

Adult Learning Strategies and Psychological Perspective of their Learning Interest in Programmes

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ABSTRACT

The organizers, facilitators and participants should a cordial relationships when organizing any programme for adult learners. The understanding of who is an adult is crucial since it is one of the basic component for learning consideration. Identifying who is adult it depends on individual culture, tradition, norms and values. The features of adult learners were discussed in respect of their differences in their groups, autonomous, independent and self-directed learners goal-oriented among others. Looking at what perspective adult should learn largely depend on their internal intention at learning center and also the learning environment. The adult learning perspective were discussed on three basic aspect: participation, self-directed and transformation learning. Adult were different from children therefore, their learning strategies also differ three distinctive reasons were examined e.g motivation, visual and auditory among others. The learning environment of adult learners constituted some critical issues that directly concerns adult for instance social perspective, emotional and physical environment. Objectives are the basic things which motivated adult to attend learning centers. These include: skills development, career advancement, personal growth and social interaction to mentioned but few. And conclusion was made for the study were highlighted on what was discussed on the study were emphasize.

Keywords: Adult, Learning Strategies, Psychological, and Perspective

INTRODUCTION

Adult are individuals categories based on their certain concepts depending on the situation, circumstances and instances at which one is address as adult. Adult learning strategies are mechanism employed to with the learning needs of adult which adult facilitators make used of it. The learning strategies of adult differ with children since the learning contents are not the same. Psychologically adult are peoples with varying needs, wants and interest based on these features adult learning are set to meet their demand. Based on the psychological perspective adult learners are control, attend, and interact with. The adult learning material are designed to appeal to their learning interest because most of the learning contents are due to their consent were developed. Therefore, the psychological learning of adult learner is basically on their interest since from it inception. The organizers of adult learning programme of whatever kind are much considering the impact of the learning outcomes using the learning interest of the adult participants.

WHO IS AND ADULT?

Basically, to describe who is and adult is a matter of concerns of culture, religion, tradition and socio-economic perspective to some extent. Adult are been recognize either from their culture definition where one belongs to Religion and traditions also differ and the recognition of who is adult also differ in terms of

responsibility, age and social level of engagement. Richard, Settersten, Timothy, Ottusch, & Barbara (2015) explain the adult in the psychological and social-psychological inquiry into the markers of adult has focused on more subjective or interior phenomenon, especially an evolving feeling of becoming or being an adult. A sense of “emerging adulthood,” markers such as “taking responsibility for oneself,” “making independent decisions,” or becoming financially independent,” which reflect more abstract concepts of maturity, independence, responsibility, and personal control. However, the authors further clarified these psychological factors which can be viewed as being facilitated by traditional markers rather than as conditions that are necessary for entering them. Some degree of maturity or responsibility seems necessary to assume the roles of partner or parent, for example, or at least to perform them with minimal effectiveness. And, indeed, there is evidence that many young people are now actively postponing marriage and parenthood precisely because they want to be ready for and do well in these roles and not take them lightly.

Meanwhile, from the biological point of view adult as a person who is fully grown. There is no doubt in terms of differences no how people grown at different capacity; equally, physical maturity may be earned at a chronological age of 15, 20, or 25 years, for instance. Individual difference may be inferred on their bodily organs or organ systems usually age and mature at different rates. It is clearly and understood that, the reproductive system ages are more rapidly than the nervous system.

FEATURES OF ADULT LEARNERS

Adult based on their characteristics, differences in learning styles, age and experience warrant for a befitting learning strategies. Adult by their nature are self determining individual who want recognition and acceptance at all the time. Shikha (2015). describe adult learners that have a vast wealth of knowledge acquired by controlling their environment and experiences of life. Their opinions, values and beliefs are their defining characteristics which they bring to the learning situations. The teachers/facilitators in order not to hurt the self-image of adult learners have to treat them with utmost respect and equality. But According to UNESCO (1992) viewed adult learning process has to be geared to meet the needs of the adult learners. Adult learner also a mature student who is acquiring new knowledge and skills, developing new attitudes after having reached mature intellectual, physical and social development. Adult learner is also used to describe any person socially accepted as an adult who is involved in a systematic learning process, whether it is formal education, informal learning, or corporate-sponsored learning as a full-time or part time learner.

