

ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH IN SASKATCHEWAN¹

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Abstract

Sites of adult education research in Saskatchewan were surveyed to identify the origins, goals and methodologies of recent research and factors which influenced its production. Research was found to be produced by a broad range of institutions and The University of Saskatchewan was the major site of research activities. Two research traditions existed at the two university sites surveyed; adult education for social change and adult education to meet multifunctional, including technical-rational societal goals. Human resource development and economic adjustment were not the focus of the majority of studies conducted. The possibilities for a future narrow economic agenda to dominate adult education research was recognized.

Résumé

Une enquête a été menée dans divers lieux de recherche en Saskatchewan afin d'identifier les origines, les buts, les méthodes utilisées dans les recherches récentes en éducation des adultes et les facteurs qui ont influencé leur production. Les recherches inventoriées ont été produites dans un large éventail d'institutions toutefois, l'Université de la Saskatchewan est le site majeur des activités de recherche. Deux traditions de recherche se côtoient dans les deux universités qui ont été examinées: une première qui découle d'une vision de l'éducation des adultes comme instrument du changement social, et une deuxième qui s'inspire d'une conception multifonctionnelle de l'éducation des adultes, incluant des aspects techno-rationnels et sociaux. Le développement des ressources humaines et les ajustements économiques ne sont pas le focus de la majorité des recherches recensées. Par ailleurs, on reconnaît que des visées plus étroitement économiques puissent éventuellement dominer la recherche en éducation des adultes.

This survey was designed to address several specific questions about the production of adult education research in Saskatchewan and was conducted under the overarching global UNESCO study goal of determining whether adult education research is becoming driven by economic objectives. Specifically this survey sought to: identify the broad goals of adult education research in Saskatchewan, determine who is involved in producing research, identify the dominant research paradigms and methodologies, assess the demand for research, and identify some of the key factors influencing the production of research.

¹ The assistance of J. Fretz and K. Kennett in the design of the study, collection of data, and their helpful comments on the first draft is gratefully acknowledged.

Study Design

The study was conducted by a small research team consisting of one faculty member and two graduate students in the College of Education at The University of Saskatchewan. Many of the decisions made regarding the design of the study and data collection were influenced by the availability of resources, or lack thereof, and time constraints. Data was collected during May, June and July 1993, data analysis was completed during August and September and the preliminary report was written in September and October of 1993.

The study design incorporated a content analysis of theses, project reports and doctoral dissertations completed by graduate students in adult and continuing education and cognate subject areas at The University of Saskatchewan; interviews with faculty members in the College of Education and the Extension Division at The University of Saskatchewan who taught courses, or were known to have research interests in the area of adult education, and interviews by telephone and mail surveys of researchers at The University of Regina and other post secondary institutions and adult education agencies in Saskatchewan.

Definitions

Adult education for the purposes of this study was broadly conceived around a definition adapted from Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) who considered adult education to be "a process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or skills". Studies addressing the education of short term (one year or less), full-time adult learners seeking credentials from post-secondary institutions were therefore included in the data collection.

Adult education research was defined as systematic and sustained inquiry which focused on issues, problems or concerns related to the provision of adult education including the participation, access or performance of adult learners in adult education contexts. Scholarly writing was defined as critical or reflective essays, commentaries, text books and other materials written to support the training or professional development of adult educators. Research was distinguished from scholarly writing on the basis of whether or not an article reported on the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, including the analysis of scholarly articles and historical documents, and was a sustained investigation of an adult education problem that used recognized research methods and strategies.

Limitations of the Study

The collection of data, as readers are reminded at intervals, focused largely on one site, The University of Saskatchewan, and many smaller sites of research production could not be contacted due to a lack of time and resources. The survey of graduate student research, and faculty research in the College of Education and the Division of Extension at this University was thorough but it was not possible to conduct a longitudinal analysis of research trends in the time available. The nonsystematic

sampling of research produced at other sites in the province provides only a sketch of the status of research rather than a detailed picture. While acknowledging that the gaps in the data result in an incomplete record of Saskatchewan research, the data obtained was more than adequate to address the study's central questions. In the writer's opinion, the study conclusions are well supported by the quality and quantity of the data collected.

Research Sites and Survey Methods Used

1) Graduate Degree Program at the University of Saskatchewan

The adult and continuing education graduate degree program at the University of Saskatchewan is the only one in the Prairie provinces. It draws a total enrollment of 30-40, mostly part-time students who are working towards either a Post Graduate Diploma (P.G.D.) or a Master of Education (M.Ed.) or a master of Continuing Education (M.C.Ed.) degree. Since it awarded its first degree in 1967, the program has produced many distinguished graduates who serve in leadership positions in all economic sectors throughout North America. Several have also earned Ph.D. degrees from universities in Canada and the United States.

The University of Saskatchewan Special Collections thesis data base was searched for all Masters of Education and Masters of Continuing Education theses originating from the Adult and Continuing Education graduate program over the past 25 years. Those project reports, completed as an alternative to the Masters thesis, and available in the university library collection, were also reviewed. In addition, the collection was searched for theses and dissertations having an adult education focus but produced in cognate program areas. A total of 129 abstracts from 112 theses, 15 project reports and two dissertations were identified. Each abstract was reviewed independently by each of the three team members and categorized according to the type of study (thesis, project report, or dissertation), author's gender, department affiliation, and several variables concerned with research methodology, paradigmatic view and study purpose. The focus of the research was analyzed using a set of 15 topic categories previously used by Dickinson and Rusnell (1971) and Long and Agyekum (1974). Interjudge agreement during the categorization process was high. Only six studies required a group meeting to achieve consensus in the category coding process.

2) Faculty Research at The University of Saskatchewan

Four faculty members in the College of Education have taught the core classes in the adult and continuing education program since 1988. Approximately ten other faculty members from cognate departments in the College of Education, from the University Division of Extension and from other Colleges such as the College of Nursing serve as associate faculty in the graduate program. The Extension Division, in collaboration with The University of Victoria, The University of Calgary, The University of Alberta and The University of Manitoba offers the Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) program through a combination of distance education and traditional delivery methods. Faculty members who taught in the CACE program were included in the pool of potential study respondents. A list of eleven faculty members were selected from the pool for in-person interviews.

