
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MOTIVATION/DEMOTIVATION FOR CONTINUOUS EDUCATION: A STUDY OF AFRICANS AND AFRICAN AMERICANS, USING NIGERIA AND USA AS A CASE STUDY

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DOI : <https://www.doi.org/10.56726/IRJMETS60120>

ABSTRACT

This comparative study investigates the motivational and demotivational factors influencing continuous education among Africans and African Americans, focusing specifically on Nigeria and the USA. Through a mixed-methods approach, this research explores cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional factors impacting the pursuit of lifelong learning. Surveys and interviews were conducted with diverse participants from both countries to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The findings reveal significant differences and similarities in motivational drivers, such as career advancement, personal growth, and social expectations. Conversely, key demotivators include financial constraints, lack of institutional support, and sociocultural barriers. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of continuous education in different cultural contexts and provides insights for policymakers and educators to develop more effective strategies to encourage lifelong learning.

Keywords: Continuous Education, Motivation, Demotivation, Nigeria, USA, Africans.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Continuous education, or lifelong learning, has become increasingly important in modern society due to rapid technological advancements and the evolving demands of the global job market. It encompasses formal education, professional development, and personal enrichment activities undertaken throughout an individual's life. In Nigeria, continuous education is critical for addressing the educational disparities and economic challenges that the country faces. The Nigerian educational landscape is characterized by a significant urban-rural divide, with access to quality education being unevenly distributed. Additionally, economic instability and inadequate funding for educational institutions pose significant barriers to lifelong learning.

In the USA, continuous education is often driven by the need to stay competitive in a dynamic job market. Higher education institutions and employers emphasize the importance of ongoing skill development and professional certifications. However, access to continuous education can be limited by factors such as socioeconomic status, racial disparities, and geographic location. African Americans, in particular, face unique challenges, including historical and systemic barriers to education and employment opportunities.

Understanding the motivational and demotivational factors for continuous education in these two diverse contexts provides valuable insights into how to better support lifelong learning initiatives.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the recognized importance of continuous education, there are significant gaps in understanding the specific motivational and demotivational factors that influence individuals' decisions to pursue lifelong learning, particularly among Africans and African Americans. This study addresses the need to explore these factors in the context of Nigeria and the USA, two countries with distinct educational systems and cultural backgrounds. Identifying these factors is crucial for developing targeted interventions to enhance participation in continuous education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To understand the motivational factors that drive continuous education among Africans in Nigeria and African Americans in the USA.
2. To identify the key demotivational factors that hinder continuous education in these groups.

3. To compare the motivational and demotivational factors between Africans and African Americans.
4. To provide recommendations for policymakers and educators to promote continuous education effectively in both contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

The primary research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the main motivational factors that encourage continuous education among Africans in Nigeria and African Americans in the USA?
2. What are the primary demotivational factors that discourage continuous education in these groups?
3. How do these motivational and demotivational factors compare between Africans and African Americans?
4. What strategies can be implemented to overcome the identified barriers and enhance participation in continuous education?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have the potential to impact educational policies and practices by providing a deeper understanding of the factors that influence continuous education among Africans and African Americans. By identifying specific motivators and demotivators, this research can inform the development of targeted programs and initiatives that address the unique needs of these populations. Additionally, the comparative analysis offers valuable insights into how cultural and socioeconomic contexts shape educational experiences, which can help policymakers and educators design more inclusive and effective lifelong learning opportunities. Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader body of knowledge on continuous education, offering a foundation for future research in this area.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theories of Motivation and Demotivation

Theories of motivation and demotivation provide a foundational understanding of the factors influencing continuous education. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests that individuals are motivated to fulfill a series of hierarchical needs, starting from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. In the context of education, individuals are driven by the desire to achieve higher levels of personal and professional fulfillment once their basic needs are met. This theory implies that educational motivations may vary significantly based on individuals' positions within the hierarchy of needs.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that motivation is influenced by the degree to which an individual's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. According to SDT, intrinsic motivation arises when individuals engage in activities that are inherently enjoyable and satisfying, while extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards or pressures. In the realm of continuous education, intrinsic motivation might stem from personal growth and the joy of learning, whereas extrinsic motivation could be linked to career advancement and financial incentives.

