

Perception of Adult Education Students on the Nomenclature of Adult Education as a course of study in selected Universities of South East Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the perception of adult education students on the nomenclature of adult education as a course of study in selected universities of South East Nigeria. Two specific purposes and two research questions guided the study. The design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 150 adult education students drawn from two universities in the study area. There was no sampling technique because the population of the study was manageable. A structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled “Perception of Adult Education Students and Nomenclature Questionnaire” (PAESNQ) was used for data gathering. The instrument was validated and administered to respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha methods at .86. Data collected were analysed using simple percentages. The findings revealed that students who were satisfied with the name adult education were low while those students that feel that the name adult education should be changed were high. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that there should be adequate awareness creation and sensitization towards the study of adult education programmes by all levels of government in the study area.

Keywords: perception, adult, education, students, nomenclature, universities

Introduction

Adult Education is offered as a course of study in several universities in Nigeria. In south East Nigeria, it is offered in University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) and Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). In University of Nigeria, it is known as Department of Adult Education and Extramural Studies, in Nnamdi Azikiwe University it is known as Department of Adult Education while it is called Department of Adult and Continuing Education in Enugu State University of Science and Technology. All these universities have been in existence for

over two decades and adult education has been in existence all this time either as a full-fledged department or a programme as in the case of ESUT prior to being accredited as a department in 2009. However, there are indications that there is not enough understanding on the part of young adults aspiring to get into the university about Adult Education as a course of study. This is evident in their refusal to include it as a choice of study when filling out their Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) forms or reluctance to accept admission into the department when their choice of study was not granted. Adult education is the education which embraces career education and skills building programmes, creative thinking, product development and marketing, economic development and negotiation, leadership and occupational training, wealth creation etc. Adult education seeks for occupational motivation, self-actualization and national development (Olasupo, 2015).

Adult education is a unique and all-encompassing field of study that pertains to all aspects of human life. The universal definition of Adult Education provided by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1976 as cited in John (2014) states that adult education is the entire body of organized process, whatever the content, level or method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspective of full personal development. According to Adedokun (2013), adult education through its broad programme is a means of integrating individuals into the global events, bringing about not only the attainment of self-fulfillment but national development.

Adult education is a pivotal position to ensure that individuals in the society are properly groomed through the efforts of adult education to have good and the assurance of integration into work life (Aitokhuchi & Jegede, 2018). Nyere cited in Ifeancha, Uba and Chukwuji, (2018) described adult education as education sensitization. In other words, adult education is awakening mechanism which helps to liberate people from limitations through development of the mind and creation of awareness. Adult education involves educational activities or programmes that can be formal or non-formal, aimed at the provision of basic knowledge skills, attitudes, and competencies or literacy education to the population of the country. The provision of literacy training is considered a component of adult education. Literacy entails acquisition of basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy, listening and speaking as well as a discipline, a course or an area of study which can take place in a community or literacy centre, schools, college or university, which one goes through in order to acquire some knowledge, skills, or attitude within a stipulated period of time necessary for employment but not enough to continuous adaptation and fulfillment in life. In a wider sense, adult education can be seen as a continuous process for acquisition of wide-range experiences in and out of school, all facets of life.

Similarly, Anowor, Ezema and Umezuike (2006) describe adult education as a purposeful effort towards self-development carried out by individuals without direct legal compulsion and without such effort becoming his major field or activity. They also maintained that adult education is a conscious effort of a matured person to learn something anew. This concept includes all accidental learning that takes place in the course of the routine activities of everyday learning.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization UNESCO (1976) as cited in Ani (2010) defined adult education as the entire body of organized educational process, whether the contents, level, method; whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges or universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby a person regarded as adult by the society which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improves their technical or professional qualification or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviours in the two folds perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

Adult Education as a course of study is enriched with different aspects of other disciplines to produce a total scholar who is expected to impact his environment positively. This is supported by studies such as All Party Parliamentary Groups for Adult Education (APPG), cited in Dokubo and Andong (2020), which opines that adult education has proven to be extremely successful in performing multiple roles. In the same vein, Obidegwu (2013) is of the view that adult education is one of the fields of academic endeavours saddled with the responsibility of solving socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental problems and there is positive association between Adult Education programmes and increased level of self-esteem and high level of knowledge and skills which thereby encourage positive and active engagement of people in their own development.

