

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LOW ENROLLMENT IN THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO EKITI.

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Abstract

This study investigated the institutional factors contributing to low enrolment rates in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study sampled 150 adult education students, administrators, and educators drawn from communities served by the university through simple random sampling. A self-developed questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.70 was employed to collect data, which was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that institutional barriers significantly affect the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes at the university, including inadequate facilities, rigid course schedules, limited support services, and teaching methods inappropriate for adult education students. The study also identified that University policies and practices affect enrolment, but lack sufficient support and mentorship for adult education students. Based on these findings, the study recommends regular assessment of adult education students-oriented facilities and services, the implementation of adult-focused policies, the establishment of structured mentorship systems, and more proactive university administration to achieve the goals of adult education programmes and improve enrolment rates.

Keywords: Adult Education, Low Enrolment, Institutional Factors, University Policies, Support Services

Introduction

Adult education is essential to lifelong learning because it gives people the chance to learn new things, advance their knowledge, and improve their quality of life. Adult education programmes are especially important in developing nations like Nigeria because they fill in educational gaps for individuals who did not finish formal schooling, providing a second opportunity for education while promoting socioeconomic growth and

individual empowerment (Kosyakova, 2018). The adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, are made to take into account the special needs of adult education students, such as employment obligations, family duties, and other personal limitations. Enrolment rates appear low, which could present significant obstacles to educational growth and community development in the area, despite the programmes' acknowledged value in

encouraging social inclusion, lowering inequality, and boosting socioeconomic development.

A careful examination of the institutional elements that might be causing the apparent drop in adult education programme enrolment at Ekiti State University is necessary. Although socio-economic hurdles, including financial limitations, work status, and family obligations, have been found to have an impact on enrolment decisions in earlier studies, institutional variables might be just as important. Administrative policies, programme design, curriculum relevance, instructional quality, support service accessibility, physical infrastructure, and institutional culture are a few examples of these institutional elements. Gaining an understanding of these elements is essential to creating strategies that will maximise the potential impact of adult education programmes on community development and individual empowerment by increasing participation. The institutional factor is one of the most important variables affecting enrolment in adult education programmes.

Institutional factors refer to the characteristics and conditions of the educational institutions offering adult education programmes. These elements include curricular flexibility and relevance, student support services, and the quantity and calibre of educational facilities (Ahn, 2022). Enrolment in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, may be hampered by a lack of resources and facilities. A lot of educational institutions might not have the classrooms, libraries, and technology needed to support adult education students. The physical setting of learning centres can have a big influence on adults' enrolment intentions. For prospective adult

education students, inadequately maintained facilities or a dearth of necessary resources might be demoralising.

The low enrolment in adult education programmes is partly a result of institutional problems. Lack of institutional support, strict academic requirements, and limited programme flexibility can discourage adult education students from enrolling. Working individuals are less able to attend, for instance, when institutions only provide classes during regular business hours. Programs that provide online course delivery, flexible scheduling options, and sufficient academic support are the most beneficial to adult education students, according to Blake and Russell (2017). Adults who are unable to adhere to standard academic timetables tend to enroll in programmes with less modifications.

Institutional rigidity compounds the challenges posed by opportunity costs. Many educational programmes do not offer the flexibility that working adults require, such as self-paced learning modules, online possibilities, or evening or weekend seminars. Limited schedule flexibility at institutions tends to discourage full-time working individuals from enrolling, particularly if they are unable to manage their study and employment within conventional academic frameworks. Because they better meet the demands of working adults, programmes designed to fit work schedules or allow for flexible completion timeframes draw in more adult learners, according to Brooks and Davis (2022).

The quality and accessibility of adult education programmes are greatly impacted by institutional impediments, which frequently deter prospective adult education students and reduce the educational efficacy of

enrolled adult education students. Inadequate facilities are a significant institutional barrier, according to Pickard (2019). Many adult education facilities, such as those at Ekiti State University in Ado-Ekiti, are devoid of basic facilities including, computer labs, libraries, and well-equipped classrooms. Because they give adult education students access to tools and technologies that improve their educational experience, these facilities are essential for efficient learning. Without these tools, adult education students might not be able to participate completely in the course material, struggle to finish tasks, and lose out on chances to gain important skills, especially in subjects that call for technological competence.