Knowing fully who is an adult learner based on their characteristics scholars like Houle, (1961); Knowles, (1980 & 1984); Hiemstra & Sisco, (1990); & Rogers, (2007) elaborated the following features as cited in Shikha (2015):

- **A Distinct group:** No two individuals are alike. The adult learners too vary distinctly from each other in terms of their needs, problems, requirements, attitudes and outlook that they bring to the learning situation. There are also variations in their age, experience, levels of knowledge, communication and learning styles that makes them distinct from the other.
- **Autonomous, independent and self-directed:** Autonomous means selfgoverning, thinking, feeling and governing independently; independent on the other hand is not being dependent on someone or something, being free. Adult learners are self governing, self dependent and self directing. Their facilitators/teachers have to understand these characteristics and use experiential methods of teaching and learning, guiding the adult learners only when required and helping the adult learners to achieve their goals set out prior to entering the learning situation.
- **Goal-oriented individuals:** Adults set their goals very clearly and elaborately in whatever activity that they involve themselves in. Their participation in learning activities also involves achievement of the enunciated goals. Sometimes the goal may be social i.e. simply to socialize and meet and make new friends; or it may be educational i.e. to gain/add a degree/qualification; or it may be vocational/occupational i.e. to add a skill or upgrade existing skills; or an economic goal i.e. to add a

qualification or a skill and then get an increment/higher position or go for a better job that would pay more.

- **Voluntary learners:** Adults learners join learning process without any pressures, compulsions or coercion. They are voluntary learners.
- **Result-oriented:** Besides coming voluntarily to the learning situation, the adult learners are highly result-oriented learners. They usually have a definite result in their mind when they join a teaching-learning program. If the results they are anticipating out of learning activities aren't achieved they may even drop out of the learning program.
- **Relevancy-oriented:** Adult learners have to know how relevant the learning process is to them. How is it geared up to meet their needs. Once they understand the relevancy of the learning both in their present everyday life and future context they become active participants in the learning programmes.
- **Wealth of Experience and Knowledge:** As individuals progress chronologically in age, they become mature by accumulation of vast wealth of experience and knowledge.
- **Self-Esteem and Self-Image:** Extensive studies on learning and educational attainments of adult learners indicate an association between low self esteem and a negative self-image among learners with poor learning & educational attainments and non participation in the training learning situations. (Lawrence, 2000) as cited in Shikha (2015) The building of positive self image and a high self-esteem should be the goal of any learning situation.

PERSPECTIVE OF ADULT LEARNERS

The psychological construct of who is an adult and their characteristic revealed to a significant volume to understand who is an adult learner. Therefore, the perspective at which he or she enroll into learning center can only be motivated if that was really attained by him with the help of his facilitator. The learning is basically on the individual himself as to what motivate him to participate into learning activity. Two basic assumptions were term to be the foundation for adult learning perspective. The first is learning something that happens internally, primarily inside of our heads. In essence the outside environment is given little if any attention in the way we think and learn. Second, this perspective is based on the assumption we can construct a set of principles and competencies that can assist all adults to be more effective learners, no matter what their background or current life situation. A sampling of topics grounded primarily in this perspective include participation and motivation (Boshier & Collins 1985), self-directed learning (Tough, 1971), andragogy (Knowles, 1970) to mentioned but few as cited in Rosemary and Sharan (1999). The adult learning perspective can be look at three different level. Participation, self-directed learning and transformational learning:

Participation: is a decision taken by an individual learner for the purpose of behavioral change in attitude, believe and learning perception. There is this when we talk of participation for instance, who is a participant?, what is he there to study?, and what motivates some adults and not others to enroll in a course or independent learning in adult education which are better in educating adult when they are younger, have higher incomes, and are most likely to be employed in full time or part-time basis. Adult participated in adult learning because of the hope for aspiration and forethought. The aspiration of adult learner is relates to the extent to which an individual is able to set future goals, develops aspirations about well-being and acts anticipating on future outcome and (changing) wealthiness. To this end adult look at it based on self-efficacy and motivation. (Alkire, 2005; Bandura, 2001; Hammond & Feinstein, 2005; Hart, 2016; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). As argued by Hart (2016), aspirations are future-oriented, driven by conscious and unconscious motivations and they are indicative of an individual commitment towards a particular trajectory or end point. Bandura includes the concept of intention, being a representation of a future course of action to be performed (Bandura, 2001).

Self-direct learning: in the view of Knowles (1975 & 1980) described it as a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resource for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. Since then, self-directed learning has become a prominent

feature of adult education and some educators suggest that adult education is synonymous with self-directed learning. Philip Candy (1991), did the most comprehensive analysis and discussion of self-directed learning, he proposed in his conceptual framework that self-directed learning is both a goal and a process which embraces four distinct phenomena: personal autonomy, self-management, learner control, etc. Not surprisingly self-directed learning is also known as autonomous learning or self regulated learning. Zimmerman, (1986, 1989) described it as degree to which learners are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process. Such learners personally initiate and direct their own efforts to acquire knowledge and skill rather than relying on teachers, parents, or other agents of instruction.

Transformational Learning: the perspective which make adult to engaged into learning activities is a total whole of changes which may occur through process. Transformative learning refers to a perspective of transformation or change in worldview. Instructors in literacy learning centers and adult basic education as well as professionals can learn how to foster transformative learning. These techniques can help learners engage in critical thought and discussion with others and may gain a broader, more inclusive view of themselves and their world. Transformational learning make adult to have a reflection on critical thinking. For instance, most often, it is seen as a single event, such as a positive or negative, that causes a person to critically reflect on his or her previous thought about the world although a series of events can also lead to a perspective of transformation (Mezirow, 2000). it also an aspect of dialogue reach to some level between participant and instructor regarding what to learn. Accordingly, Taylor (2000, 2009) reviewed empirical studies that discussed fostering transformative learning in an educational setting. The studies confirmed Mezirow's (2000) ideal conditions for engaging in dialogue. A more recent study conducted by Keen & Woods, (2016) concerning prison educators' views of facilitating transformative learning noted that having a respectful relationship with adult learner and serving in a counseling role where dialogue could occur, and learners could "risk what they do not know" encouraged transformative learning. In a more specific term transformative learning also encourage dialogue that emphasizes "relational and trustful communication" (Taylor, 2009). A fruitful discussions are important, which encourage instructors the need to attend to their "learners' attitudes, feelings, personalities, and preferences over time, and as signs of change and stability begin to emerge, professional can respond accordingly". Taylor, Duveskog, and Friis-Hansen (2012) investigated the transformative learning of participants who attended Field Farmer schools in Kenya. These schools were "community-led (non-formal education programs) where farmers met regularly to study farming". A scheduled Interviewed was held with participants revealed that individuals' experiences and group dialogue fostered transformative learning.

Adult Learning Strategies:

The characteristic of adult and adult learner has been earlier discussed getting to know these features has solve a lot of controversy between children and adult when it comes to learning styles. For, instance adult learner is originally his or her the owner his or her learning contents, the facilitator of adults he has no much when it come for the adult learning instructions unlike children. However, since around 1970's, adult learning theory offers a model for educators and trainers to use for effective outcome in an adult learning contents. The work of Knowles (1973) champion in adult learning, has dedicated his work on the concept of "andragogy" (the art and science of how adults learn). He identified the following features to adult learners: Need to know why they are learning something; learn through doing; are problem solvers; learn best when the subject is of immediate use; prefer social interaction; want to use their life experiences in the classroom; and want to integrate new ideas with existing knowledge.

