation, such as a desire for personal growth and satisfaction, was the strongest factor. Nevertheless, external motivations, like career opportunities and financial incentives, also mattered. Success during learning experiences—like achieving good results—boosted motivation, while having enough time, money, and emotional support was critical to keeping that motivation alive (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Rothes et al., 2014; Boeren, 2017).

***SQ3: What Outcomes do People get After Developing or Acquiring New Skills?***

Participants reported clear benefits. Professionally, they became more confident, effective, and collaborative. Personally, they improved their time management, emotional intelligence, and even their relationships. Lifelong learning also helped them rethink their future, making them more optimistic and ambitious about what they could achieve (Smidt et al., 2009; Nikolov & Yeh, 2021; Boeren, 2017).

***SQ4: What Difficulties do People Face in Lifelong Learning and How do They Overcome Them?***

The main challenges were lack of time, difficulties understanding complex materials, and language barriers. However, participants overcame these obstacles with strong resilience—using better time management, online tools, help from colleagues, and support from family. This shows that even when the road is tough, adults can succeed if they have the right strategies and support (Chen, 2013; Bellare et al., 2021; Boeren, 2017).

This study shows that adults aged 25 to 65 in Kazakhstan engage in lifelong learning to combine personal fulfillment and professional growth. Intrinsic motivation, such as the desire for growth and self-improvement, played a leading role, while extrinsic factors, such as career development and financial incentives, also influenced their decisions. The results confirm that when adults are successful in learning and receive support from their social and work environments, they are more likely to remain motivated and committed.

Addressing the main research questions, this study highlights that lifelong learning not only improves professional skills, but also brings positive changes to adults' personal lives, relationships, and self-confidence. Despite barriers such as time constraints and academic challenges, participants demonstrated resilience and adaptability. These findings support the importance of creating more flexible, supportive educational opportunities for adults and confirm the relevance of self-determination theory and human capital theory to understanding adult learning motivation today.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the low global and national participation rates in lifelong learning among adults aged 25 and older, several recommendations can be made to enhance adult education engagement, particularly in Kazakhstan:

#### ***Expand Research in the Local Context***

There is still a lack of in-depth research on lifelong learning in Kazakhstan, especially among older adults (Toimbek, 2022). Universities and think tanks should be encouraged to conduct further studies on motivations, barriers, and learning outcomes. These findings will be critical to inform evidence-based policies.

### ***Establish a National Adult Learning Strategy and Monitoring System***

Kazakhstan currently lacks a comprehensive system for monitoring adult competencies and lifelong learning participation beyond the PIAAC (Toimbek, 2022). A national strategy should be developed to guide policy, allocate resources, and track progress. This strategy should be informed by data collection systems that regularly assess skill levels, barriers, and learning outcomes.

### ***Promote Employer Engagement and Incentives***

Since 7 out of 10 companies in Kazakhstan report a shortage of qualified staff (World Economic Forum, 2025), employers should be encouraged—through tax breaks or recognition programs—to support employee upskilling. This includes sponsoring professional development programs, granting paid study leave, and offering internal training opportunities.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this research gives useful insights, it has a few limitations:

Only seven participants were interviewed, which limits how much the findings can be generalized.

Participants were found through purposeful and snowball sampling, which might have attracted more motivated learners.

It covers only one point in time and does not track changes in motivation or outcomes over the years.

### **Reflection**

I began this study out of a personal interest in understanding why adults continue to study despite facing many challenges at work and in their personal lives. Initially, I focused on reviewing the literature, developing interview questions, and carefully selecting participants who could share a variety of experiences. Overall, the process went smoothly,

but unexpected challenges also arose. Recruiting participants who met all the criteria and processing responses took longer than expected.

One of the most important lessons I learned is that flexibility is critical in qualitative research. If I were to do this study again, I would allow more time to recruit participants and consider including a wider range. Ethical considerations were always at the forefront: I ensured that participants were fully informed of their rights, obtained written consent, and guaranteed confidentiality. During the interviews, when participants shared personal or sensitive information, I remained respectful and ensured their safety and support. As I reflected on this process, I realized how important it is not only to collect data, but also to approach the research with empathy, responsibility, and an open mind.

