Analysis of Educational Accessibility, Career Development Expectations, and Learning Motivation of Rpl Students at Ut Majene in 2024–2025

Akbar[1], Syahrinullah [2]

Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Open University

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100900364

Received: 24 September 2026; Accepted: 29 September 2026; Published: 11 October 2026

ABSTRACT

This analytical descriptive qualitative research aims to explore in depth the educational accessibility, career development expectations, and learning motivation of students who register for the Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) pathway at the Open University (UT) Majene. This study is based on the integration of longitudinal secondary data for four registration periods (2024.1–2025.2) with a total population of 3,628 new students, of which 581 are registrants of the RPL pathway, and confirmed through in-depth interviews with working students in West Sulawesi Province. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldanha through three main analyses: Andragogy Theory (Knowles), Expectation Theory (Vroom), and Higher Education Accessibility Theory (Trow & Terenzini). The results of the study show that: (1) The accessibility of the Open and Distance Higher Education (PTJJ) system acts as an inclusive enabler that breaks down geographical, time, and financial barriers for workers through the recognition of credit transfer of work experience credits; (2) Career development expectations, including adjustment of formal diploma qualifications (PGSD In-Service), adjustment of ASN/PPPK groups, and position promotions, are the main extrinsic drivers of enrollment decisions; and (3) RPL students' learning motivation has been transformed from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation as self-efficacy increases, where the challenge of dual roles (work-life-study balance) is overcome through independent time management strategies and peer support group support. The novelty of this study concludes that PTJJ's flexibility is able to transform external career demands into intrinsic learning commitments of adult learners. This research provides strategic implications for UT Majene in designing a student support system based on student workers as well as a reference for local governments in the formulation of human resource development policies based on lifelong learning.

Keywords: Recognition of Past Learning; Educational Accessibility; Career Expectations; Learning Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the modern higher education paradigm requires inclusivity and flexibility in accommodating the right to learn for all levels of society, especially adult learners who are already in the world of work. In the realm of Human Resource Management (HR), improving the formal education qualifications of the workforce is a strategic investment in building competitive human capital. The Government of Indonesia responds to this need through the Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) policy, a formal mechanism that recognizes previous work experience, training, and non-formal/informal education into the weight of semester credit units (SKS) in higher education. The Open University (UT) Majene, as the organizer of Open and Distance Universities (PTJJ) in West Sulawesi Province, plays a crucial role in providing the RPL pathway to reach the availability of access to higher education for the local community.

Theoretically, the registration of working students through the RPL pathway is a manifestation of the interaction between institutional flexibility (educational accessibility), career achievement encouragement (career development expectations), and individual psychological motivation (learning motivation). However, in the literature on HR Management and Higher Education, there is still a tendency for theoretical gaps. Work Motivation Theory (such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory) generally

assumes that the development of workers' competencies is predominantly triggered by external organizational incentives (such as job promotions and salary increases). On the other hand, adult learning theory (Andragogy by Knowles) emphasizes intrinsic motivation and readiness for independent learning without relying entirely on formal structures. There is still a limited conceptual model that fully maps how the flexibility of the PTJJ academic system as an enabler variable (accessibility) can mediate or harmonize between the external motivation of the career with the internal motivation of adult learners in developing areas.

In addition to the theoretical gap, there is a real research gap in an empirical context. The majority of previous research on RPL and working students has focused more on administrative evaluation of credit conversion criteria, curriculum effectiveness, or studies in big cities with well-established digital infrastructure. There is still a lack of in-depth qualitative research that explores the subjective experiences, geographical barriers, and psychosocial dynamics of RPL students in archipelagic and geographically challenging areas such as West Sulawesi Province.

This phenomenon is concretely recorded in the registration data of new students at Majene Open University for four consecutive academic periods (2024 Odd, 2024 Even, 2025 Odd, and 2025 Even). The total accumulation of new students in the four periods reached 3,628 students, with details of 1,353 students in 2024 Odd, 606 students in 2024 Even, 1,143 students in 2025 Odd, and 526 students in 2025 Even. Of the total population, 581 students (16.01%) were officially registered to apply for the RPL (Transfer of Credit/AK) pathway.