More so, the adult learning strategies has various component which support their learning capacity. To further strengthen the above view point a Workforce Solutions Conference (2015) was conducted and come up with some fundamental principles that appeal to the adult learners styles in learning. These four:

Motivation: in this aspect one should make sure that his adult learners understand why. This principle is not only about having participants see the relevance of the training, but about why each thing they learned is

important to them and part of the learning. Adult learners are motivated to learn when they have a need to know. Tell participants explicitly how the training and individual activities will be useful to them on the job. And early in the training, share the clearly defined goals, objectives and agenda for the training.

Inform: Adult need to learn in their own way because there three learning styles for providing information that appeal to their interest which emphasize by Kelly (2010) the importance the following methods in facilitating adult learning Visual, Auditory, and kinesthetic or Tactile:

Visual learners rely on pictures. “Show me,” is their motto. You can best communicate with them by providing handouts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations, and writing on the white board.

Auditory learners listen carefully. “Tell me,” is their motto. They will pay attention to the sound of your voice and actively participate in discussions. You can best communicate with them by using stories, examples, case studies, pneumatic devices to help them remember information, discussion and oral reports of working groups.

Kinesthetic or Tactile learners need to physically do something to understand it. Their motto is “Let me do it.” They trust their feelings and emotions about what they’re learning. They prefer activities, role playing, simulation games, and allowing them to practice what they’re learning.

Monitor: in this principle participant feel respected and engaged if the instructor acknowledges the adult learner’s experience and current knowledge and creates an environment that conveys respect for everyone in the room. If people feel that they are being talked down to, patronized, or even ignored, their energy is diverted from learning to dealing with those feelings.

Engaged: to principally engaged it means to use experiential learning which holds two distinctive meanings for the facilitator of adult learners: 1) honoring the life experiences and knowledge an individual brings, and 2) active participation in activities during the session.

The first aspect of this principle is to tap into the wealth of wisdom and experience of the participants whenever it’s appropriate. This is done with asking participants to share stories, using case studies and problem solving exercises.

The second aspect can take many forms. Any activity that gets your students involved makes the learning experiential. This includes small group discussions, experiments, role playing, skits, building something at their table or desk, writing or drawing something specific activity of any kind. Activities also keep people energized, especially activities that involve getting up and moving about.

Perspective of Adult Learners Center:

Adult at level of learning needs concerns and maximum attention to his wants. Learning environment of any education type is to appeal to the learners interest and want that is not against with provision of the policies. The adult learners environment it also required some certain qualification which in the end will make the learning interested and at the end objectives to be achieved. In support of this the adult learning environment is used to refer to the social, cultural, political and economic context in which adult education is conducted (Nafukho, et al, 2005 as cited in Wanga, Chakanika, Noah, Sichula & Phyllis 2016). Also for the success of any adult education programme depends largely on the learning environment. The learning environment has a remarkable potential to impact either positively or negatively on the education programme (RHEF, 2007 as cited in Wanga, Chakanika, Noah, Sichula & Phyllis 2016). The learning environment of adult learners should have the following perspectives:

Social Perspective of Adult Learning Environment:

The adult learning environment should be a social learning environment where the actors are facilitator and adult learners. The social aspect involves interactions, firstly between the facilitator and the learners and

secondly interactions among the learners themselves. The interactions reflect a variety of group dynamics based on social status, profession, occupation to mention a few. This aspect is also concerned with learner involvement in the learning process and the methods employed in adult learning. Therefore, the first impression given to adult learners can have either a positive or negative impact on their learning (Ngoma, 2008).

Emotional Perspective of Adult Learning Environment:

Mindfulness practices were identified as a valuable strategy for managing stress which in turn increases adult learners emotional well-being in the learning centers (Brown & Williams, 2019). In the context of adult education, where individuals often juggle multiple responsibilities, incorporating mindfulness techniques becomes crucial for promoting a positive emotional climate. According to Brown and Williams (2019), mindfulness involves cultivating awareness of the present moment without judgment, fostering a heightened sense of clarity and calmness. Adult facilitators understand the prime gain attached when and if mindful practices were fully utilized in adult learners in order to motivate them and manage stress among them for the activity to be successful.