In addition to impeding the educational process, inadequate infrastructure deters prospective adult education students from enrolling in the first place. When adults are thinking about going back to school, they frequently view the facilities' quality as a measure of the programmes' worth and applicability. They may question whether the provided education will be worthwhile of their time and financial investment if there are no resources available, which may indicate a lack of institutional support. Furthermore, the lack of a supportive learning environment at adult education facilities reinforces cultural attitudes that may devalue adult learning by sending the idea that adult education is not a priority.

Limited alternatives for flexible or part-time learning, as well as strict course scheduling, are additional institutional constraints. Adult education students, who frequently juggle work and home obligations, need programmes that take into account their particular time constraints. The participation of adults is restricted by fixed timetables that do not correspond

well with normal working hours or personal obligations. Scheduling flexibility, like self-paced modules, online course opportunities, or evening or weekend classes, could help remove this obstacle. Access for adults who are unable to adhere to conventional timetables is limited by the fact that many institutions, including Ekiti State University, still do not offer these flexible options.

Furthermore, adult education programmes frequently lack adequate institutional support services, with limited access to career counselling, academic advising, and adult-specific mental health support. According to Carter & Lee (2020), adult education students encounter unique difficulties, such as apprehension about going back to school, the requirement for well-defined professional paths, and assistance in juggling their studies with other obligations. Adult education students may feel alone and unsupported without these services, which could increase dropout rates and decrease their level of satisfaction with their education overall.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the establishment of Adult Education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, enrolment rates have been observed to be persistently low. This decline poses significant challenges to educational advancement and community development in the region. While the university has attempted to create flexible programmes, several institutional factors appear to be hindering participation, including inadequate educational facilities, rigid academic requirements, limited programme flexibility, insufficient support services, and a lack of scheduling options that accommodate working adults. Additionally, the absence of well-equipped classrooms,

libraries, and computer labs necessary for effective learning may create barriers to access. The physical environment of learning centres, which can significantly impact the willingness of adults to enroll, often remains poorly maintained. These institutional barriers collectively diminish the quality and accessibility of adult education programme, preventing the programmes from fulfilling their potential to address educational gaps, foster socio-economic development, reduce inequality, and promote social inclusion in the community.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the institutional factors contributing to the low enrolment rates in adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What institutional barriers affect the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti?
- ii. What role do University policies and practices play in influencing adult education enrolment?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was raised for the study;

- There is no significant relationship between institutional barriers and the accessibility and quality of adult education

programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population comprised of adult education students, administrators, and educators from communities served by Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. A total 150 adults were used as a sample for the study, selected using simple random sampling. A self-developed questionnaire was the research instrument used to gather detailed information for the study. The questionnaire used was subjected to both content and face validation in order to ensure validity. The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha method, yielding a coefficient of 0.70, which was considered acceptable. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics, specifically the t-test, were used to test the formulated hypothesis. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What institutional barriers affect the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti?

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of the Institutional Barriers that affect the accessibility and quality of Adult Education Programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree		Mean	SD	Decision
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%			
1	The facilities (e.g., classrooms, libraries) for Adult Education are adequate.	101	67.3	49	32.7	2.64	0.19	Accepted
2	The course schedules for Adult Education are flexible enough to fit my needs.	94	62.6	56	37.3	2.51	0.23	Accepted
3	Support services (e.g., advising, counselling) are accessible to me as an adult education student	98	65.3	52	34.7	2.61	0.26	Accepted
4	The teaching methods are suitable for adult education students	100	66.7	50	33.3	3.13	0.42	Accepted
5	There are online or hybrid learning options available for Adult Education.	95	63.3	55	36.7	2.52	0.17	Accepted

Mean Cut Off = 2.5

Table 1 shows the Frequency and Percentage of the institutional barriers that affect the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The responses of the respondents were collapsed into agree and disagree for easy interpretation. The mean scores of all the items on the scale were above the cut-off mean of the scale. This implies

that all the institutional variables aforementioned in this study affect the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

Research Question 2: What role do University policies and practices play in influencing adult education enrolment?