The way people perceive a thing determines its acceptance or rejection. According to McDonald cited in Okon (2019), perception involves the way one sees the world. Collins (2006) also defines perception as insight or intuition and way of viewing. However, McDonald cited in Okon (2019) emphasizes that perception is an individual's view making it a powerful force for action. It is never objective; it is an individual's or group's unique way of viewing phenomenon that involves the processing of stimuli and incorporates memories and experiences in the process of understanding. This definition gives an apt and holistic view about the concept of perception which is necessary for understanding the purpose of this study, as the study is aimed at understanding the perception of students in Adult Education on the nomenclature of Adult Education as a course of study in selected universities in South East Nigeria.

Nomenclature is the name by which a person or thing is addressed. In other words, the purpose of this study is to ascertain how students perceive the name, Adult Education, as a course of study.

Statement of the problem

Many students of Adult Education tend to shy away from revealing their course of study to their friends or contemporaries. There is hardly a student who gained admission into the university to study Adult Education on their own volition. While some entered the department as an alternative to their first choice, others did so because the body in charge of admissions put them there. The moment they complete first year they start making plans to change to another department. Some outrightly refuse the admission and choose instead to retake UTME. Some students already in the department seem to display an attitude of resignation to the course while some behave in ways that can be likened to feeling inferior. They are also taunted by their contemporaries in other disciplines which increase their desperation to leave the department. This results in fewer numbers of students in Adult Education in comparison to other departments in the faculty of Education in all three universities. The problem of this study is therefore to ascertain the perception of students in Adult Education about the nomenclature of Adult Education as a course of study in the two universities selected for the study.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of adult education students on the nomenclature of adult education as a course of study in selected universities in South East Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to ascertain:

1. How students feel about studying adult education.
2. How students feel about the name adult education.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do students feel about studying adult education?
2. How do students feel about the name adult education?

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for this study comprised of 150 adult education students drawn from the two selected universities namely Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two universities from the three universities, offering the course, in the study area. There was no sampling because the population of the study was manageable.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Perception of Adult Education Students and Nomenclature Questionnaire” (PAESNQ) designed by the researchers. The instrument had two parts, A and B. Part A contained respondent’s demographic information such as sex, age and year of study; while part B has 12 items in the form of modified four points Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with scores 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts; two from the Department of Adult and Continuing Education and one from the Measurement and Evaluation unit of the

Department of Mathematics and Computer Education of Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the participants and collected by the researchers with two research assistants for the purpose. Data collected were analysed using simple percentages.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: How do students' feel about studying adult education?

Table 1: Summary of simple percentages for the students' feeling about studying adult Education (n=150)

S/N	Items statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	Total %
1	Adult education has great employment prospects	95 63.3	21 14.0	13 8.7	21 14.0	150 100%
2	Adult education is a prestigious course	60 40.0	40 26.7	23 15.3	27 18.0	150 100%
3	Adult education improves a person's quality	51 34.0	48 32.0	36 24.0	15 10.0	150 100%
4	Adult Education is easy to understand	16 10.7	12 8.0	54 36.0	68 45.3	150 100%
5	It is easier to graduate with a good grade in Adult Education than from other disciplines.	19 12.7	9 6.0	22 14.7	100 66.6	150 100%
6	Adult Education is a very interesting course.	51 34.0	48 32.0	15 10.0	36 24.0	150 100%