Nine of the total eleven interviews conducted centered on the respondents' research foci for the previous ten years; two considered the research foci of respondents since the time they had commenced teaching in the program. Because of the difficulty in obtaining comparable lists of research reports and publications, the actual research materials reviewed and categorized by research topic and methodology were from the eight year period 1985-1993. During the interviews each respondent was invited to nominate others whose research work might fit the criteria for inclusion in the study. While not all faculty who have been engaged in adult education research were interviewed, the writer considers the breadth and depth of the experience and interests of the eleven respondents who participated in the in-depth interviews to have provided an accurate reflection of the historical and current state of adult education research at The University of Saskatchewan.

Each interview was conducted using a semi-structured format; the interviews were not tape recorded, but field notes were taken during the interviews. Quotations in the following report are based on field notes and in some cases may not be verbatim statements. The interviews began with a statement of the purpose of the interview and the intended use of the study report. The definitions of adult education and adult education research adopted for use in the study were read to the respondents. In the first part of the interview questions explored the demands for research, the sources of the demands, the focus of the research in demand and the respondent's response to the demands.

The second part of the interview explored respondents' research production, both published and unpublished. Questions sought to make clear the origins of each respondent's research questions and goals, to summarize the long term themes of their research, to identify sources of support, and to reflect on who the beneficiaries of their research work might be.

3) Other Sites

The University of Regina offers a Master of Education degree in post-secondary vocational technical education and several students and faculty in that program have conducted adult education studies in various sites. Networking identified over 30 researchers at other sites including the University of Regina and its Extension Division, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC), Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), provincial regional colleges, community colleges, government agencies, and a number of nongovernment organizations (NGOs). Requests were made for copies of published articles and brief conversations were held with those persons who could be contacted, about the extent of their activities and the origins and purposes of their research work.

Survey Findings

Graduate Student Research at The University of Saskatchewan

Of the 129 studies, 47 (36.4%) were completed by males and 82 (63.6%) by females. It was noted that in the 12 year period between 1968 and 1980 males completed 31

studies and females completed 25. However, in the following 13 year period, 1981 to 1992, as enrollments increased the ratio of male and female students changed. Consequently the ratio of studies completed by male and female researchers was reversed with 57 studies being completed by females and only 16 by males. Over the 25 year period graduate student research production shifted from being a predominantly male to a predominantly female enterprise.

Table 1

Distribution of Graduate Student Research Reports by Topic Category and Five Year Intervals, 1968-1992

Topic Category	'68-'72		'73-'77		'78-'82		'83-'87		'88-'92		Total	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)								
Adult Learning	0	(0.0)	2	(10.0)	1	(4.0)	1	(3.1)	1	(3.4)	5	(3.9)
Program Planning	4	(17.4)	2	(10.0)	9	(36.0)	5	(15.6)	6	(20.7)	26	(20.2)
Instit. Sponsors	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	2	(8.0)	0	(0.0)	2	(6.9)	4	(3.1)
Ad. Ed. Discipline	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(4.0)	1	(3.1)	0	(0.0)	2	(1.6)
Instruction Mats.	4	(17.4)	2	(10.0)	1	(4.0)	5	(15.6)	1	(3.4)	13	(10.1)
Philosophical	4	(17.4)	2	(10.0)	3	(12.0)	3	(9.4)	6	(20.7)	18	(14.0)
Program Areas	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(3.1)	2	(6.9)	4	(3.1)
Personnel	1	(4.3)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	3	(10.3)	5	(3.9)
International	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	2	(6.9)	2	(1.6)
Target Groups	4	(17.4)	8	(40.0)	5	(20.0)	14	(43.7)	4	(13.8)	35	(27.1)
Labour Educ.	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Learning Env.	1	(4.3)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.8)
Organization	0	(0.0)	1	(5.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.8)
Evaluation	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(4.0)	1	(3.1)	1	(3.4)	3	(2.3)
Other	5	(21.7)	1	(5.0)	2	(8.0)	1	(3.1)	1	(3.4)	10	(7.8)
Total	23	(100.0)	20	(100.0)	25	(100.0)	32	(100.0)	29	(100.0)	129	(100.0)

Since the first graduate degree in adult and continuing education was awarded there has been a sustained research focus on the education of particular adult target groups with 35 studies (27.1%) completed and program planning and administration with 26 studies (20.2%) (see Table 1). A third content area of sustained interest but with only 18 (14%) studies completed concerned the philosophy of adult education. These three areas of research topics accounted for slightly more than 60% of all graduate student adult education research. Studies in the areas of adult learning, institutional sponsors, adult education as a field of study, special program areas, personnel and staff, international adult education, learning environments, the organization of adult education, and evaluation were rare or nonexistent.

The decision to analyze graduate research topics by author's sex was based on the findings of an earlier study that male and female graduate students who had published their work, differed in terms of their research topic and other aspects of graduate study experience (Blunt & Lee, 1994). The distribution of studies by male

and female student authors in this survey confirmed these findings (see Table 2). The three major content areas of studies by male researchers were philosophy of adult education with 12 (25.5%) studies, adult education of particular groups with 10 (21.3%) and program planning and administration with 7 (14.9%) studies. Research by female students focused on the education of particular groups with 25 (30.5%) studies, program planning and administration with 19 (23.1%) and instructional materials and methods with 9 (11.0%) studies.

Table 2

Distribution of Graduate Student Research Reports by Topic Category and Sex

Topic Category	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Adult Learning	1	(2.1)	4	(4.9)	5	(3.9)
Program Planning	7	(14.9)	19	(23.1)	26	(20.2)
Instit. Sponsors	3	(6.4)	1	(1.2)	4	(3.1)
Ad. Ed. Discipline	1	(2.1)	1	(1.2)	2	(1.6)
Instructional Mats.	4	(8.5)	9	(11.0)	13	(10.1)
Philosophical	12	(25.5)	6	(7.3)	18	(13.9)
Program Areas	0	(0.0)	4	(4.9)	4	(3.1)
Personnel	1	(2.1)	4	(4.9)	5	(3.9)
International	1	(2.1)	1	(1.2)	2	(1.6)
Target Groups	10	(21.3)	25	(30.5)	35	(27.1)
Labour Educ.	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Learning Env.	1	(2.1)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.8)
Organization	0	(0.0)	1	(1.2)	1	(0.8)
Evaluation	1	(2.1)	2	(2.4)	3	(2.3)
Other	5	(10.6)	5	(6.1)	10	(7.7)
Total	47	(100.0)	82	(100.0)	129	(100.0)

Differences were also observed regarding the research paradigms guiding studies completed by male and female researchers. A larger proportion of the studies by female graduate students (65.8%) than males (51.1%) were in the quantitative research paradigm while a larger proportion of studies by males (44.7%) than females (32.9%) were in the qualitative paradigm (see Table 3). This finding contradicts the common perception that female graduate students rather than males choose qualitative methods and may be explained by the large number of females who entered the adult and continuing education program from health science backgrounds. A clear trend over time from quantitative to qualitative research methods was observable in the data.