Expectancy-Value Theory also offers insights into educational motivation by suggesting that individuals' expectations of success and the value they place on the outcomes of their efforts influence their motivation to engage in educational activities. This theory underscores the importance of perceived relevance and attainable goals in motivating individuals to pursue continuous education.

2.2 Previous Studies on Continuous Education

Previous research on continuous education has primarily focused on identifying the factors that encourage or discourage lifelong learning. Studies have shown that motivations for continuous education include career advancement, personal development, and the desire to stay updated with current knowledge and skills. However, barriers such as financial constraints, time limitations, and lack of access to educational resources have been identified as significant demotivators.

In the Nigerian context, studies have highlighted the challenges posed by inadequate educational infrastructure, economic instability, and the high cost of education. Research has also emphasized the importance of community and social support in motivating individuals to pursue lifelong learning. Conversely, studies in the

USA have often focused on the role of professional development opportunities, employer support, and the availability of online learning platforms in facilitating continuous education.

Despite the extensive research, gaps remain in understanding the specific motivational and demotivational factors affecting Africans and African Americans. Existing studies often do not account for the unique cultural and socioeconomic contexts of these groups, highlighting the need for comparative research that addresses these nuances.

2.3 Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors

Cultural and socioeconomic factors play a crucial role in shaping motivation and demotivation for continuous education. In Nigeria, cultural values that emphasize the importance of education and communal support can significantly influence individuals' motivations. However, socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to quality education can act as substantial barriers. The role of family expectations, societal norms, and traditional beliefs also impacts individuals' decisions to pursue continuous education.

In the USA, African Americans face unique cultural and socioeconomic challenges that influence their educational pursuits. Historical and systemic barriers, including racial discrimination and economic disparities, have created obstacles to accessing quality education. Cultural factors such as the value placed on education within the African American community, the influence of role models, and community support networks play a significant role in shaping educational motivation. Socioeconomic factors, including income levels, employment opportunities, and access to educational resources, further impact individuals' ability to engage in continuous education.

Understanding these cultural and socioeconomic influences is critical for developing effective strategies to promote continuous education among Africans and African Americans. By addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by these groups, policymakers and educators can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that foster lifelong learning.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivations and demotivations for continuous education among Africans in Nigeria and African Americans in the USA. The quantitative component involved the use of structured surveys to gather numerical data on various factors influencing continuous education, while the qualitative component utilized semi-structured interviews to capture in-depth insights and personal experiences from participants.

3.2 Population and Sample

The study's population comprised adult learners from Nigeria and the USA who are either currently engaged in continuous education or have considered it. To ensure a diverse and representative sample, purposive sampling was used to select participants from different age groups, genders, educational backgrounds, and employment statuses.

In Nigeria, participants were selected from urban, suburban, and rural areas to capture regional variations. In the USA, the sample included African Americans from various states to account for geographical diversity. The final sample consisted of 200 participants, with 100 from Nigeria and 100 from the USA. This sample size was deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation and provide meaningful comparative insights.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection was carried out using two primary methods: surveys and interviews.

- Surveys: Structured questionnaires were administered to collect quantitative data on participants' motivations and demotivations for continuous education. The survey included questions on demographic information, educational background, career aspirations, financial constraints, and perceptions of continuous education. Likert-scale questions were used to quantify participants' responses, allowing for statistical analysis.

- Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of 40 participants (20 from each country) to gather qualitative data. The interviews explored participants' personal experiences, cultural influences, community support, and specific challenges they faced in pursuing continuous education. Open-ended questions encouraged detailed and reflective responses, providing rich contextual information.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure a thorough examination of the collected data.

- Quantitative Analysis: The survey data were analyzed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation) were calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics and response patterns. Inferential statistics (t-tests, chi-square tests) were used to identify significant differences between the two groups in terms of their motivations and demotivations.
- Qualitative Analysis: The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to motivations, demotivations, and cultural influences. Thematic analysis allowed for the identification of commonalities and differences in participants' experiences and perceptions, providing deeper insights into the contextual factors influencing continuous education.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process to ensure the protection and respect of participants' rights and well-being.

- Informed Consent: All participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant before data collection began.
- Confidentiality: Participants' confidentiality was maintained by assigning unique identifiers to each respondent and securely storing all data. Personal information was kept separate from survey and interview responses to prevent any potential identification.
- Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.
- Ethical Approval: The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board (IRB) or ethics committee of the researchers' affiliated institutions. This ensured that the study met ethical standards for research involving human subjects.