## References

- Ates, H., & Alsai, K. (2012). The importance of lifelong learning has been increasing. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *46*, 4092-4096.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.205>
- Bellare, Y., Smith, A., Cochran, K., & Lopez, S. G. (2021). Motivations and Barriers for Adult Learner Achievement: Recommendations for Institutions of Higher Education. *Adult Learning*, *34*(1), 30–39.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10451595211059574>
- Bloomberg, L., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226613>
- Boeren, E. (2017). Understanding adult lifelong learning participation as a layered problem. *Studies in Continuing Education*, *39*(2), 161–175.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037x.2017.1310096>
- Bolzonella, F., De Greef, M., & Segers, M. (2024). Training design for social inclusion: The impact of sociodemographic factors on immigrant learners in Dutch adult education programs. *Social Psychology of Education*, *27*(6), 3453–3490.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-024-09936-w>
- Bourke, B. (2014). Positionality: reflecting on the research process. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1026>
- Bülbül, A. E., & Yalçinkaya, D. (2024). The regulatory effect of self-control in the relationship between life satisfaction and lifelong learning motivation in adults. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *43*(6), 625–639.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2024.2376670>

- Chen, J. C. (2013). Teaching nontraditional adult students: adult learning theories in practice. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(4), 406–418. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2013.860101>
- Chiţiba, C. A. (2012). Lifelong learning challenges and opportunities for traditional universities. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 1943–1947. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.408>
- Dæhlen, M., & Ure, O. B. (2009). Low-skilled adults in formal continuing education: does their motivation differ from other learners? *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 28(5), 661–674. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370903189948>
- De Greef, M., Verté, D., & Segers, M. (2014). Differential outcomes of adult education on adult learners' increase in social inclusion. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 37(1), 62–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037x.2014.967346>
- De Meyer, A., & Ang, J. (2021). *Building excellence in higher education*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003083719>
- Desjardins, R., & Ioannidou, A. (2020). The political economy of adult learning systems—some institutional features that promote adult learning participation. *Zeitschrift Für Weiterbildungsforschung*, 43(2), 143–168. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40955-020-00159-y>
- Fouarge, D., Schils, T., & De Grip, A. (2012). Why do low-educated workers invest less in further training? *Applied Economics*, 45(18), 2587–2601. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2012.671926>
- Illeris, K. (2003). Adult education as experienced by the learners. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 22(1), 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370304827>

- Iqbal, S., Razalli, M. R., & Taib, C. a. B. (2023). Influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on higher education performance: mediating effect of quality culture. *Frontiers in Education*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2023.1099415>
- Jonson, B. & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches* (4th ed.) SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Kalz, M. (2015). Lifelong Learning and Its Support with New Technologies. In *Elsevier eBooks* (pp. 93–99). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.92006-3>
- Kitiashvili, A., & Tasker, P. B. (2016). The relationship between attitudes, motives and participation of adults in continuing education: The case of Georgia. *Int J Res Rev Educ*, 3, 13-21.
- Kungu, K., & Machtmes, K. (2009). Lifelong learning: Looking at triggers for adult learning. *The International Journal of Learning*, 16(7), 497–511.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281763837\\_Lifelong\\_learning\\_Looking\\_at\\_triggers\\_for\\_adult\\_learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281763837_Lifelong_learning_Looking_at_triggers_for_adult_learning)
- Laal, M. (2012). Benefits of lifelong learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 4268–4272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.239>
- Laal, M., Laal, A., & Aliramaei, A. (2014). Continuing education; lifelong learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 4052–4056.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.889>
- Lattimore, F., Steinberg, D. M., & Zhu, A. (2023). *The Economic Effect of Gaining a New Qualification Later in Life*. arXiv preprint arXiv:2304.01490.  
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2304.01490arXiv>
- Lee, P., & Pang, V. (2014). The influence of motivational orientations on academic achievement among working adults in continuing education. *International Journal of Training Research*, 12(1), 5–15. <https://doi.org/10.5172/ijtr.2014.12.1.5>

- Lindqvist, M. H., Mozelius, P., Jaldemark, J., & Cleveland-Innes, M. (2023). Higher education transformation towards lifelong learning in a digital era – a scoping literature review. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 1–15.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2023.2279047>
- Matygov, M., Bagov, M., & Amirova, E. (2023). How artificial intelligence is flushing out professions. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 402, 03035.  
<https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202340203035>
- Nikolov, P., & Yeh, S. (2021). *Reaping the Rewards Later: How Education Improves Old-Age Cognition in South Africa*. EdWorkingPaper No. 21-457. Annenberg Institute at Brown University. <https://doi.org/10.26300/samk-6307>
- Omirbayev, S., Akhmed-Zaki, D., Mukhatayev, A., Biloshchytskyi, A., Kassenov, K., & Faizullin, A. (2021b). The Conceptual Foundations of Lifelong Learning in Kazakhstan: Process Modeling. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)*, 16(17), 60. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v16i17.23685>
- Rothés, A., Lemos, M. S., & Gonçalves, T. (2014). Motives and beliefs of learners enrolled in adult education. *Procedia: Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 112, 939–948. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1252>
- Rubenson, K., & Desjardins, R. (2009). The impact of welfare state regimes on barriers to participation in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 59(3), 187–207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713609331548>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.55.1.68>

UNESCO. (2016). *3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 3)*.

Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245913>

Van Nieuwenhove, L., & De Wever, B. (2021). Why are low-educated adults underrepresented in adult education? Studying the role of educational background in expressing learning needs and barriers. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 44(1), 189–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037x.2020.1865299>

Sloane-Seale, A., & Kops, B. (2008). Older Adults in Lifelong Learning: Participation and Successful aging. *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education*, 34(1).

<https://doi.org/10.21225/d5pc7r>

Smidt, A., Balandin, S., Sigafos, J., & Reed, V. A. (2009). The Kirkpatrick model: A useful tool for evaluating training outcomes. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 34(3), 266–274.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13668250903093125>

Sunu, S., & Baidoo-Anu, D. (2023). Relationship between students' academic self-concept, intrinsic motivation, and academic performance. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, 12(1), 41–53.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2023.2292033>

Toimbek, D. (2022). Building human capital in Kazakhstan: Information-processing skills and socio-economic outcomes of the population. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 29(2), 683–702.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/14779714221145861>

Yılmaz, E., & Kaygın, H. (2018). The relation between lifelong learning tendency and achievement motivation. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(3a), 1.

<https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v6i3a.3141>

Zhou, Z., & Zhang, Y. (2023). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Distance Education: A Self-Determination Perspective. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 38(1), 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2023.2177032>

## Appendix A: AI Declaration Form



Thesis Title: Exploring Adults' needs and motivation to participate in Lifelong education programs.

### Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

- with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or
- without the use of artificial intelligence tools.

*(If you have used AI tools as defined in the GSE policy document, please complete the rest of this form.)*

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used Chat GPT for paraphrasing text and for finding appropriate structures.

I also declare that I

I am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),

- have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,
- am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,
- have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and
- acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding appropriate AI use.

Name: Guldana Yessetova

Signature:

Date: 28.04.2025

## Appendix C: Consent Letters

### Informed Consent Form

**Introduction.** You are invited to participate in a research study entitled Exploring Adults' needs and motivation to participate in Lifelong education programs.

**Procedures.** If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an online or in-person interview lasting approximately 50-70 minutes. The interview will focus on your experiences in lifelong learning and how it has influenced your personal and professional development. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded for accuracy in data collection.

**Risks.** There are no known significant risks associated with participating in this study. However, there is a minimal risk of a breach of anonymity. All data will be kept confidential, and all measures will be taken to protect your personal information.

**Benefits.** Anticipated benefits from this study add the potential benefits to Nazarbayev University, science, and adults, who do not continue their education.

**Compensation.** No tangible compensation will be given. A copy of the research results will be available at the conclusion of the study and will be sent to you upon request.

**Confidentiality & Privacy.** Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by the law. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The data will be stored on my password-protected laptop, to which only I have access. All information will be completely deleted after three years.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study.** Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, even after the interviews are completed you may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Points of Contact. It is understood that should any questions or comments arise regarding this project, the Principal Investigator, Prof. Ahmet Aypay, +7 (705)186-9784, ahmet.aypay@nu.edu.kz should be contacted. Any other questions or concerns may be addressed to the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee, Sub-Committee for Graduate School of Education gse@nu.edu.kz.

Statement of Consent.

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

Give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

The researchers clearly explained to me the background information and objectives of the study and what my participation in this study involves.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I can at any time and without giving any reasons withdraw my consent, and this will not have any negative consequences for myself.

I understand that the information collected during this study will be treated confidentially.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D: Recruitment Emails

**Subject:** Invitation to Participate in an Interview

Dear *Name*,

My name is Guldana Yessetova, and I am a graduate student at Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University. As part of my research on how adult people of different age categories, genders, educational backgrounds and with different work experiences, perceive and experience the process of lifelong education, and what needs and factors motivate them to continue learning, I am conducting interviews with adults aged from 25 to 65 who continue to participate in lifelong learning.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview, which will take approximately 50-70 minutes and can be conducted online via Zoom or in-person. Your insights and experiences would be invaluable to my research, and I believe your participation will enhance understanding of my research “Exploring Adults’ needs and motivation to participate in Lifelong education programs”.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. All information will be kept confidential, and your responses will be used solely for the purpose of this research.

If you agree to participate, please let me know when would be a convenient time for you to conduct the interview, and I will do my best to accommodate your schedule. Thank you for considering this opportunity, and I hope to hear from you soon!

