

Determinants of Adult Learners Enrolment into Open and Distance Learning Institutions in the North East, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study surveyed determinants of adult learners enrolment into open and distance learning institutions in the north east of Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to determine if; increase in income is a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme; updating of knowledge and skills is a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme; psychological interest is a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme. Hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level. Ho₁ increase in income will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme. Ho₂ Updating of knowledge and skills will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme. Ho₃ Psychological interest will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme. Survey design was used for the study. The population for the study was 13,406 adult learners enrolled into the University of Maiduguri, Centre for Distance Learning, Federal University of Technology Yola Centre for Distance Learning and National Open University of Nigeria, Maiduguri Study Centre. The sample for the study was 987 respondents selected through stratified proportionate to size random sampling technique. A 25 – item questionnaire named “Determinants of Adult Learners Questionnaire” (DALQ) was administered to the sample respondents. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean, Standard deviation and chi-square were used to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that, increase in income has significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme, updating of knowledge and skills has not significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme, and psychological interest has not significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made, employers should freely facilitate employees to satisfy their need of increase in income through enrolment into open and distance learning programme; and conduct seminars and workshops to make employees appreciate learning for its own sake and derive satisfaction in the pursuit and updating of knowledge for its own sake.

Keywords: Determinants, Adult, Learners, Enrolment, Distance, Learning,

Introduction

Adult learners enrol into open and distance learning for various different reasons. Boashire (1971) proposed 58 reasons why adults participate in adult education classes. He found participation to be based on learning orientation, desire-activity orientations, personal-goal orientation, societal-goal orientation and need activity orientation. Burges (1971) proposed that adults participated in learning activities out of desire to know, reach a personal goal, reach a social goal, reach a religious goal, take part in a social activity, to meet formal requirements.

Dave (1999) observed that increase in income, acquisition of knowledge and skills and psychological interests were the reasons why adult learners re-engage themselves in learning activities. Donald (1980) found out that wage increase and receiving of promotion were not significant reason for adult learners to return to school. These are studies carried out in different environments outside Nigeria. Therefore, this study explored determinants of adults participation in open and distance learning institutions in the North Eastern Nigeria namely: Centre for Distance Learning, Federal University of Technology, Yola Nigeria; Centre for Distance Learning University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, and National Open University of Nigeria, Maiduguri Study Centre.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to determine if;

- (i) increase in income is a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

- (ii) updating of knowledge and skills is a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.
- (iii) psychological interest is a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested

- Ho₁: Increase in income will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme
- Ho₂: Updating of knowledge and skills will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.
- Ho₃: Psychological interest will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

Methodology

This is a survey study. Fajonyomi (2012) states that survey is used for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory purposes. The target population of the study was all the 13, 406 Learners enrolled in the 3 distance learning centres of the institutions in the North East Nigeria. Using stratified proportionate to size random sampling technique, 987 learners (7.36 percent of the target population) were sampled for the study based on (Krejcie and Morgan 1970, Ogbazi and Okpala 1994, Yakir 2011). A five point Likert type questionnaire tagged “Determinants of Adult Learners Questionnaire (DALQ)” was made by the researcher and used in the study. The responses ranged from Strongly Agreed (SA) to Strongly Disagreed (SD) with a rating scale of 5-1 respectively. A test-re-test correlation obtained a correlation coefficient of 0.76 for the instrument. The researcher distributed 987 copies of the questionnaire out of which 981 were retrieved and used. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Chi square was used to test the hypothesis.