In terms of specific research methods utilized, almost three quarters of the studies completed by females (73.2%) were surveys or quasi-experimental studies as compared to 57.5% of studies by males which used those methods (see Table 4). In

contrast historical and philosophical research methods were more frequently selected by males (27.6%) than females (6.1%). Similarly a larger proportion of studies conducted by females (85.9%) than males (71.4%) were judged by the research team to be applied research, rather than basic or theoretical studies.

Table 3

Distribution of Graduate Student Research Reports by Research Paradigm and Sex

Research Paradigm	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Quantitative	24	(51.1)	54	(65.8)	78	(60.5)
Qualitative	21	(44.7)	27	(32.9)	48	(37.2)
Critical	2	(4.2)	1	(1.3)	3	(2.3)
Total	47	100.0	82	100.0	129	100.0

Table 4

Distribution of Graduate Student Research Reports by Research Methodology and Sex

Research Method	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Survey	21	(44.7)	45	(54.9)	65	(51.2)
Quasi-experimental	6	(12.8)	15	(18.3)	21	(16.3)
Historical	8	(17.0)	4	(4.9)	12	(9.3)
Case Study	5	(10.6)	7	(8.5)	12	(9.3)
Philosophy/Lit. Analysis	5	(10.6)	1	(1.2)	6	(4.6)
Multi-method	2	(4.3)	3	(3.7)	5	(3.9)
Other	0	(0.0)	7	(8.5)	7	(5.4)
Total	47	(100.0)	82	(100.0)	129	(100.0)

Discussion

While graduate departments are known to mediate the influence of the field of practice on research decisions made by graduate students (Blunt & Lee, 1994), the data from this study suggests that the large majority of students selected thesis, project and dissertation topics based on their individual interests and experience in adult education or other areas of prior professional practice. The field sites and subjects of the research appear to have been determined largely by expediency and proximity to the researcher. Overall the studies reviewed reflected a narrow focus in terms of the range of possible research topics. This may in part be attributable to the interests and expertise of the faculty who select students for admission. A further mediating influence of the department may have occurred when faculty members participated in the process leading to the identification and approval of some students' graduate research topics. It was observed, for example, that during a period of four

or five years a number of studies were conducted which focused on adult learning projects. Essentially, the studies replicated the research of Allen Tough (1979) with particular groups of adult learners in Saskatchewan. In this case, one faculty member with an interest in this line of inquiry appears to have influenced students' decisions in the selection of a research topic. Further, a small but persistent commitment to the study of the history and philosophy of adult education, and more recently critical adult education, was observable in the data. This modest research tradition was also later observed to be congruent with faculty research and it is likely that these mutual interests fostered graduate research.

It is likely that a more dynamic and complex relationship exists between institutional influences and student researchers than is presented here. Graduate students are not passive and compliant in the process of exploring research questions. If expediency is a major factor in the selection of research topics, sites, and subjects, it is possible that faculty influence is greatest on decisions related to the conceptual frameworks of theses and possibly the research methods used.

The most noticeable trend in the data was the decline in the proportion of research studies produced by males and a corresponding increase in the proportion of studies by female graduate students. It was also apparent that while the majority of students were females there were relatively few studies which addressed women's issues in adult education or connected feminist and adult education research. Again this may reflect the mediating influence of faculty as the core members of the adult and continuing education faculty were males.

The great majority of studies reviewed appeared to reflect mainstream adult education priorities: continuing professional education, problems of sustaining participation, needs analyses, and instructional techniques and materials. Analysis of the graduate research abstracts yielded no evidence of a shift over time in the numbers of studies categorized within four broad traditional functions of adult education: achieving goals of citizenship and democracy, learning for leisure and recreation, coping with changing adult life roles and assisting in career advancement. Historically, adult education programs have met the needs of individuals wishing to acquire or to improve vocational skills and research has often focused on this function of adult education. No apparent increase has occurred to suggest a shift in emphasis towards research which has explicit individual and economic objectives emanating from corporate or government agendas for technological change and economic restructuring.

Saskatchewan has not been excluded from the global economics discourse, and the University and adult education institutions in the province have in the last five years frequently been a focus of attention in the national and provincial debate about the future role of educational institutions in responding to the proclaimed needs of the new globalized economy. However, there is no evidence from the conceptual frameworks used in their research, nor the topics that they have selected, that graduate students have become seriously engaged in the debate. Only a small minority of the studies reviewed were concerned with vocational-technical training

or were narrowly conceptualized within organizational and human resource development frameworks.

It is possible that the influence of the state's economic agenda on adult education research priorities cannot be discerned by the approach taken in this study. Demographic, political and economic shifts may have occurred in the province which have, for example, changed government funding of social and educational programs. In this case, the sites of adult education programming, the program participants, target populations and the goals of programs may have shifted without the changes becoming apparent in a content analysis of individual graduate research studies. The changes would only be apparent if longitudinal studies were conducted of the programming activity at each of the major sites and of the adult education participant populations across the sites.

Projects undertaken by the Extension Division have provided professional work experience and financial support for some graduate students who then selected thesis or project topics which focused on issues and problems they encountered during their extension work experience. A small number of graduate students received university scholarships which indirectly supported their research activity. However, the great majority of students relied entirely upon their own resources to meet research expenses. While there is evidence that students undertook research related to the adult education programs of prior, and possibly future, employers, none of the studies appeared to have been supported by external funding beyond minimal expenses to pay, for example, photocopying costs. While some institutions might have benefitted directly from the research, they did not contribute towards the costs of producing it. Further, in the great majority of studies which investigated problems within the context of adult education institutions, the institutions concerned were public institutions or community based NGOs rather than business, industry or corporate organizations.