The dominance of the RPL group is concentrated in professional and public service-based study programs, especially the PGSD programs for In-Service Teacher Input, S1 Management, and S1 Law. In terms of regional distribution, the majority of RPL students come from areas with geographical characteristics spread across Majene Regency, Polewali Mandar, Mamuju, Central Mamuju, to Pasangkayu (North Mamuju). There are fluctuations in the number of RPL registrants where registration in the Odd semester tends to jump sharply compared to the Even semester undermining the dynamics of decision-making patterns, the budget cycle of the agency where they work, and the registration schedule for employee diploma adjustments.

The data of the above phenomenon confirms that the accessibility of education offered by UT Majene through cost flexibility, distance learning system, and recognition of working tenure via RPL is a solution to the geographical and time limitations experienced by workers in West Sulawesi. However, physical and administrative accessibility alone is not enough to explain why these workers are willing to take on a dual role as workers as well as students. Career development expectations such as the demand for S-1 qualifications for in-position teachers, the fulfillment of certification requirements, and the opportunity for promotion of ASN/employee are very strong external drivers. At the same time, the high risk of burnout in the remote system requires a strong motivation to learn, both intrinsically to master new competencies and extrinsically to maintain their professional sustainability.

The academic reason that underlies the importance of taking the title "Analysis of Educational Accessibility, Career Development Expectations, and Learning Motivation of RPL Students at UT Majene in 2024–2025" is the need to build a comprehensive framework of understanding how these three dimensions interact qualitatively in the distance higher education ecosystem. The selection of qualitative methods is crucial so that this research does not only present enrollment statistics, but is able to unravel the deep narratives, perceptions, and lived experiences of RPL students in navigating operational and academic obstacles.

Practically and academically, the results of this research are expected to make a conceptual contribution to the development of human resource management, especially related to the upskilling and reskilling strategy of higher education participation-based workforce. For institutions such as UT Majene and education policy makers in the regions, this study provides strategic recommendations to improve the governance of RPL registration, design a supportive learning assistance system for working students, and align the university curriculum with the real needs of career development in the regions.

Problem Formulation

Based on this background and theoretical study, the formulation of the problem in this study is:

- How is educational accessibility (including geographical flexibility, affordability, and effectiveness of the Past Learning Recognition mechanism) experienced and interpreted by RPL students at Majene Open University for the 2024–2025 period?
- How do career development expectations (such as the fulfillment of diploma qualifications, adjustment of rank/class of ASN/employee, and job promotion opportunities) drive the decision of workers in West Sulawesi to register through the RPL route?
- What are the dynamics of learning motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) of RPL UT Majene students in responding to the challenge of dual-role between job demands and academic demands?

Research Objectives

This research aims to:

- Analyze and describe the accessibility of education (geographical flexibility, affordability of costs, and effectiveness of the Recognition of Past Learning mechanism) felt by students of the RPL pathway at Majene Open University for the 2024–2025 period.
- Identify and analyze career development expectations (fulfillment of diploma qualifications, adjustment of rank/class of ASN/employee, and promotion opportunities) that are the main drivers of workers who register for the RPL pathway.
- Exploring and analyzing the dynamics of learning motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) as well as the strategies of RPL UT Majene students in managing the challenges of dual-role between the world of work and academic demands.

Research Benefits

The benefits of this research are explained as follows:

Theoretical Benefits

Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to:

- The development of the Human Resources Management and Higher Education Literature is a scientific reference that enriches the study of Human Resources Management, especially in understanding the phenomenon of lifelong learning and human capital development based on the inclusive path of Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) in the distance education system.

- Strengthening the Integration of Motivation Theory and Adult Learning is to provide a conceptual contribution regarding the synergy between Vroom's Expectancy Theory (career expectations) and Andragogy Theory (adult learning) by showing how the variable of system flexibility (educational accessibility) is able to bridge the external motivation of the career and the internal motivation of working students.

- The Literature Foundation for Advanced Research is to provide qualitative methodological references and empirical bases for future researchers who want to examine the dynamics of dual-role, student retention, and the effectiveness of RPL programs in areas with archipelago and developing geographical characteristics.