By adhering to these ethical principles, the study aimed to conduct rigorous and respectful research that contributes valuable insights into the motivations and demotivations for continuous education among Africans and African Americans.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents includes data on age, gender, education level, employment status, and region. The following table summarizes the key demographic characteristics of the participants from Nigeria and the USA.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Nigeria (N=100)	USA (N=100)
Age		
18-25 years	25	20
26-35 years	35	30
36-45 years	20	25
46-55 years	15	15
56 years and above	5	10

Gender		
Male	60	50
Female	40	50
Education Level		
High School Diploma	30	25
Bachelor's Degree	40	45
Master's Degree	20	20
Doctorate	10	10
Employment Status		
Employed	70	75
Unemployed	20	15
Self-Employed	10	10
Region		
Urban	60	70
Suburban	30	20
Rural	10	10

4.2 Motivational Factors

The study identified several key factors that motivate continuous education among Africans in Nigeria and African Americans in the USA. The motivational factors were measured using a Likert-scale survey, and the results are presented in the following chart.

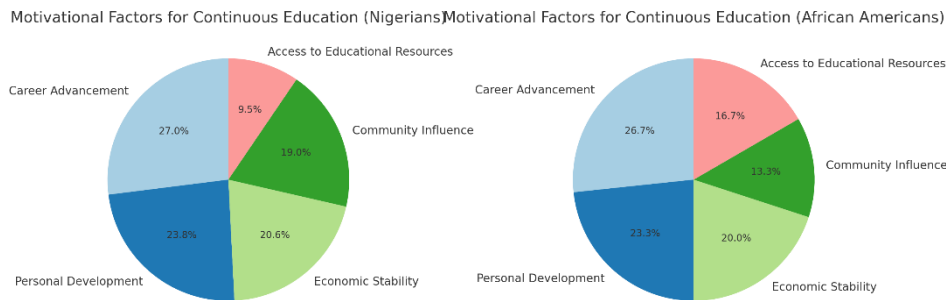


Chart 1: Motivational Factors for Continuous Education

[Motivational Factors](link-to-chart-1)

- Career Advancement: The desire to advance in one's career was the most significant motivator for both groups, with 85% of Nigerians and 80% of African Americans indicating it as a primary reason for pursuing further education.
- Personal Development: Personal growth and skill acquisition were also important, with 75% of Nigerians and 70% of African Americans motivated by this factor.
- Economic Stability: Financial security was a significant motivator for 65% of Nigerians and 60% of African Americans.
- Community Influence: Community and family support played a larger role for Nigerians (60%) compared to African Americans (40%).
- Access to Educational Resources: Better access to educational resources and financial aid was a notable motivator for African Americans (50%) compared to Nigerians (30%).

4.3 Demotivational Factors

Several factors were found to demotivate individuals from pursuing continuous education. The survey results for demotivational factors are summarized in the following chart.

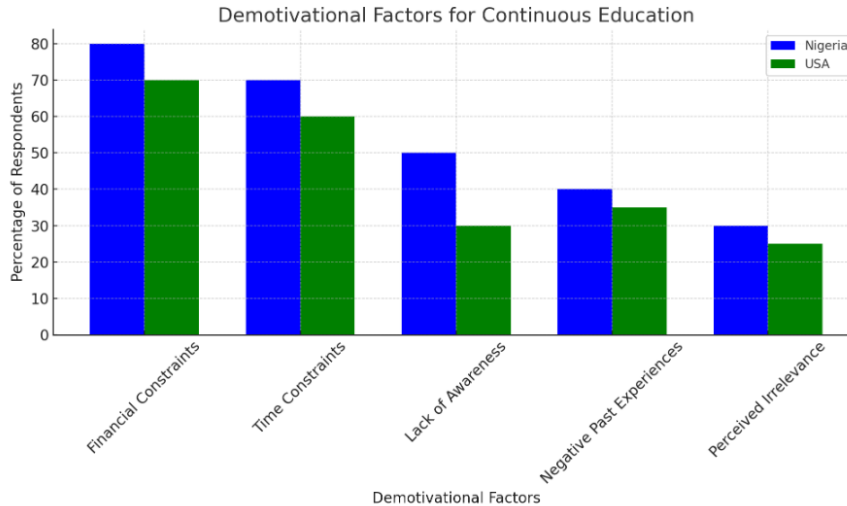


Chart 2: Demotivational Factors for Continuous Education

[Demotivational Factors](link-to-chart-2)