Based on the number of applications for entry, it would appear that there is a sustained demand for graduate study in adult and continuing education at The University of Saskatchewan. Further, as the writing of a research thesis is an option in the program selected by approximately 40% of the students, the production of graduate research is student driven. Students aspiring to higher level graduate study would be expected to select the thesis option in the belief that entry into a Ph. D. program would require evidence of research training and experience at the Masters level. Whether or not employers believe that research training and experience are desirable work related outcomes of graduate study is unknown. Neither is it known whether or not students believe that employers favor hiring graduates who have completed a research thesis rather than a practice of professional skills project. Interest in, and satisfaction derived from, challenging intellectual work appears to be the dominant factor in the personal decision to undertake graduate level research in adult education.

However, the magnitude and importance of graduate student research to the discipline of adult education ought not to be underestimated (Blunt & Lee, 1994). Faculty and students have reported the results of graduate research in coauthored

articles and have made joint presentations at conferences. Not only do these activities promote the dissemination of graduate research but they contribute to the long term research agendas of individual faculty members. Without graduate research it is likely that the university based adult education research enterprise generally would decline. The synergy created when practitioners (all graduate students have a minimum of two years experience in adult education work) and faculty work together to investigate problems in adult education can contribute to sustaining the quality of research and teaching in graduate programs. In this respect graduate research is an essential component of university based adult education research and serves both the emerging discipline and the broad field of practice.

Faculty Research at The University of Saskatchewan

There was general agreement among respondents that there was a "need", but opinions varied about the nature of the "demand" for adult education research. One group of respondents reflected a traditional perception of the value to society of adult education as an instrument for social change. This "philosophical" group argued the case for the role of adult education research as a counter hegemonic force to oppose the agendas of particular vested class, ethnic and economic interest groups in society and as an instrument to support community and national efforts to achieve equity and social justice goals. These respondents saw need for research being voiced by marginal groups, social change organizations and progressive political movements whereas demand for research was seen to be emanating from Chambers of Commerce, right-wing political parties, and from business, industry and corporate boardrooms. This demand, in practice, is for adult education to shape human capital and human resource development so as to support the training and employment needs of an increasingly globalized Canadian economy. Opposition to this demand was firmly entrenched among this philosophical group of respondents. One commented, "There is an underlying realization that something is amiss, however technical-rationality remains so dominant that most [adult educators] do not have an adequate analysis of the problem".

In addition to their strong research focus opposing technical-rationality and the professionalization of adult education, the work of the more philosophical (adult education for social change) group also proposed in constructive terms an alternative vision of an emancipatory adult education practice and a critical adult education pedagogy.

A larger group of respondents saw the demand for adult education research from, as they termed it, a more "pragmatic" and less "political" position. While rejecting the idea that the role of university programs of adult education ought to become more narrowly defined in order to prepare professionals for future employment in the private sector, these respondents acknowledged that the private sector was an expanding market for the employment of adult education graduates and that legitimate research needs existed in that sector. This group argued for change in the current focus of the graduate program to have the program become more broadly defined, responsive to employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors, more practitioner oriented, and less concerned with philosophy, history and

“theoretical issues”. Research conducted by faculty and graduate students within this more practitioner focused graduate program would be expected to be more applied than basic.

It was mentioned, for example, that a separate graduate program had been established to train extension specialists. While core classes were still shared with the adult education program, it had been necessary to develop a separate extension graduate program to provide the specialist courses that had not been offered by the adult and continuing education program. The implication was that other areas of the field of practice such as training and development were being ignored, or excluded from the current graduate program. Several of the respondents in this group reported they did research and professional consultation activity aimed at enhancing employer based training and pre-employment training in public and private training institutions. The research interests and perceptions of the field of practice held by this group of respondents differed markedly from the social change or philosophical group, of whom one respondent stated:

An ivory tower mentality pervades the work of some people. None of the practitioners that I know reads, or can read and understand, the research produced by those guys. None of it is in the real world of adult education. How are adult educators in Saskatchewan who are on the front lines being helped by their research?

Advocates for a philosophical approach acknowledged that adult education researchers are not inundated with requests for research studies from, for example, social activists, poverty groups, gay rights organizations, racialized women, native communities, and representatives of the differently abled. However, the need was considered to be great for research to support the work and social goals of these adult education constituencies. It was also noted that faculty did not report being inundated with requests for studies from representatives of business and industry - studies which might be expected to have explicit economic objectives. One respondent commented specifically on the demand for research from practitioners in the field and the response of researchers from the university-based disciplines and condemned both parties:

There is a failure on the part of practitioners to be interested in research beyond needs assessments and evaluations on the one hand, and on the other hand, a disinclination generally on the part of the “theorists” to “get their hands dirty” in the field.

Several respondents warned against the dangers of “political correctness” in adult education research and an over-emphasis on theoretical or basic research which they thought failed to yield valuable results. These respondents pointed out that adult education was an applied field and that the literature of the discipline had for several years acknowledged the magnitude of the gap between theory and practice. However, members of the philosophical (research for social change) group tended to view their research as foundational work in the adult education graduate program.

In practice, then, how did a piece of research reflect the various influences of philosophical, pragmatic, macro and micro approaches? One example which may prove illustrative concerns a respondent whose interests focused on learning disabilities and the problems experienced by young adults making the transition from schooling to employment. A respondent reported receiving both research support and frequent requests for information from instructors and equity officers in postsecondary institutions, parents, and community representatives of the differently abled. In that this respondent argued that training for adults with learning disabilities enabled them to cultivate independence, contribute economically and simultaneously reduce the subsidies they required, this research focused on immediate, local problems and yet also addressed larger social issues.

One area of considerable research demand was community development. Municipalities, government agencies, organized labor, professional associations and organizations such as cooperatives were all reported to be active users of community development research. Some funding for research and evaluation studies had been obtained from government agencies and foundations. However, those groups who most frequently requested research projects did not have the means to pay for the research themselves and relied upon accessing public funding.

Research Perspectives and the Origin of Projects

From the interviews it appeared that the projects of researchers in the philosophical group were initiated as a result of personal interest in questions which were investigated without reference to particular constituencies, or were self-initiated in response to open invitations from particular groups or agencies, rather than in response to direct and specific requests for studies. Faculty research undertaken to contribute to a foundational literature for the field, particularly if it focuses on the historical role of adult education as an instrument for social change, is often undervalued by practitioners. Also, while faculty research addressing current issues and problems may not have been initiated in direct response to research demand, these initiatives were congruent with perceived client interest and research utilization needs, and this has been the case historically in adult education for several generations of researchers.