Practical Benefits

Practically, this research is expected to be useful for:

- For Institutional Managers (Majene Open University), it is to provide strategic input in evaluating and improving RPL administrative services, providing more flexible distance learning facilities, and designing a mentoring program (student support system) that suits the needs of student workers.

- For Agencies/Employers (Regional Government & Private in West Sulawesi), it is a consideration for agency leaders and HR/BKPSDM sections in formulating career development policies, granting study permits, and utilizing the RPL pathway as an efficient upskilling scheme for employee qualifications without interfering with work productivity.
- For Students and Prospective Students of RPL, it is to provide insight and practical overview of time management strategies, management of work-study demands, and growth of learning motivation so that students are able to complete their studies on time in the midst of dual role challenges.

RESEARCH METHODS

Approaches and Types of Research

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore and understand the subjective meaning, perception, and lived experiences of students of the Past Learning Recognition (RPL) pathway related to educational accessibility, career expectations, and learning motivation in the midst of dual role demands.

The focus of this research is descriptive analytical, which is to comprehensively describe how the phenomenon of academic flexibility at Majene Open University interacts with the professional and psychological motivation of adult learners.

Research Location and Time

Research Location:

This research was carried out at the Open University (UT) Majene, West Sulawesi Province. The determination of this location is based on the consideration that UT Majene is the only distance education-based state university in the region that serves RPL students spread across various districts (Mamasa, Majene, Polewali Mandar, Mamuju, Central Mamuju, and Pasangkayu).

Research Time:

This research focuses on data analysis and experience of students of the 2024 Odd batch/registration, 2024 Even, 2025 Odd, to 2025 Even. The stages of the research implementation lasted for 4 months, from February to June 2026], including the stage of secondary data preparation, informant interviews, data analysis, and report preparation.

Data Sources

This study uses two main types of data sources:

Primary Dates:

Primary data was obtained directly from informants through in-depth interviews. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques with inclusion criteria:

- Registered as an active student of the RPL pathway at UT Majene in the period 2024.1–2025.2.
- Status as a worker/employee/ASN (for example, In-Service Teacher, Local Government Employee, or Private Workforce).
- Willing to provide information objectively and in-depth.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is in the form of official documents of UT Majene new student registration data for the 2024 period Odd (1,353 data), 2024 Even (606 data), 2025 Odd (1,143 data), and 2025 Even (526 data) with an accumulation of 3,628 student data (of which 581 are RPL pathway registrants). This data is used to map the trend of geographical distribution, the composition of study programs (such as PGSD In-Service, Management, and Law), and the status of credit transfer applications (AK).

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out in a triangulation manner through three main techniques:

In-Depth Interview:

It was conducted using structured-semistructured interview guidelines to RPL student informants to explore in-depth narratives about the ease of access to education, expectations for promotions/career diplomas, as well as the dynamics of their motivation to learn and time management.

Document Analysis:

Analyzing the database of UT Majene new student registration for the period 2024–2025. This documentation is used to validate the regional background, study program, and proportion of RPL registrants as supporters of the empirical phenomenon.

Free/Unstructured Observation:

Observation of the academic interaction of RPL students through the learning platform (LMS/Tuton) or during administrative services/New Student Study Orientation (OSMB) at UPBJJ UT Majene.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique refers to the interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) which consists of four continuous stages:

- Data Collection: The initial stage begins by recording, organizing, and collecting all information obtained from the field. The researcher collected secondary data in the form of a document file of the UT Majene new student registration database for the period 2024.1 to 2025.2 (3,628 total students and 581 students of the RPL pathway) to map the trend of the distribution of regions, study programs, and types of credit transfer applications. At the same time, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with RPL student informants and collected field notes from the observations. All voice recordings of the interviews were converted into written transcripts (verbatim) to be ready for analysis in the next stage.
- Data Condensation: The process of sorting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data from interview transcripts and registration documents. At this stage, the researcher codifies the informant's narrative into main categories that are aligned with three research variables, namely: Educational Accessibility (distance flexibility and RPL effectiveness), Career Development Expectations (diploma adjustment and position promotion), and Learning Motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic factors of working students).
- Data Presentation (Data Display): Presents data that has been condensed into a structured and easy-to-understand form. Qualitative data presentation is carried out through thematic matrices, geographical distribution tables/RPL student study programs, and narrative texts that connect informant interview excerpts with secondary statistical data to strengthen the phenomenon being studied.
- Conclusion Drawing and Verification: The final stage to formulate the meaning of the data that has been analyzed. The researcher seeks patterns, relationships, and answers to the formulation of problems regarding how educational accessibility and career expectations affect the learning motivation of RPL UT Majene students. The initial conclusions drawn will continue to be verified by re-examining the validity of qualitative data and secondary data until a solid and valid conclusion is obtained.

Data Validity Criteria

To ensure the quality and validity of the results of this qualitative research, the researcher used the criteria of the Data Validity Test according to Lincoln & Guba (1985):

- Credibility/Trustworthiness: Tested through source triangulation (confirming information from various RPL students in different study programs/regions) and engineering triangulation (combining interviews

with UT Majene's official registration documents). In addition, member checks were carried out to ensure the suitability of the interview transcript with the informant's statement.

- Transferability: It is sought by compiling a research report in detail, clear, and systematic (thick description), so that the findings of this research can be understood and potentially applied to the context of other distance universities in developing regions.
- Dependability: Carried out through an independent audit by the supervisor/reviewer of the entire research process, starting from raw data collection, coding process, to drawing conclusions.
- Confirmability: Ensuring the attachment between the findings and real data in the field without the subjective bias of the researcher, through the confirmation of secondary data of the registration documents of 581 RPL UT Majene students for the 2024–2025 period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations

Andragogy Theory by Malcolm Knowles (1970, 1984)

The Theory of Adult Learning or Andragogy was developed by Malcolm Knowles in 1970 and refined in 1984 to fundamentally distinguish between the learning process of children (pedagogy) and adults (andragogy). Knowles stated that adult learners have self-directed characteristics, bring accumulated life and work experience as a very rich source of learning, and have a learning readiness that is oriented towards real problem solving (problem-centered). This concept emphasizes that adults no longer position themselves as passive recipients of information, but rather as active subjects who need learning that is relevant to the practical needs of life as well as their professional development.

In the context of this research, Adult Learning Theory is the main foothold to analyze the characteristics and academic behavior of students who register for the Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) pathway at Majene Open University. The work experience that has been possessed by workers in West Sulawesi Province is recognized as a weight of formal academic credit, which directly reflects the andragogy principle regarding appreciation for past experiences. In addition, the learning independence carried out in Knowles' theory is very much in line with the Open and Distance Higher Education (PTJJ) system. RPL students are required to have a strong internal learning motivation to manage the independent study process in the midst of daily busyness without relying on the physical supervision of teachers every day.

Expectancy Theory of Motivation by Victor Vroom (1964)

The Theory of Expectation formulated by Victor Vroom in 1964 states that a person's motivation to perform an action is determined by the results of rational calculations of three main elements, namely Expectancy, Instrumentality, and Valence. Expectancy is an individual's belief that the effort made will result in a certain performance. Instrumentality is the perception that the performance achieved will be rewarded with a certain result or reward. Meanwhile, Valence refers to how much value or level of subjective satisfaction an individual places on the reward he will receive.

The relationship between Vroom's theory and this research lies in the way of dissecting external impulses in the form of career development expectations in RPL students. The workers or State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in West Sulawesi decided to enroll at UT Majene because they believed that the sacrifice of time, energy, and cost (Expectancy) would result in academic achievements in the form of graduation and diplomas (Instrumentality). This academic performance is very valuable (Valence) for them because it is an absolute requirement for adjustment of the diploma class, the fulfillment of teacher professional certification, career level improvement, and promotion of positions in the place where they work.

