

SOCIO ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING LOW ENROLLMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO EKITI.

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Abstract

This study investigated the socio-economic factors contributing to low enrollment rates in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey research design, data was collected from 150 respondents including students, administrators, and teachers using simple random sampling technique. A self design questionnaire was the instrument used for collection of data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysis of the data collected. The findings revealed that major socio-economic factors influencing low enrollment include financial challenges, family responsibilities, limited transportation, and high cost of materials. Additional factors discouraging enrollment were people's negative perceptions of adult education, societal norms regarding gender, and concerns about employment opportunities. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant relationship between socio-economic factors and enrollment rates. The study recommended considering students' socio-economic status during enrollment planning, providing adequate learning resources, developing policies to ensure employment opportunities for graduates, addressing negative perceptions, and strengthening institutional support for adult education programmes.

Introduction

Adult education is a crucial component of lifelong learning that helps people learn new things, expand their knowledge, and live better lives. In developing nations, where adult education options can have a major impact on socioeconomic development and human empowerment, it is especially crucial (Fűréss et al., 2023). Adult education programs are essential in Nigeria because they give those who did not finish formal schooling a second chance at education, meet their educational needs, and raise their socioeconomic standing.

Enrollment rates in adult education programs at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti remain significantly low, posing challenges to the state's education and development (Bada & Adewumi, 2019). Adult education plays a crucial role in fostering socio-economic development, reducing inequality, and promoting social

inclusion. It offers adults the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in society and the economy. Over the years, adult education programs have expanded to include a wide range of courses and training opportunities, particularly at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. These programs are intended to be flexible, accommodating the unique circumstances of adult learners, including work commitments, family responsibilities, and other personal constraints. For those who did not finish their formal schooling, adult education programs provide a second opportunity to enhance their reading, numeracy, and occupational abilities (Kosyakova, 2018). Significant advantages of adult education also extend to the larger community. The likelihood of civic engagement, community growth, and parental support for their children's education is higher among educated adults. Improved health outcomes can also result from adult education since

educated people are more likely to adopt healthy habits and make wise decisions regarding their health and welfare.

The adult population's educational and socioeconomic needs may be met by Ado-Ekiti adult education programs at Ekiti State University. These programs have the potential to equip people with the information and abilities they need to find better jobs, earn more money, and live better lives. However, the ongoing drop in enrollment rates restricts these programs' community influence and compromises their efficacy (Aladejana, 2023).

The socioeconomic standing of prospective students is a significant determinant of enrollment in adult education programs. A variety of components are included in socioeconomic considerations, such as family responsibilities, work status, educational attainment, and income levels. Many individuals at Ekiti State University in Ado-Ekiti struggle to pay for their education because of financial limitations (Ezekiel, 2023). People with low incomes, for example, could put their urgent needs—like food and housing—above their educational costs.

The likelihood of enrolling in adult education programs may be significantly influenced by one's work situation. Unemployed or underemployed adults might not have the time or money to devote to their education. However, people who have steady jobs could find it difficult to juggle work and school, particularly if they have rigorous job duties. This leads to a complicated situation in which having financial security is both a requirement for and a possible deterrent to continuing education. The time and energy available for schooling can also be restricted by family obligations, such as taking care of young children or aging family members. It takes a lot of time management and support—which isn't always available—for

many adults to balance these obligations with their academic goals.

Enrollment can also be strongly impacted by the caliber of the content and teaching strategies. Potential students may be discouraged from enrolling in programs that are viewed as antiquated, irrelevant, or rigid. Adult learners are frequently inspired by the real-world applications of their education, looking for information and abilities that will help them in both their personal and professional life. As a result, the curriculum needs to be current and customized to adult learners' unique requirements (Lu et al., 2022). In order to promote enrollment, support services like financial aid, career counseling, and academic advising are also essential. Adults who struggle academically or personally might need extra help to be successful in their education. Enrollment rates can rise and a more favorable learning environment can be produced by institutions that offer comprehensive support services. These services can give adult learners the direction and tools they need to reach their educational objectives while assisting them in navigating the difficulties of juggling their studies with other obligations.