This study identified two broad views of adult education research held by faculty at The University of Saskatchewan. The philosophical view holds that the legitimate purpose for adult education research is to serve the goals of social change movements through an emancipatory education which is incompatible with technical-rational adult education. The pragmatic view is conceived around a wide definition of the field of practice which encompasses both social change goals and training and development to achieve economic and technological goals. This view argues for research to be more applied than theoretical and to be driven largely by problems originating directly from the field of adult education practice. Some respondents sought to acknowledge the legitimacy of both perspectives and argued that a multi-paradigmatic institutional culture was desirable to create space for a variety of research foci and methodological approaches. Others commented that a lack of thoughtful consideration about research had its own consequences: "Adult educators in general are pursuing their personal,

professional and economic self interests, and in so doing are carrying forward a corporate and government agenda.”

It is recognized that whether made explicit, or left implicit, by researchers, philosophical positions are embedded in all research. The labels “philosophical” and “pragmatic” in this study are used to characterize and distinguish between respondents’ research orientations. It is not intended to suggest that the research of the pragmatists was devoid of philosophical underpinnings. Further it is acknowledged that simple dichotomous categorizations of groups tend to distract attention from research linkages and relationships that are likely to exist between the researchers assigned to the groups. However, given the descriptive nature of this survey it was thought to be a useful strategy to depict the groups in this manner. A more intensive analysis would need to avoid further oversimplification and labeling.

Themes, Foci and Characteristics of Faculty Research

The lists of publications provided by the respondents, supplemented by a list of the publications of the core faculty for the period 1985-1990 (College of Education 1990), were reviewed to identify research themes and foci (see Table 5). A total of 118 publications and reports of research were identified and categorized according to content topic. The content categories were used in three previous studies of research articles published in *Adult Education Quarterly* (Blunt & Lee, 1994; Dickinson and Rusnell, 1971; Long and Agyekum, 1974). Forty reports (33.9%) were program development studies, 26 (22.0%) were studies of the field of adult education and 21 (17.8%) were concerned with teaching and learning. As might be anticipated from the report of the interviews presented above, the content of faculty members’ published research reflected their views about the perceived role of adult education research.

Table 5

Distribution of College of Education and Division of Extension Faculty Research by Content Category

<u>Topics</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Adult Learning Ability	2	(1.7)
Participation in Educational Activities	15	(12.7)
Program Development	40	(33.9)
Teaching-Learning Transaction	21	(17.8)
Field of Adult Education	26	(22.0)
Other	14	(11.9)
Total	118	(100.0)

College of Education. Research by College of Education faculty members reflected the interests and perspectives of their particular disciplines or adult education interests. Over an extended period of time those faculty with direct responsibility for the graduate program have established a body of research on the historical and philosophical foundations of adult education and recently on critical adult education. These studies written for academic rather than practitioner

readerships most frequently used historical and interpretive methods and the findings were disseminated through conference presentations, particularly the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC), *Adult Education Quarterly* and through a number of other well recognized refereed journals and academic publishing houses. Citations in recent prominent texts (Houle, 1992; Merriam & Cunningham, 1989; Peters, Jarvis, and Associates, 1991) attest to the recognition afforded to this research tradition by North American professors of adult education.

Between 1985 and 1990 the four faculty members who taught the core graduate program classes wrote two books and six chapters in books, thirteen articles in refereed journals, eleven articles in nonrefereed journals, ten technical reports and thirty papers which were published in conference proceedings (College of Education, 1990). Approximately half of this work was recognized as research for the purposes of this study and the remainder was considered to be scholarly writing. Lists of publications provided by faculty members were used to supplement the official cumulative list of publications prepared by the College of Education for the period 1985-1990. From this information it appears that the research and scholarly writing of this group of faculty has for the last eight years focused on the history and philosophy of adult education as a field of practice and an emerging field of university study, critique of competency based education, marginalized learners and nonformal education, corrections education, adult basic education and literacy, and research methods and adult religious education. None of the publications reviewed could be considered to fall within the broad description of research supporting an economic imperative. In the words of one respondent, "My purpose is to speak truth to power".

Research by College faculty conducted within the view of adult education for social change critiques, for example: the nuclear industry's public education campaigns (Regnier, 1991), technical-rational adult education (Collins, 1983, 1991), participatory research methodology and practice (St. Denis, 1992), the professionalization of adult education (Carlson, 1977, 1980), narrowly defined psychological models of learning (Flynn, 1993), and the shift in government adult education literacy policy towards human capital goals (Blunt, 1990, 1991a, 1991b). However, not all of the research produced by College faculty has been constructed solely within the context of adult education as an instrument for social change. Research has for example, also focused on the development of programs for young adults with learning disabilities (Reekie, 1993), the history of Saskatchewan adult education institutions (Lyons & Kalyn, 1985) and biographies of adult educators (Lyons, 1990).

Extension Division. Specifically, research conducted by faculty from the Extension Division tended to reflect their areas of programming interest and professional development related to those areas. The research of this group reflected the traditional focus of university extension departments or centers for continuing education and was concerned with topics such as instructional design, distance education, community development, instructor and volunteer training, adult basic education, needs analyses, and program planning. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed and the reports were disseminated through a great variety of scholarly journals and books. A large number of conference presentations

indicated that faculty were active participants in the annual meetings of professional associations such as the Canadian Association of University Continuing Education (CAUCE). The productivity of the respondents was sustained over time indicating a long standing interest in, and commitment to, adult education research.

The applied research produced by Extension faculty was directed towards a wide range of user groups including: adult education practitioners from the full spectrum of public education agencies; community, self-help and special interest groups; professional associations and other adult education professionals. The large majority of the published reports were intended to influence adult education practices in distance education, program planning and the design and management of instruction. Much of the research appears to have been in response to the demand for information on adult education strategies and technologies needed to meet an increasing public demand for continuing professional education. The studies were often framed in a human capital perspective and an institutional context of cost recovery programming. While lifelong learning and continuing professional education have for some time been recognized by institutions as essential elements in their strategic mission, the previous widespread practice of using public funds to support those programs has virtually disappeared. The demand for research in distance education and new programming strategies in particular, appears now to be driven by the field of practice under pressure from increasing enrollments and declining institutional support. From this perspective the increase in, and possible overall shift by learners towards, participation in programs with human resource development goals influences the type of research produced by extension faculty.