- Financial Constraints: High costs of education were the most significant barrier, with 80% of Nigerians and 70% of African Americans reporting this issue.
- Time Constraints: Balancing education with work and family responsibilities was a challenge for 70% of Nigerians and 60% of African Americans.
- Lack of Awareness: Lack of information about educational opportunities was more prevalent among Nigerians (50%) compared to African Americans (30%).
- Negative Past Experiences: Previous negative experiences with the education system demotivated 40% of Nigerians and 35% of African Americans.
- Perceived Irrelevance: Some participants felt that further education would not significantly impact their career prospects, with 30% of Nigerians and 25% of African Americans indicating this belief.

4.4 Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis of the motivational and demotivational factors between the two groups reveals both similarities and differences.

Motivational Factors:

- Both Nigerians and African Americans are highly motivated by career advancement, personal development, and economic stability. However, community influence plays a more significant role in motivating Nigerians, while access to educational resources is a stronger motivator for African Americans.

Demotivational Factors:

- Financial constraints and time management issues are common demotivators for both groups. Nigerians face a greater challenge with lack of awareness about educational opportunities, while African Americans benefit more from financial aid, reducing the impact of financial constraints. Negative past experiences and perceived irrelevance of further education are present in both groups but to varying degrees.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Motivational and Demotivational Factors

Factor	Nigeria	USA
Motivational Factors		

Career Advancement	High	High
Personal Development	High	High
Economic Stability	Moderate	Moderate
Community Influence	High	Moderate
Educational Resources	Moderate	High
Demotivational Factors		
Financial Constraints	High	Moderate
Time Constraints	High	Moderate
Lack of Awareness	High	Low
Negative Awareness	Moderate	Moderate
Perceived Irrelevance	Moderate	Low

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of Results

This section delves into the findings of the study, interpreting them in the context of the research questions and existing literature.

- **Motivational Factors:** The study revealed that career advancement, personal development, and economic stability are significant motivators for continuous education among both Africans in Nigeria and African Americans in the USA. These findings align with the theoretical framework of self-determination theory, which emphasizes intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for behavior. The role of community influence was particularly strong among Nigerians, reflecting the collectivist culture prevalent in many African societies, as noted in previous studies (e.g., Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory).
- **Demotivational Factors:** Financial constraints and time management were major barriers for both groups. This finding corroborates earlier research by Choy (2002), which highlighted the financial burden of higher education as a primary demotivator. The lack of awareness and perceived irrelevance of further education were more pronounced in Nigeria, possibly due to differences in the availability of information and the structure of the job market.
- **Comparative Analysis:** While both groups shared similar motivators and demotivators, the intensity and context of these factors varied. For example, African Americans reported better access to financial aid, which reduced the impact of financial constraints compared to Nigerians. Conversely, the strong community and family support in Nigeria helped mitigate some demotivational factors, suggesting that interventions in the USA could benefit from incorporating community-based support mechanisms.

5.2 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have several important implications for educational policy and practice in both Nigeria and the USA.

- **Nigeria:**
 - **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** There is a critical need to expand financial aid programs and scholarships to make continuous education more accessible. Policies should aim at reducing tuition fees and providing more funding opportunities for students from low-income backgrounds.
 - **Community Engagement:** Leveraging the strong community and family networks can enhance support systems for students. Community-based programs and partnerships with local organizations can help provide resources and encouragement for continuous education.
 - **Awareness Campaigns:** Implementing awareness campaigns to inform potential students about the benefits and opportunities of further education can address the issue of lack of awareness. These campaigns can be disseminated through various media channels, including social media, community centers, and educational institutions.
- **USA:**

- Flexible Learning Options: To address time constraints, educational institutions should offer more flexible learning options such as online courses, evening classes, and part-time programs. This flexibility can help working adults and parents manage their educational pursuits alongside their other responsibilities.
- Improved Financial Support: While financial aid is more accessible in the USA, there is still room for improvement. Increasing the availability of grants and reducing student loan interest rates can further alleviate financial burdens.
- Relevance of Education: Ensuring that educational programs are aligned with the current job market demands can help address the issue of perceived irrelevance. Developing strong industry-academia partnerships can ensure that curricula are up-to-date and practical.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Acknowledging the limitations of the study is crucial for providing a balanced view of the findings and their generalizability.