Results

Ho₁ Increase in income will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme

Table 1: Increase in income as a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme

S/No	Items	Options				X ²
		SA	A	SD	D	
1	I enrol into degree studies to secure a job	353 (36.0%)	309 (31.5%)	102 (10.4%)	217 (22.1%)	15.145
2.	I enrol into degree studies to increase my monthly salary	364 (37.1%)	282 (28.7%)	29 (3.0%)	306 (31.2%)	
3.	I enrol into degree studies to move upward my salary grade level from the terminal bar	330 (33.6%)	359 (36.6%)	35 (3.6%)	257 (26.2%)	
4	I enrol into degree studies even without salary increase in the working place	341 (34.8%)	276 (28.1%)	155 (15.8%)	209 (30.5%)	
5.	I would not have enrol into degree studies if my salary would not increase on completion	218 (22.2%)	108 (11.0%)	356 (36.3%)	299 (30.5%)	
	Total	1606 (32.7%)	1334 (28.2%)	677 (13.8%)	1288 (25.3%)	

Note: Number at top represent the frequency count, numbers in parenthesis is the (%) percentage while X² is chi-square calculated.

Table 1 above described the response of the respondents on how increase in income influence their enrolment into degree programme. The table tagged “increase in income as a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning institution” comprised of five items. The first item, “I enrol into degree studies to secure a job”, shows that among the 981 respondents, 102 (10.4%) strongly disagreed, 217 (22.1%) disagreed, 309 (31.5%) agreed and 353 (36.0%) strongly agreed. The second item “I enrol into degree studies to increase my monthly salary” reports 29 (3.0%) strongly disagreed, 306 (31.2%) disagreed while 282 (28.7%) agreed and 364 (37.1%) strongly agreed. The third item “I enrol into degree studies to move upward my salary grade level from the terminal bar” has 35 (3.6%) strongly disagreed, 257 (26.2%) disagreed while 359 (36.6%) agreed and 330 (33.6%) strongly agreed. The fourth item “I enrol into degree studies even without salary increase in the workplace” has 155 (15.8%) strongly disagreed, 209 (21.3%) disagreed while 341 (34.8%)

strongly agreed and 276 (28.1%) agreed. The last item states “I would not have enrolled into degree studies if my salary would not increase on completion” reports 356 (36.3%) strongly agreed, 299 (30.5%) disagreed while 218 (22.2%) strongly agreed and 108 (11.0%).

Table 1.2: Increase in income will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	X ²	A
Item. 1 – 5	5.880	148.77	12	15.145	0.05
	3.930	145.68			
N		12		n= 981	

Table 1.2 above display the results obtained from the chi-square analysis, there was variation between the mean of those who agreed and those who disagreed. A mean score of 5.880 was for agreed and 3.930 for disagreed and standard deviation of 148.77 for agreed and 145.68 for disagreed. The result was further confirmed taking alpha (α) at 0.05 under degree of freedom = 12 using the table value as shown the table 1.2

Table 1.3: Decision Table

Items	N	df	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value	Decision
Item 1-5	5	12	15.145	9.4888	Reject

Note that item 1-5 represent the questions responsible as factors in the questionnaire

Decision

Since the X² (chi-square) at 12 df at 0.05 level of significance = 9.4888. The calculated X² value = 15.145 is greater than the critical (table) value, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Income will significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

Ho₂ Updating of knowledge and skills will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

Table 2: Updating knowledge and skills as a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning institution

S/No	Items	Options				X ²
		SA	A	SD	D	
1.	I enrol into degree studies to broaden my knowledge	700 (71.4%)	155 (15.8%)	28 (2.9%)	98 (10.0%)	3.316
2.	I enrol into degree studies to improve my communication skills	426 (43.4%)	397 (40.5%)	122 (11.4%)	46 (4.7%)	
3.	I enrol into degree studies to have a chance of becoming a director in the work place	244 (24.9%)	329 (33.5%)	139 (14.2%)	269 (27.4%)	
4.	I enrol into degree studies for better understanding of the happening around the world	532 (54.2%)	258 (26.3%)	37 (3.8%)	154 (15.7%)	
5.	I enrol into degree studies for intellectual stimulation	520 (53.0%)	358 (36.5%)	61 (6.2%)	42 (4.3%)	
	Total	2513 (56.30%)	1520 (28.2%)	282 (5.4%)	617 (10.1%)	