A few studies, particularly reports of funded projects, were written with the intention of informing or directly influencing institutional or government policy regarding aspects of community service or the provision of adult education. The dissemination of this research appears to be sufficiently wide as to enable those users who may benefit from the work to be able to access it. However, at the superficial level of analysis applied in this study, it is not possible to determine the extent to which some studies may have achieved their intended purposes of influencing policy development and improving the delivery of services.

The following studies are typical of the research of the Extension faculty. For example, on research conducted around aspects of practice and directed towards the professional development of adult educators see Archer and Wong (1991). The divide between scholarship and practice that has for many years been a feature of university based adult education was the subject of one article which called for a renewed commitment to achieve a more effective integration of scholarship and practice (Thompson & Wagner, 1994). For studies which focused on the technology of adult education see Misanchuk (1992), Schwier and Misanchuk (1993), and Wong (1990), for program planning and the economics of course delivery see Hass (1992) and on issues related to participation and access see Thompson and Devlin (1992). The historical role of the Extension Division in community development practice and research has been within the tradition of adult education for social change. The long

term involvement of faculty in this work was celebrated in one publication in particular (Baker, Draper & Fairbairn, 1991).

Faculty Research in Cognate Areas. Research which met the study's definition of adult education research was also produced in other colleges including Nutrition, Home Economics, Physical Education and Arts and Science. Several colleges including Medicine, Engineering, Veterinary Medicine and Nursing maintained continuing professional education programs and faculty associated with those programs conducted research around their program activities. Unlike the great majority of studies completed in the College of Education which had only one author, studies from other colleges more often had multiple authors with one refereed article from the College of Medicine having nine authors. Collaborative research was clearly far more common among researchers outside the College of Education.

It was not possible to complete a thorough campus wide search of data bases for studies which might be categorized as adult education research. However, the studies which were identified through the snowball data sampling approach indicate that a valuable contribution to the body of research is being made by researchers who would not normally identify themselves as adult educators. Of course, it is valuable only if adult educators are aware of the existence of this work. Two other interesting characteristics of these studies is that several were based on projects which had received funding from external agencies and there was evidence that some had their origins in, or were associated with, graduate student activity in their respective colleges and departments.

Research produced by faculty other than those in the College of Education and the Extension Division showed that researchers who do not consider themselves to be adult educators are producing studies which contribute to theory development and the improvement of practice. A critique of government vocational training policy and priorities (Dickinson, 1991) was one of several studies completed by faculty in the Department of Sociology, in the College of Arts and Science. One study with implications for practice reported on a project to prepare senior citizens to teach nutrition, consumer and medication use to other seniors (Lee, 1985). One quasi-experimental study, completed by a team of researchers from three universities, evaluated a motivational adult education program to reduce risk of cardiovascular disease (Travers, Tan, MacCleave, Murphy, & Whiting, 1992). An example of research which focused on professional development was a study of the effects of continuing medical education on the medical practices of family physicians (Jennett, Laxdal, Hayton, Klassen, Swanson, Wilson, Spooner, Mainprize, & Wickett, 1988).

Faculty Research Methods. The range of research methods used by all faculty in the studies reviewed, was found to be relatively small (see Table 6). Most respondents appear to have remained committed to only one or two research methods. No experimental and no ethnographic studies were identified and only 14 (10.4%) quasi-experimental studies were located. The largest number of studies were analytic and descriptive surveys (73: 54.5%), philosophical studies and literature analyses (25: 18.7%) and case studies (16: 11.9%). It was observed that researchers from sites other

than the College of Education were more likely to have worked collaboratively and to have used a wide range of research methods.

Table 6

Distribution of College of Education and Division of Extension Faculty Research by Research Method

<u>Research Method</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Survey	73	(54.5)
Quasi-experimental	14	(10.4)
Historical	6	(4.5)
Case study	16	(11.9)
Philosophical/Lit. Analysis	25	(18.7)
Experimental	0	(0.0)
Ethnographic	0	(0.0)
Total	134	(100.0)

Research Funding

Internal rather than external funding has played an important role in adult education research at the University. Project funding from external agencies has frequently provided extension faculty with the opportunity to integrate research into their practice. In the College of Education, external funds were received to support research projects in corrections and adult basic education. However, it has been small internal university research grants and staff travel grants that have been most significant in supporting adult education research and dissemination. While other graduate programs have received Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grants in national competitions to support faculty research, it appears that faculty in the adult and continuing education program have not applied to this source for research funding. Seeking external research monies does not seem to have been a high priority for those interviewed. Faculty from Colleges other than Education have conducted research supported by external funding.

Faculty Reward System

A frequently unrecognized influence on faculty research decision making is the university promotion and merit award system. There are two broad categories of professorial responsibilities recognized in the collective agreement between the faculty association and the University of Saskatchewan, as the employer, which governs the appointment of faculty members and the processes to review their academic work. Some faculty members are appointed to positions where research is a major professional role, and others to positions where rather than research, the designated role is the practice of professional skills. Appointment to one of these role specializations does not preclude a person from choosing to work on a project recognized as being an appropriate activity in the second role. However, for purposes of tenure and promotion each faculty member's performance is judged within one or the other of these two categories of roles and it may be highly disadvantageous for a

person to knowingly, or inadvertently, cross the boundaries of these role defining categories.

The use of established research methods and the publication of articles in refereed journals or academic books are accepted as evidence of rigorous and scholarly research. Further, these judgments are made in an academic culture where basic rather than applied research is more highly valued. Being responsive to problems arising from the local field of practice may diminish the status of a researcher. Receiving grants for research on "important" problems involving economic and human resource development issues may achieve the opposite effect in the eyes of the university administration anxious to have the government and community see academe as an engine of future economic growth and prosperity. Faculty in the Extension Division have an additional concern as they have responsibilities for the management of a public continuing education program. They must increasingly commit time to programming functions to meet enrollment and revenue targets which have become higher priorities as the University's allocation of resources for its continuing education program has declined.

Just as university departments mediate the influence of the field of practice on graduate research (Blunt & Lee, 1994), university reward systems mediate the influence of the field on faculty research.

Research From Other Saskatchewan Sites

Other sites throughout the province from which research studies and respondents were sought included: The University of Regina, SIFC, Gabriel Dumont Institute, community colleges, labor unions, NGOs, and business and industry organizations.