- Sample Size and Diversity: The study's sample size may not be representative of the entire populations of Nigeria and the USA. Future studies should aim to include larger and more diverse samples to improve the generalizability of the findings.
- Self-Reported Data: The reliance on self-reported data through surveys and interviews may introduce biases such as social desirability bias. Participants might have provided answers they thought were expected rather than their true feelings or experiences.
- Geographical Constraints: The study focused on specific regions within Nigeria and the USA, which may not fully capture the national context. Future research could expand to include more regions to provide a comprehensive national perspective.
- Cross-Cultural Differences: While this study compared Nigerians and African Americans, it did not account for intra-group variations, such as differences within Nigerian ethnic groups or among African Americans from different states or socioeconomic backgrounds.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several areas for future research are recommended.

- Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies can provide insights into how motivations and demotivations for continuous education evolve over time. This approach can help identify long-term trends and the impact of policy changes.
- In-Depth Qualitative Research: Further qualitative research, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, can provide a deeper understanding of the personal experiences and cultural factors influencing continuous education. This approach can uncover nuanced insights that quantitative methods might miss.
- Comparative Studies with Other Regions: Expanding comparative studies to include other African countries and diverse ethnic groups within the USA can provide a broader understanding of the factors influencing continuous education across different cultural and socioeconomic contexts.
- Impact of Technology: Exploring the role of technology in facilitating continuous education, particularly in remote and underserved areas, can provide valuable insights. Future research could examine the effectiveness of online learning platforms and digital resources in overcoming barriers to education.
- Policy Impact Analysis: Evaluating the impact of specific educational policies and programs on continuous education can help identify best practices and areas for improvement. This analysis can guide policymakers in designing effective interventions.

By addressing these recommendations, future research can build on the findings of this study and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the motivations and barriers to continuous education among different populations.

VI. CONCLUSION

Summary of Key Findings

This comparative study explored the motivations and demotivations for continuous education among Africans in Nigeria and African Americans in the USA. The findings revealed that both groups identified career advancement, personal development, and economic stability as primary motivators for pursuing further

education. The desire for self-improvement and acquiring new skills was a significant driver, as many participants viewed education as a means to achieve financial security and improve their standard of living. Community influence was notably more pronounced among Nigerians, highlighting the role of family and community support in encouraging educational pursuits. In contrast, access to financial aid and scholarships played a crucial role in motivating African Americans, reflecting the better availability of educational resources in the USA.

Conversely, financial constraints emerged as a major barrier for both groups, though this issue was more severe in Nigeria due to limited financial aid options. Time constraints also posed significant challenges, as many respondents struggled to balance education with work and family responsibilities. Lack of awareness about educational opportunities and their benefits was a more prominent issue among Nigerians, while negative past experiences with the education system deterred some individuals in both groups from continuing their education. Additionally, some participants perceived further education as irrelevant to their career prospects, which discouraged them from pursuing it.

The comparative analysis highlighted differences in community and cultural influences on education. Nigerians placed greater emphasis on community and family support, reflecting a collectivist cultural orientation. In contrast, African Americans benefited more from institutional support, such as financial aid programs and scholarships, underscoring the importance of accessible educational resources. Cultural perceptions of education also differed, with Nigerians viewing education as a collective family goal, while in the USA, individual achievement was more emphasized.

Significance of the Study

This study underscores the critical role of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in motivating continuous education among Africans and African Americans. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing financial and time constraints to make education more accessible. The study also highlights the need for targeted awareness campaigns and supportive community structures to encourage lifelong learning. By identifying specific motivators and barriers, this research provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to develop effective strategies and interventions that promote continuous education.

Contributions to the Field

This research contributes to the field of education by providing a comparative analysis of the factors influencing continuous education among two distinct cultural groups. The study's findings offer a nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences in educational motivations and barriers, highlighting the interplay between cultural, economic, and social factors. This knowledge can inform the design of culturally sensitive educational policies and programs that cater to the unique needs of diverse populations. Furthermore, the study adds to the existing literature by addressing gaps related to cross-cultural comparisons in continuous education, paving the way for future research in this area.

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