Enrollment decisions are significantly influenced by perceptions and awareness of adult education programs. It's possible that many adults at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, are unaware of the educational options that are available to them or have false beliefs about the importance and advantages of adult education. Outreach initiatives and public awareness campaigns are crucial for raising awareness of adult education programs and their possible effects on people's lives (Adeoti et al., 2022). Social and cultural standards have an impact on how much people value education. For people who have already entered the workforce, adult education may be undervalued or seen as unneeded in some regions. Emphasizing the long-term advantages of education, such as

increased employability, higher income potential, and improved quality of life, is necessary to change these attitudes.

Additionally, enrollment may be hampered by the stigma attached to adult education. Some people may be embarrassed or humiliated to go back to school later in life out of concern for their family members' or classmates' opinions. Increasing attendance in adult education programs requires addressing these unfavorable perceptions and fostering a culture that supports lifelong learning. The quality and accessibility of adult education programs are important determinants of enrollment. The ease with which prospective students can access educational opportunities is referred to as accessibility. This covers factors including schedule, transportation, and location. Enrollment may be severely hampered by programs that are far from students' homes or places of employment or that have rigid timetables.

The convenience of educational programs is a deciding factor for many adult learners when it comes to enrolling. The hectic schedules of adult learners who might have family or work obligations can be accommodated with flexible scheduling, which includes evening and weekend programs. According to Todd et al. (2021), education can also be made more accessible by offering transportation choices or placing programs close to public transportation. Another crucial factor is the quality of education. Adults are more inclined to sign up for programs that provide excellent education, current and relevant curricula, and efficient teaching strategies. Programs for adult education must adhere to these requirements in order to draw in and keep students. Additionally, a high standard of education can improve the standing of adult education programs, increasing their attractiveness to prospective students.

In order to address the educational needs of adults who were unable to finish their formal education for a variety of reasons, adult education programs were created. However, despite their acknowledged significance and potential advantages, enrollment rates have remained disappointingly low, which presents a significant challenge to the state's educational and developmental goals. In order to develop effective strategies for increasing participation, it is essential to fully understand the complex factors contributing to the low enrollment in adult education programs (Nieuwenhove & Wever, 2021).

Statement of the problem

Enrollment rates in adult education programs at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, seem to be very low, despite the acknowledged significance and potential advantages of these programs in promoting socioeconomic development, lowering inequality, and giving people a second opportunity at education. Numerous factors contribute to this low enrollment, such as socioeconomic limitations (such as income levels, work status, and family obligations), a lack of knowledge and unfavorable opinions about adult education, difficulties with accessibility, curriculum relevance, and instructional quality. The ongoing membership drop restricts these programs' potential impact on community development and individual empowerment in Ekiti State and compromises their efficacy. Developing successful methods to boost participation and optimize the advantages of adult education in the area requires an understanding of these dynamics.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the socio-economic factors contributing to the low enrollment rates in adult education programmes in Ekiti State

University, Ado-Ekiti Nigeria. This study aims to identify and analyze the socio-economic barriers, such as poverty and unemployment, that prevent individuals from enrolling in adult education programmes.

Research Questions

- i. What are the socio-economic factors influencing low enrollment rates in adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti?
- ii. What are the major factors discouraging students from enrolling in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were raised for the study

- i. There is no significance relationship between socio-economic factors influencing low enrollment rates in adult education programmes and Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design of the survey type.

The population comprised of students, administrators, teachers from both urban and rural areas of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. A total 150 adults were used as 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 used was estimated using the Cronbach's alpha reliability method was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.70, which was adjudged reliable. The data collected was analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were use to answer the research questions while the inferential statistics of t-test was used to test the formulated hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1. What are the socio-economic factors influencing low enrollment rates in adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti?