Best regards,  
Guldana Yessetova

2nd year master students of Educational Leadership in Higher Education program  
E-mail: guldana.syzdykova@nu.edu.kz  
Tel.: +7 778 7977744  
Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University

## Appendix E: Data Collection Instruments

### Interview questions

1. **Which age group do you belong to: from 25 to 35 years, from 36 to 45 years, from 46 to 55 years or from 56 to 65 and older?**
2. **What is your educational level?**
3. **What is your work experience?**
  - *How long have you been working in your current job?*
  - *How many times have you changed your vocation or profession?*
4. **Why did you decide to continue learning?**
  - *What life events or situations influenced your decision to return to studying?*
  - *What is your main goal in lifelong learning? Is it more related to career growth or personal development?*
  - *Who were the influencers who affected your decision? (family, friends, colleagues)*
5. **What factors influence your motivation to continue learning?**
  - *Do external factors, such as career advancement or financial improvement, affect your desire to study?*
  - *Are there any internal factors, such as the desire for self-fulfillment or the satisfaction from gaining new knowledge?*
  - *How does your confidence in success after studying influence your motivation?*
  - *Are there moments when your motivation decreases? If so, what helps you get back to learning?*
  - *What role do available resources (time, finances, support) play in maintaining your motivation?*
6. **What results do you get after developing or acquiring a new skill?**

- *How do new skills affect your professional activities? Do you notice changes in your career opportunities?*
- *Do the acquired skills influence your self-esteem and confidence?*
- *How do new skills help you in your everyday life, beyond work?*
- *Do you notice improvements in communication with colleagues or in solving work-related tasks thanks to your new skills?*
- *Are there any skills that have changed your perception of future prospects?*

**7. What challenges did you face during learning and how did you cope with them?**

- *What challenges arise most often: lack of time, difficulties with material, lack of support, or other factors?*
- *How do you manage the lack of time for studying amidst work and family responsibilities?*
- *Have you encountered educational programs or methods that seemed too difficult? How did you handle that?*
- *Are there external factors, such as financial difficulties or lack of access to resources, that hinder your learning?*
- *What kind of support do you receive from loved ones or colleagues in overcoming learning challenges?*

## Appendix F: Data Analysis – Transcript and Coding Samples

### Basic Information

Age group: 25–35 years

Educational level: Master's degree in Public Administration

Work experience: 12 years in total, mainly in HR

Current job experience: 1 year and 3 months

Career changes: 3 times (HR → Marketing/PR → Business Development)

### Interview Questions and Answers

#### 1. Why did you decide to continue learning?

— I have always enjoyed the learning process itself. I believe it is impossible to know everything, and continuous learning helps me stay relevant, especially with fast changes like the development of AI. Learning is a journey and a part of my self-realization.

#### 2. What life events or situations influenced your decision to return to studying?

— It was driven by an internal need for growth, curiosity about the world, and a desire to enhance my financial opportunities.

#### 3. What is your main goal in lifelong learning? Is it more related to career growth or personal development?

— Mainly personal development. Career growth is secondary. Learning helps me overcome impostor syndrome and gain formal confirmation of my knowledge through certificates.

#### 4. Who were the influencers who affected your decision?

— Influencers include friends, experts I admire, and professionals in my environment who inspire me to keep learning.

#### 5. What factors influence your motivation to continue learning?

**Internal factors:** Desire for self-fulfillment, satisfaction from gaining new knowledge, desire to validate expertise.

**External factors:** Financial growth and applying new skills in projects.

**Confidence after studying:** Strengthens motivation; learning success increases belief in oneself.

**Moments of decreased motivation:** Happen when there is a heavy workload or boring content. Certification or visible results help restore motivation.

**Role of resources:** Time, finances, and emotional support are critical. Lack of time is the most challenging factor.

## 6. What results do you get after developing or acquiring a new skill?

**Professional impact:** Improved communication, confidence in professional discussions, ability to use new technologies like AI to reduce workload.

**Personal impact:** Improved emotional intelligence, communication, adaptability in everyday life.

**Change in future prospects:** Shifted mindset from vertical career growth to broader, flexible professional development and building a personal brand.

## 7. What challenges did you face during learning and how did you cope with them?

**Challenges:** Lack of time, difficult material, moments of low motivation.

**Coping strategies:** Time management (e.g., Pomodoro technique), audio-learning during routines, asking colleagues or finding answers online, using YouTube for difficult topics.

**External barriers:** Sometimes financial barriers prevented access to expensive courses.

**Support:** Occasional support from colleagues and teamwork helped during intensive study periods.