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of the role played by University policies and practices in Influencing Adult Education enrolment

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree		Mean	SD	Decision
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%			
1	Does the University policies encourage adult education student. In study Adult Education Programmes.	66	44.0	84	56.0	2.21	0.12	Rejected
2	The university updates its Adult Education policies regularly to meet my needs.	95	63.3	55	36.7	2.60	0.13	Accepted
3	The university provides sufficient outreach and information about Adult Education Programmes.	113	75.3	37	24.7	2.64	0.19	Accepted
4	Admissions requirements for Adult Education are flexible and accommodating.	94	62.7	56	37.3	2.51	0.23	Accepted
5	The university provides mentor-ship or peer support opportunities for adult education students.	63	42.0	87	58.0	2.14	0.26	Rejected

Mean Cut Off = 2.5

Table 2 shows the Frequency and Percentage of the role played by University policies and practices in

influencing adult education enrolment. The responses of the respondents were collapsed to agree and disagree for easy

interpretation. The mean scores of all the items except items 1 and 5 on the scale were above the cut-off mean of the scale. This implies that the role played by university policies and practices in influencing adult education enrolment includes the provision of sufficient outreach and information, updating Adult Education and placing admissions requirements.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis: Institutional barriers, including inadequate resources, rigid programme structures, and limited support services, significantly affect the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance showing significant influence of Institutional Barriers on the Accessibility and Quality of Adult Education Programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	692.110	2	741.113	5.410*	0.001
Within Groups	1061.443	147	1840.117		
Total	1753.553	149			

$p < 0.05$

(Significant Result)

Table 6 shows that the $F(5.410^*)$ is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not accepted, which implies that there is a significant influence of Institutional barriers on the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that the quality and accessibility of adult education programmes at Ekiti State University in Ado-Ekiti are impacted by all of the institutional factors described above. This result is consistent with Blake and Russell's (2017) argument that poor enrolment in adult education programmes is also influenced by institutional variables. Adult learners may be discouraged from enrolling due to strict academic requirements, limited program flexibility, and a lack of institutional support. For instance, working folks find it more difficult to attend when schools only provide classes during regular business hours.

According to Blake and Russell (2017), programmes that provide online course delivery, flexible scheduling options, and sufficient academic support are most beneficial to adult learners. Programmes without these adaptations often experience lower enrolment from adults who are unable to meet traditional academic schedules.

The findings showed that university policies and procedures, such as providing adequate outreach and information, upgrading Adult Education, and setting admissions requirements, have an impact on adult education enrolment. This result is consistent with Assefa's (2021) statement, which emphasised the importance of tracking and assessing adult education programmes to make sure they effectively address students' needs and produce the intended results. This study confirms the findings of Collom (2022), who discovered that a sizable portion of individuals are still ignorant of the educational options accessible to them and the advantages these programmes

provide, such as skill development, career promotion, and personal growth. Limited marketing and outreach initiatives by government organisations and educational institutions are frequently the cause of this lack of knowledge. Potential adult students are unaware of the good effects adult education could have on their lives, since many adults who could benefit from these programmes are just not aware of their possibilities.

The findings of this study revealed that there is a significant influence of Institutional barriers on the accessibility and quality of adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. This result supports the findings by Blake and Russell (2017) that programmes that provide online course delivery, flexible scheduling, and sufficient academic support are most beneficial to adult learners. Adults who are unable to adhere to conventional academic timetables frequently enroll in programmes without these modifications at a lower rate.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that institutional variables play a significant role in influencing enrolment rates in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Key barriers identified include inadequate learning facilities and limited support services. Additionally, while university policies and outreach efforts impact enrolment, they are not sufficiently tailored to address the unique needs of adult education students. Addressing these institutional shortcomings is essential for improving accessibility, enhancing the overall effectiveness of adult education, and increasing enrolment in such programmes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The university should conduct regular assessments of its facilities, course schedules, support services, teaching methods, and learning options to ensure they continue to meet the evolving needs of adult education students.
2. Ekiti State University should develop and implement specific policies that explicitly encourage adult education student participation, including financial incentives, recognition of prior learning, and special admission pathways designed specifically for adult education students returning to education.
3. The university should establish a structured mentorship and peer support system specifically for adult education programmes.
4. University administrations should play their roles, such as providing adequate facilities, supporting outreach initiatives, encouragement and implementing adult-friendly policies so as to achieve the goals of the adult educational programme.

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