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MOTIVATIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL  
INFLUENCES IN THE DECISION  
OF FEMALES TO STUDY  
EDUCATION EXTRAMURALLY

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## ABSTRACT

In order to determine the motivational factors influencing adult female extramural education students (FEES) to decide on a course of study at Massey University, a pilot study was carried out. From an analysis of this, a questionnaire was designed which covered demographic variables, reasons for studying education, satisfaction with life, satisfaction with the choice of education as a subject, predisposing factors that helped to create or maintain motivation to enrol, barriers in the decision not to enrol at an earlier time, events that enabled enrolling, frustrations involved with studying extramurally, positive effects of extramural study, changes in the original motivation, and the coinciding of life events, the decision to study and changes in values. In order to establish whether motivations of FEES related to personality types, the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory was also administered. The sample of 170 ranged in age from 19 to over 50 and included males as a comparison group (MEES). The research aimed to find out what general motivations underlay FEES' decisions to study; in what ways did FEES motivations differ from MEES motivations; what the frustrations and positive effects of extramural study were; whether FEES motivations to study had changed since the decision was made to study; and whether there was any link between the decision to study, the coincidence of a life transition and the formation of new values. An analysis of variance for the demographic variables showed the immensely heterogeneous nature of

the sample and its effect on the motives for studying. Results showed that the major motivation for FEES was to gain knowledge and for personal interest, while for MEES it was to gain a degree. The main motivational change for FEES was to attain a degree, while for males it was completing the degree that had been started. The life transition that coincided with the decision to study was starting work, getting a new job, and job promotion for both FEES and MEES. The main value formation for FEES was growth in independence, while for MEES it was understanding the differences and reactions of others. Results showed that some personality types were related to various motivations. The most frequent Myers-Briggs psychological type that occurred was ISTJ. Finally the study made reference to the frustrations of extramural study and their subsequent importance for educators of extramural students.

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