Note: Number at top represent the frequency count, numbers in parenthesis is the (%) percentages while X² is chi-square calculated

Table 2 above describes the responses on updating of knowledge and skills as a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning institution. The first item states “I enrol into degree studies to broaden my knowledge” indicates 28 (2.9%) strongly disagreed, 98 (10.0%) disagreed, while 700 (71.4%) strongly disagreed and 155 (15.8%) agreed. The second item “I enrol into degree studies to improve my communication skills” indicates 112 (11.4%) strongly disagreed, 46 (4.72%) disagreed, while 426 (43.4%) strongly agreed and 397 (40.5%) agreed. The third item “I enrol into degree studies to improve my writing skills” reports 44 (4.5%) strongly disagreed, 277 (28.2%) disagreed, while 335 (34.1%) strongly agreed and 325 (33.1%) agreed. The

item four “I enrol into degree studies for better understanding of the happening around the world” has 37 (3.8%) strongly disagreed, 154 (15.7%) disagreed, while 532 (54.2%) strongly agreed and 258 (26.3%) agreed. Then “I enrol into degree studies for intellectual stimulation” shows 61 (6.2%) strongly disagreed, 42 (4.3%) disagreed, while 520 (53.6%) strongly agreed and 358 (36.5%) agreed.

Table 2.2: Updating of knowledge skill will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	X ²	A
Item 1 – 5	7.596	89.433	12	3.316	0.05
	2.214	89.433			
N		12		n= 981	

Note that item 1-5 represent the questions responsible as factors in the questionnaire

The results obtained from the chi-square test analysis there was variation between the mean of those who agreed, those who disagreed. A mean score of 7.596 was for agreed and 2.214 for disagreed and standard deviation of 89.433 for agreed and 89.433 for disagreed. The result was further confirmed taking alpha (α) at 0.05 under degree of freedom = 12 using the table value as shown in table 2.2

Table 2.3 Decision Table

Items	N	df	Calculated Value	Tabulated* Value	Decision
Item 1-5	5	12	3.316	21.026	Accept

Note that item 1-5 represent the questions responsible as factors in the questionnaire

Decision

Since X² (chi-square) at 12 df at 0.05 level of significance = 21.026. The calculated X² value = 3.316 is less than the critical (table) value, we therefore accept the null hypothesis that states that Updating of knowledge skills will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

Ho₃ Psychological interest will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme

Table 3.1: Psychological Interest as a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme

S/No	Items	Options				X ²
		SA	A	SD	D	
1.	I enrol into degree studies for just interest in learning	313 (31.9%)	283 (28.8%)	163 (16.6%)	222 (22.6%)	2.762
2.	I enrol into degree studies for just the pride of becoming an undergraduate	195 (19.9%)	252 (25.7%)	140 (14.3%)	394 (40.2%)	
3.	I enrol into degree studies to have confidence to discuss with others as graduate.	136 (13.9%)	309 (31.5%)	200 (20.4%)	336 (34.3%)	
4	I enrol into degree studies for psychological satisfaction	351 (35.8%)	245 (25.0%)	128 (13.0%)	257 (26.2%)	
5.	I enrol into degree studies to relieve stress and boredom	122 (12.4%)	252 (25.7%)	199 (20.3%)	408 (41.6%)	
	Total	1117 (22.8%)	1341 (27.4%)	830 (16.9%)	1617 (32.9%)	

Note: Number at top represent the frequency count, numbers in parenthesis is the (%) percentages while X² is chi-square calculated