University of Regina

Research from faculty at The University of Regina paralleled that of the University of Saskatchewan in terms of topic and philosophical view. Although the University of Regina does not have a graduate adult education program, the Faculty of Education has a Vocational-Technical Education program which since its inception in 1985 has maintained a critical adult education research perspective. One professor's work in the area of critical adult education (Little, 1991, 1992) has received international recognition in the adult education literature (Cunningham, 1991). Graduate students have also conducted research in adult education and cognate subject areas (Gould, 1992; Robinson, 1992a, 1992b).

While the Extension Division maintains a strong commitment to adult education for social change in its practice and research, the majority of its programs and published research reveals that this perspective is subordinate to a broader multi-functional view of adult education. Discussions with respondents supported the perception that much of the research focused on improving the practice of adult education. Several faculty members who have recently completed graduate degrees in adult education and cognate subjects at other institutions reported being actively involved in research projects with the goals of meeting requirements for tenure and promotion.

Extension faculty research has mirrored the interests of extension colleagues at The University of Saskatchewan. For example, a focus on issues of program delivery and professional practice was observed with published studies of evaluation research on distance education (Beveridge & Morrell, 1992), leadership challenges facing deans and directors of university continuing education (Pearce, 1992) and perceptions of the purposes of university continuing education among deans and directors who were members of CAUCE (Hein, 1992a). Scholarly writing and research focusing on the traditional role of adult education as an instrument for social change in university based community development was also located (Cruikshank, 1991, 1992). A linkage between research activity and continuing professional development of faculty was also apparent with two extension faculty members having recently completed doctoral dissertations at The University of Toronto (Hein, 1992b; Oussoren, 1993).

Researchers from other academic departments on campus had also completed studies which met the definition of adult education research. In addition, one respondent reported that adult education philosophy and practices had influenced program development in one unit of particular social importance, the School of Human Justice:

Adult education has been emphasized in the mission of the School from its start. Both the sections [in the report on proposals for reformulating the School's program, (Harding, 1992)] on the history of the course development and models of curricula address matters of adult education.

It was inferred from this statement that research produced by students and faculty in the School was likely to have been conceptualized within, or at least well connected to, adult education research frameworks. Unfortunately time and distance constraints prevented a search of the University's data bases to explore this possibility.

Overall, information obtained from the University of Regina reflected the themes and foci obtained from interviews at The University of Saskatchewan with regard to the demand for research. No differences in groups of anticipated users of research, sources of support, research methods, and patterns of research dissemination were observed between the two institutions.

Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC)

One faculty member at SIFC held a graduate degree in adult education. A list of publications revealed a history of research addressing issues of aboriginal adult education, indigenous knowledge, and social and cultural development in aboriginal communities. Several studies indicated that SIFC faculty researchers had close working relationships with native communities and participatory research was a preferred methodology. Users of the SIFC research would include the disciplines associated with aboriginal development including adult education, social work and human justice. Students at the College, preparing for future leadership roles in native communities, are direct beneficiaries of this research. The communities themselves also derive benefits over the long term as staff members of social agencies, aboriginal and nonaboriginal, become better informed about, and skilled in providing, appropriate social intervention practices for native communities.

Recent research completed by faculty at SIFC has focused on first nations adult education programming issues (Sanderson, 1992), indigenous knowledge, traditional healing and aspects of spiritual, social and community development (Katz, 1986; Katz & Seth, 1993).

Saskatchewan Institute for Applied Science and Technology (SIASST)

Several respondents identified faculty and staff at SIASST as producers of adult education research. However, follow-up calls confirmed that for several of the persons identified, their major research work had been included in the survey of graduate student research completed at The University of Saskatchewan. Individual staff members as graduate students have also completed nondegree research projects (Finucan, 1992). A number of studies have been conducted to meet the needs of SIASST for evaluation reports, needs analyses and labor market surveys. The majority of these studies are used for internal program planning purposes and are not widely disseminated. Others, sometimes completed under the direction of, or with assistance from external consultants, including university faculty members, are occasionally disseminated through professional journals. These studies are most frequently funded internally or conducted on a cost recovery basis through projects funded by agencies such as Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC).

Recently, SIASST has provided leadership in the formation of the Saskatchewan Labor Force Development Board, an activity that has created a demand for additional training and labor market studies funded by CEIC. The beneficiaries of this research include local and provincial employers, individual trainees and their dependents, and communities throughout Saskatchewan which derive benefits from increases in the productivity and efficiency of the local economy and improvements in the functioning of the provincial labor market. As might be expected for a postsecondary vocational-technical institution, the purpose of SIASST's research activity appeared to be almost entirely focused on economic objectives.

Other Sites

Several persons identified as adult education practitioners with strong interests in research were employed at community colleges, labor unions, NGOs, and business and industry organizations. It was noted that some people held multiple roles and assumed the position of "researcher" on different occasions and in different contexts. For example, a college faculty member might also be a part-time graduate student, a board member of a local NGO (nongovernment organization) and also be a researcher in each context.

Development organizations such as CUSO, Saskatchewan World Food Day Association, Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, One Sky, Central Mennonite Committee, and the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation are actively involved in community development work in Saskatchewan. These NGO's are producers, disseminators, and users of adult education research. Some studies produced by these organizations are disseminated through conference proceedings and publications. It is likely however, that most have limited circulation in the form of

internal reports, desk-top published materials mailed to members and reports to government funding agencies.

Similarly, labor unions and business organizations are both producers and consumers of adult education research. It is probable, but not confirmed in this study, that much of the research of interest to these groups, like that of interest to SIAST, is research that is focused upon issues framed within human capital and human resource development research models. While several studies were located for review, time constraints prevented a thorough study of research production, demand and use in these sites. It appears that the dissemination network for studies from this sector is similar to that of the development NGO's, that is, by means of narrow networks of members, related unions and associations and government agencies. A small proportion of studies are disseminated through journals and conference presentations. The majority of studies are likely to have a long shelf life as archival materials, not easily accessible by persons from outside the organizational networks. Some studies referred to by respondents appeared to have a certain level of confidentiality and restricted readerships. Some organizations, from both business and labor, require that certain studies remain private in order to protect particular strategic interests.

Research produced by NGOs, labor and business organizations was disseminated through channels other than academic and professional journals, books and conference proceedings. Searches of academic literature therefore, are not the most effective means to access these studies and may lead to inaccurate estimates of the research productivity of these groups. Readers need to recognize that this study did not contact many agencies and organizations which may have completed research studies such as professional associations, environmental groups, chambers of commerce, private trade schools and first nations organizations. The metaphor of the iceberg may be appropriate to describe the extent of research in the NGO and business and labor sectors. What is observable and accessible by means of academic literature searches is a very small proportion of the research that has been produced. Because this research is also outside the mainstream of academic interest, as demonstrated by the lack of graduate and faculty research in these areas, this hidden area of research demand, supply and utilization is likely to be seriously underestimated in studies, such as this survey, in terms of both its magnitude and social importance.