Perspective of the Physical Environment of Adult Learners:

Adult education values the principle of flexibility meaning by nature and practice is also flexible. By virtue of physical environment should also be flexibility in terms of venue is worth consideration. Learning can occur in a building or outside under some shelter. Within the physical environment learning should be made effective by making the learners feel comfortable to learn (RHEF, 2007 as cited in Wanga, Chakanika, Noah, Sichula & Phyllis 2016). Considerations should be made in terms of; the room temperature which has to accommodate all the learners. The learning environment has to be free from any form of distraction such as noise which has potential to divert learner's attention. The size of the room should be adequate to accommodate all the learners and leaving enough space for ventilation, the sitting arrangement should be done with a lot of caution. For instance, married men and women should not be made to seat suggestively next to individuals who are not their spouses. In terms of seats, they should be comfortable nonetheless they should not take learners to sleep.

Cognitive Perspective of Adult Learning Environment:

Cognitive of adult learner will determine as the matured when and developed to learning ability and capacity. The adult may have high speed processing knowledge because of their prior experiences, level of engagement and position they occupied. It Therefore, believe that the principles of cognitive learning are attributed to the works of Jean Piaget. Piaget perceives cognitive development as occurring in distinct stages of thinking that determine how human beings deal with the environment (Munsaka, 2011).

Adult Learning Objectives Strategies:

The objectives of adult learners often focus on practical and immediate applications of knowledge. Here are some key objectives Provided by Helen (1999) typically for in adult learning programmes:

Skill Development: Enhancing specific skills related to their profession or personal interests. The adult learner may an expertise that want to be upgraded to meet up with current challenges in science and technology and be relevant in his area of specialization.

Career Advancement: Gaining qualifications or knowledge that can lead to promotions or new job opportunities. To remain positive and relevance on one's career.

Personal Growth: Pursuing learning for personal satisfaction, intellectual stimulation, or to achieve personal goals and solving his community problem.

Social Interaction: Engaging with peers and expanding social networks through learning environments. Interacting with in a social setting enable one to increase his learning skills, level of socialization, and social awareness with regard global changes.

Adaptability: Learning new technologies or methodologies to stay current in their field. At the adult learning centers adult tend to have a paradigm ship from dogmatic culture of what have been our usual practice to a very current global practices. Therefore, facilitating adult learners effectively involves several key strategies tailored to their unique needs and experiences. The author further elaborated some proven strategies:

Relate Learning to Real-Life Situations: Adults are more motivated when they see the relevance of the material to their personal and professional lives

Encourage Self-Directed Learning: Allow adults to take charge of their learning process by setting their own goals and finding resources

Use Active Participation: Engage learners through discussions, group work, and hands-on activities

Leverage Their Experiences: Incorporate learners' prior knowledge and experiences into the learning process

Provide Practical Examples: Use case studies, role-playing, and simulations to demonstrate how new knowledge can be applied

Create a Comfortable Learning Environment: Ensure the learning space is welcoming and conducive to open communication

Offer Flexibility: Provide options for how and when learning occurs to accommodate busy schedules.

CONCLUSION

Adult by their nature, desire and interest want independent learning, flexible and problem solving learning contents. As adult learning differ is also differ in their methodology, timing, objectives and expected learning outcome. The obvious reasons adult learners need concerns, recognition and acceptance based on their peculiarities on the learning purposes. For these and many more reasons the learning contents of adult should focus on solving individual adults personal problem as they participate in the learning centers. Also the objectives should be clear and precise which is achievable within short period of time. The learning environment should be one that have much consideration on their emotion, socially attractive to address their social nature and the physical outlook should be one that appeal their difference in nature, culture and values

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