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of the socio-economic factors influencing low enrollment rates in adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree		Mean	SD	Decision
		Freq	%	Freq	%			
1	I find it difficult to enroll in Adult Education Programmes because of financial challenges	106	70.6	44	29.3	3.21	0.44	Accepted
2	Unemployment makes it hard for me to enroll in Adult Education Programmes.	58	38.7	92	61.3	1.79	0.25	Rejected
3	My family responsibilities (e.g., childcare) hinder me from participating in education.	108	72.0	42	28.0	2.83	0.16	Accepted
4	Limited transportation options affect my ability to attend classes.	111	74.0	39	26.0	3.10	0.37	Accepted
5	The cost of materials and resources for the programme is too high.	105	70.0	45	30.0	2.82	0.24	Accepted

Mean Cut Off = 2.5

Table 1 shows the Frequency and Percentage of the socio-economic factors influencing low enrollment rates in adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The responses of the respondents were collapsed to agree and disagree for easy interpretation. The mean scores of all the items except items 2 on the scale were above the cut off mean of the scale. This implies that the socio-economic factors influencing low enrollment rates in

adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti ranges from limited transportation, family responsibilities, financial challenges to high cost of materials and resources.

Research Question 2: What are the major factors discouraging students from enrolling in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti?

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of the major factors discouraging students from enrolling in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree		Mean	SD	Decision
		Freq	%	Freq	%			
1	I am aware of that Adult Education Programmes is available at Ekiti State University.	112	74.7	38	25.3	2.61	0.12	Accepted
2	People's perception towards Adult education discourages me from enrolling in Adult Education Programmes.	98	65.3	52	34.7	2.56	0.14	Accepted
3	I believe Adult Education will improve my employment opportunities or personal growth.	102	68.0	48	32.0	2.71	0.15	Accepted
4	Cultural expectations influence my decision to enroll in Adult Education Programmes.	56	37.3	94	62.7	2.13	0.11	Rejected
5	Societal norms limit my access to Adult Education because of my gender.	87	58.0	63	42.0	2.50	0.13	Accepted

Mean Cut Off = 2.5

Table 2 shows the Frequency and Percentage of the major factors discouraging students from enrolling in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The responses of the respondents were collapsed to agree and disagree for easy interpretation. The mean scores of all the items except items 4 on the scale were above the cut off mean of the scale. This implies that the major factors discouraging students from enrolling in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti are

availability of the programme, employment opportunities, people's perception and Societal norms.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1: Socio-economic factors, such as income level, employment status, and family responsibilities, significantly influence the enrollment rates in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance showing significant influence of Socio-economic factors on the enrollment rates in Adult Education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	732.209	2	933.052		
Within Groups	2616.782	147	196.668	9.829*	0.000
Total	3348.991	149			

p < 0.05

(Significant Result)

Table 5 shows the F (9.829*) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not accepted, this implies that there is a significant influence of Socio-economic factors on the enrollment rates in adult education programmes at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that restricted transportation, family obligations, financial difficulties, and the high cost of materials and resources are some of the socioeconomic variables affecting low enrollment rates in adult education programs at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. This result is consistent with Castleman and Meyer's (2019) conclusion that adult learners are mostly discouraged by financial limitations, as many people cannot afford textbooks, tuition, and other necessary educational resources.

The findings showed that the availability of the program, career chances, people's perceptions, and societal norms are the main reasons deterring students from enrolling in adult education programs at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. This result supports the argument made by Rosinger et al. (2020), who emphasize how strict admission requirements and class scheduling deter individuals from participating in educational programs. Attending lessons at set times during regular hours might be difficult for many adult learners who balance a variety of duties, such as work, childcare, and other personal obligations. Adult learners, in contrast to conventional students, usually need schedules that fit their complicated lifestyles, but many educational institutions have not yet implemented flexible formats to satisfy this demand.

The results of this study showed that socioeconomic factors significantly affect the rates of enrollment in adult education programs at Ekiti State University in Ado-

Ekiti. This result is consistent with that of Castleman and Meyer (2019), who discovered that a major barrier to adult learning is money, as many people cannot afford textbooks, tuition, and other necessary educational supplies.

Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, it could be concluded that socio-economic factors influence the enrollment rates in adult education programmes in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

Recommendations

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

1. Socio-economic status of the students should be looked into when considering enrolment into adult education programmes
2. There should be provision of enough materials and resources in planning adult education programmes so as to ensure quality.
3. There should be a policy to ensure availability of employment opportunities and people should develop the right perception about adult education programmes
4. University administrations should play their roles as expected so as to achieve the goals of adult education programme.

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