NGOs have few resources to commit to research, yet several studies were located. Research appears to have been undertaken when an organization was able to hire staff or enlist the support of volunteers and board members who had social science training. Unfortunately the reports of these studies were often not widely disseminated. For example, CUSO Saskatchewan completed several evaluation studies which would be of value to adult educators engaged in community development, and of interest to other development groups, but the results were only distributed in-house to staff, volunteers and linkage organizations. Another example would be an evaluation of a job readiness training program for immigrant women funded by CEIC. Only the host agency and CEIC received the study findings yet the evaluation report contains information many adult educators working with immigrant

groups would wish to have access to. NGOs do not have the resources to print and disseminate their research reports, nor the time to prepare manuscripts to the standards required for academic publication. Exceptions do occur and some NGO based studies are published when their authors have strong research interests and affiliations with academe. For example, a study of community development work among immigrant women in Saskatoon was accepted for presentation at two conferences and published in an academic journal (Lee, 1993).

Similarly labor and business and industry organizations produce research studies for internal purposes the great majority of which are inaccessible to adult educators. Exceptions occur when the studies are undertaken for advocacy or educational purposes (Smillie & Kroll, 1991).

The demand for research produced at sites other than the two universities originates largely from the internal needs of institutions or organizations for strategic information, or in response to the needs of external funding agencies such as CEIC in the case of SIAST, or the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in the case of CUSO. One important observation with regard to the experience of development NGOs such as CUSO and the Immigrant Women's Society is that the goals of the projects which they manage under contracts with, or grants from, federal government departments such as CEIC or CIDA, have shifted from being defined in terms of basic human needs to goals which are directly linked to quantifiable socioeconomic benefits. Research to determine needs, substantiate program proposals and evaluate program outcomes has therefore become framed within the economic development agendas of the federal government's human resource development policies. In this respect the demand for research produced by NGOs has shifted from an internal demand for research to support public advocacy for social change and government intervention, towards research for funding accountability with its focus being on human capital development and economic criteria.

Summary and Conclusions

Adult education research in Saskatchewan is produced by a broad range of institutions and organizations. However, university based research greatly outweighs that from all other sites in terms of quantity, diversity and methodological rigor. At The University of Saskatchewan the faculty reward system was identified as a factor influencing researchers' decision making.

Graduate research at The University of Saskatchewan has tended to reflect mainstream adult education activity. Relatively little of the research completed for degree requirements has been conducted within a human resource development perspective and in support of the broad goals of economic development and restructuring. Personal interest rather than demand from the field of practice has been the dominant motivation for the selection of research topics by students. A group of faculty in the College of Education, at The University of Saskatchewan, has maintained a strong research tradition around the view of adult education as an instrument for social change. However, other members of the College, faculty from the Division of Extension, and the majority of faculty from across campus who have

conducted adult education research studies, have done so from a broad multi-functional perspective of adult education. A narrow range of research methods were used in the studies reviewed. The great majority of studies were descriptive or analytical surveys, a small proportion were historical or philosophical studies, and a few were quasi-experimental projects or case studies.

Similar patterns of faculty research were observed at The University of Regina. The research of extension faculty had predominantly technical-rational goals and originated from the concerns of faculty practitioners rather than from external demands of the field of adult education practice. The research of faculty and graduate students in the Faculty of Education reflected both a focus on critical adult education and mainstream adult education topics.

Research conducted at sites other than the two universities has made a contribution to the fields of adult education study and practice. It was observed that research produced by NGOs and other postsecondary institutions was often strategically important to their operations. Unfortunately, the research of NGOs and labor and business organizations, which had the potential to be of immediate value to many adult educators, was poorly disseminated and not retrievable through typical literature search processes. Research productivity at these sites was low and it is a cause for concern that more graduates of adult education programs, particularly those employed in publicly funded institutions, are not involved in field based research. The question must be asked; if adult education research has its origins in the problems of practice, why is there so little collaboration between university researchers and those adult educators who have research skills and are employed as practitioners?

The economic demands for adult education research, as perceived by study respondents, have their origins in the agendas of government, business and industry, while the origins of social demands for research lie in community based organizations and interest groups. There was little evidence that adult education researchers were highly responsive to either source of demand. Faculty research conducted in the tradition of adult education for social change appeared to be initiated by individual professional interests and involvement in personal networks, some of which were loosely connected with community groups. Faculty research characterized as pragmatic within a broad multi-functional tradition of adult education had its origins in the researchers' adult education practices, professional roles and responsibilities. While a longitudinal analysis was not conducted, it appeared from the data available that there had not been a major shift in focus on the part of faculty or graduate students, during the last six or seven years, towards the implementation of research conceptualized within human capital models. The demand of the emerging discipline of adult education for a knowledge base and the requirements for faculty tenure and promotion appear to have been strong justificatory influences in the origins of research conducted by College of Education faculty. Very few of the studies reviewed were supported by external grants, and small internal grants at The University of Saskatchewan were recognized to have been very important in supporting faculty research and dissemination activities.

Among faculty the two broad views about the functions of adult education, as an instrument for social change or as a broad education system with multiple functions in society including responding to provincial economic priorities, have become a basis for defining differences in research priority and legitimacy. There was widespread awareness among faculty of shifts that have occurred in the field of practice as government funding has followed policy priorities away from community based adult education (for basic human needs, citizenship, personal and cultural development and leisure goals), towards workplace training and institutional programs aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the labor force and accommodating issues of employee dislocation due to economic restructuring. The assumption, if not expectation, among study respondents was that adult education research would increasingly become linked with human capital oriented adult education practice. If practice focuses increasingly on economic and technical-rational goals, and research continues to seek solutions to problems identified in the field of practice, a shift in research focus towards human capital based studies can be anticipated.

Adult education research in the province of Saskatchewan appears increasingly to be a site of ideological contest which may mirror the concerns evident around the globe about the increasing influence of economic and human resource development agendas. It is possible that in the long term, a narrow economic agenda for adult education practice and research may detrimentally affect adult education practice and research focused on basic human needs, social equity and justice.

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