Result of analysis in Table 1 showed that out of 150 (100%) respondents that responded to item 1, 95 (63.3%) strongly agree, 21 (14.0%) agree, 13 (8.7%) disagree and 21 (14.0%) strongly disagree. For item 2, 60 (40.0%) strongly agree, 40 (26.7%) agree, 23 (15.3%) disagree and 27 (18.0%) strongly disagree. Item 3 had 51 (34.0%) strongly agree, 48 (32.0%) agree, 36(24.0%) disagree and 15 (10.0%) strongly disagree, while for item 4, 16(10.7%) strongly agree, 12 (8.0%) agree, 54 (36.0%) disagree and 68 (45.3%) strongly disagree. For item 5, 19 (12.7%) strongly agree, 9 (6.0%) agree 22 (14.7%) disagree and 100 (66.6%) strongly disagree. Item 6 had 51 (34.0%) strongly agree, 48 (32.0%) agree, 15 (10.0%) disagree and 36 (24%) strongly disagree. From the Table 1, this means that the students' feeling towards studying adult education was high. This also means that the course have great employment prospect, as it is considered as being prestigious, capable of improving a person's quality and being an interesting course.

Research question 2: How do students feel about the name, adult education?

Table 2: Summary of simple percentages for the students’ feelings about the name adult Education (n=150)

S/N	Items statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	Total %
1	The name adult education is suitable	12 8.0	7 12.7	19 22.7	112 74.6	150 100%
2	I am proud to tell my friends that I am studying adult education	130 86.0	10 6.7	6 4.0	4 3.3	150 100%
3	I think the name adult education should be changed	130 86.0	10 6.7	6 4.0	4 3.3	150 100%
4	I would recommend my siblings or loved ones to study adult education	7 4.7	8 5.3	11 7.3	124 82.7	150 100%
5	I would return for further studies in adult education	123 82.0	13 8.6	7 4.7	7 4.7	150 100%
6	I entered the department of adult education by choice.	95 63.3	21 14.0	21 14.0	13 8.7	150 100%

Simple percentages statistical technique was employed in analyzing data for this research question. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2. Result of analysis in Table 2 shows that out of 150 (100%) respondents that responded to item 1, 12 (8.0%) strongly agree, 7 (12.7%) agree, 19 (22.7%) disagree and 112 (74.6%) strongly disagree. For item 2, 130 (86.0%) strongly agree, 10 (6.7%) agree, 6 (4.0%) disagree and 4 (3.3%) strongly disagree. Item 3 had 130 (86.0%) strongly agree, 10 (6.7%) agree, 6 (4.0%) disagree and 4 (3.3%) strongly disagree. While item 4 had 7(4.7%) strongly agree, 8 (5.3%) agree, 11 (7.3%) disagree and 124 (82.7%) strongly disagree; item 5 had 123 (82.0%) strongly agree, 13 (8.6%) agree, 7 (4.7%) disagree and 7 (4.7%) strongly disagree. For item 6, 95 (63.3%) strongly agree, 21 (14.0%) agree, 21 (14.0%) disagree and 13 (8.7%) strongly disagree. From the findings of this study, it showed that students’ feelings about the name adult education was low. This means that the name adult education should be changed to attract more learners into the programme.

Discussion of the findings

Based on the findings from research question one, the study revealed that students’ feelings about studying adult education in higher institution was high in the study area. The finding is in line with the view of McDonald, cited in Okon (2019), who emphasized that perception is an individual’s view, making it a powerful force during action. It is never objective; it is an individual or group’s unique way of viewing phenomenon that involves the processing of stimuli and incorporates memories and experiences in the process of understanding.

The findings from research question two showed that students’ feeling about the name adult education was low. The findings are in agreement with the view of John (2014) who

states that Adult Education is the entire body of organized process, whatever the content, level or method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspective of full personal development. Also, the findings of this study is in line with the view of Adedokun (2013) who stated that adult education through its broad programme is a means of integrating individuals into the global events, bringing about not only the attainment of self-fulfillment but national development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the students' feelings about studying adult education as a career was high and the course have great employment prospect, and is viewed as being prestigious, improving the persons' quality and being an understanding course. The findings of the study also revealed that students opine that the name, adult education, should be changed to attract more learners into the programme.

Recommendations

This paper recommends that there should be adequate awareness creation and sensitization about adult education programmes, by all levels of government. There should be campaign, workshops and seminars to enlighten the masses in order to strengthen adult education programmes in tertiary institutions.

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