Table 3 above describes the responses on psychological interest as a factor influencing adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning institution. The first item that states “I enrol into degree studies just for interest in learning” indicates 163 (16.6%) strongly disagreed, 222 (22.6%) disagreed, while 313 (31.9%) strongly agreed and 283 (28.8%) agreed. The second item “I enrol into degree studies for the pride of becoming an undergraduate” indicates 140 (1.3%) strongly disagreed and 394 (40.2%) disagreed, while 195 (19.9%) strongly

agreed and 252 (25.7%) agreed. The third item “I enrol into degree studies to have confidence to discuss with other as an undergraduate” has 200 (20.4%) strongly disagreed, 336 (34.3%) disagreed, while 136 (13.9%) strongly agreed and 309 (31.5%) agreed. The fourth item “I enrol into degree studies for psychological satisfaction” has 128 (13.0%) strongly disagreed, 257 (26.2%) disagreed, while 351 (35.8%) strongly agreed and 245 (25.0%) agreed. The fifth item that states “I enrol into degree studies to relieve stress and boredom” reports 199 (20.3%) strongly disagreed, 408 (41.6%) disagreed while 122 (12.4%) strongly agreed and 252 (25.7%) agreed.

Table 3.2 Psychological interest will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	X ²	A
Item 1 – 5	4.916	99.736	12	2.7622	0.05
	4.894	99.736			
N		12		n= 981	

Table 3.1: The result obtained from the chi-square analysis was variation between the mean of those who agreed and 4.894 for disagreed and standard deviation of 99.736 for agreed and 99.736 for disagreed. The result was further confirmed taking alpha (α) at 0.05 under degree of freedom = 12 using the table value as shown in the table 3.2.

Table 3.3: Decision Table

Items	N	df	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value	Decision
Item 1-5	5	12	2.7622	21.026	Accept

Note that item 1-5 represent the questions responsible as factors in the questionnaire

Decision

Since the X² (chi-square) at 12 df at 0.05 level of significance = 21.026. The calculated X² value = 2.7622 is less than the critical (table) value, we therefore accept the null hypothesis that states psychological interest will not significantly influence adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

Summary of findings

From the analysis of data shown in the preceding tables, the following were the summary of the study.

- (i) Increase in income has significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme
- (ii) Updating of knowledge and skills has not significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.
- (iii) Psychological interest has not significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme.

Discussion

The study found that increase in income has significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme. This finding is supported by Wanjala & Oteino 2010) that enrolling for bachelor of education degree by distance learning at the university of Nairobi, Kenya is largely seen by individuals and their families as a means to secure income. They asserted that in developing world, education is largely seen by individuals and their families as a means to better income. Also, this finding is further supported by Bender & Valentine (1990) that the reasons of low literate adults for participating in Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses are economic needs which include securing a job, wanting to get off welfare and wanting to earn more money. This implies that adult learners enrol into degree programme through open and distance learning largely because of economic reasons.

The study has also found that updating of knowledge and skills has not significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programmes. This finding contradicts (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) that adults participated in adult education because of job related skills due to the changes occurring with globalization that demands people to updates their skills regularly. This finding of this study also differs from Sunday (2001) that substantial number of Oyo state public servants attended different types of training programmes at different levels because they believed that training and skills development were necessary tools for improving their skills. By implication from the result of this study, adult learners have not been influenced by the factor of updating of knowledge and skills regarding their enrolment into open and distance learning

programme.

This study reports that psychological interest has not significantly influenced adult learners to enrol into open and distance learning programme. This finding contradicts the study conducted by Fujita-Starch (1996) found out that motivational orientation that enhance good participation in adult education includes cognitive interest, communication improvement and community service. Furthermore, Raghvan & Kumar (2008) conducted a study of adult learners in the Open University of Malaysia and found that participation needs were based on professional advancement, followed closely by cognitive interest and communication improvement. It can be deduced from this study that, adult learners' enrolment into open and distance programme has no influence on psychological interest.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that increase in income is a significant determinant of adult learners' enrolment into open and distance learning programmes. While updating of knowledge and skills and psychological interest are not significant determinants of enrolment into these programmes in the North East of Nigeria. It is suggested that economic empowerment programmes be provided by government and non-governmental organizations to fight high rate of poverty in the region, increase access to education especially by women to enable the populace appreciate learning for the sake of knowledge.

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