Higher Education Accessibility Theory Martin Trow (1973) & Terenzini (1996)

The Theory of Higher Education Accessibility initiated by Martin Trow in 1973 maps the evolution of the function of higher education from the elite stage to the mass stage (massification) to universal. This concept was then expanded by Terenzini (1996) who emphasized that educational accessibility should not only be

interpreted physically in the form of the existence of campus buildings. Accessibility covers a much wider dimension, including affordability of costs, flexibility of time, openness of administration, and the ability of the education system to reach groups of people who were previously marginalized from the formal education strata.

In this study, Accessibility Theory is an analytical framework to evaluate the strategic role of Majene Open University as a provider of Open and Distance Higher Education (PTJJ) services. UT Majene is here to break down geographical barriers for workers spread across coastal to mountainous areas in West Sulawesi Province. The existence of RPL pathways and flexible learning schemes are a tangible manifestation of the expansion of higher education accessibility, where distance barriers, working time, and financial constraints can be minimized so that workers can still pursue S-1 qualification education in an inclusive manner.

Conceptual Thinking Framework

The conceptual framework in this study is built from the synthesis of the three main theories above to comprehensively describe the relationship between variables. The Educational Accessibility variable offered by UT Majene through the flexibility of the remote system and the RPL policy acts as an enabler. This inclusive accessibility provides space for workers in West Sulawesi to realize their Career Development Expectations, such as fulfilling formal diploma qualifications and certainty of employment status in the agency where they work.

The interaction between the ease of institutional accessibility and the magnitude of career expectations ultimately shapes and maintains the Learning Motivation of RPL students. This learning motivation includes an intrinsic dimension to master new competencies as well as an extrinsic dimension in the form of institutional regulatory demands. Thus, this framework explains the holistic process of how a flexible academic environment is able to align workers' professional ambitions with the commitment to independent learning in navigating the challenges of dual-role as workers and students.

Research Gap

Previous studies on the Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) program and distance learning generally still show a significant focus gap. Most of the previous literature tends to focus on administrative evaluations, such as the technical procedures for converting semester credit units (SKS), curriculum effectiveness, or the reliability of academic information systems. Qualitative studies that dissect the RPL phenomenon from the perspective of Human Resource Management (HR), especially regarding the psychological dynamics, career expectations, and learning motivation of adult learners in the region, are still very limited.

In addition to the focus gap, there are also significant geographic and empirical context gaps in previous studies. The majority of qualitative research on RPL has been conducted at face-to-face universities in major cities in Java with the availability of highly established digital infrastructure. There is still very little research that explores in depth how working students in developing regions with geographical challenges such as West Sulawesi utilize the RPL pathway to maintain their motivation to study and career sustainability.

Research Novelty and Implications

Research Novelty

The conceptual novelty in this study lies in the integration of three main variables, namely Educational Accessibility, Career Development Expectations, and Learning Motivation in a qualitative analysis model in the PTJJ ecosystem. This study not only examines these variables separately, but also unpacks an in-depth narrative about how the flexibility of educational institutions can mediate the relationship between external career motivation and the internal learning motivation of adult learners simultaneously.

In addition to conceptual novelty, this study also offers empirical novelty through the use of longitudinal secondary data from four consecutive registration periods (2024 Odd to 2025 Even). By basing the qualitative analysis on a real database of 3,628 new students (including 581 RPL students) at UT Majene, this study is

able to present very strong qualitative analysis results because it stands on the mapping of statistical data on the distribution of real regions and study programs.

Research Implications

The theoretical implications of this study are to make a scientific contribution to the development of the literature on Human Resources Management and Higher Education, particularly regarding the upskilling strategy of the workforce based on lifelong learning. The findings of this study enrich the academic understanding of how the flexibility of the distance learning system is able to bridge the demands of the professionalism of workers in developing regions without having to sacrifice their daily work productivity.

Practically, this research has direct implications for UT Majene managers and local governments in West Sulawesi Province. For UT Majene, the results of this analysis can be used as a reference in designing a more friendly academic assistance system (student support system) for student workers to reduce the dropout rate. For local governments and employer agencies, this study provides strategic input in formulating employee human resource development policies that are synergistic with the use of the RPL pathway.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Educational Accessibility for RPL Students at UT Majene (2024–2025)

The results of the analysis of secondary data (3,628 total new students for the period 2024.1–2025.2, of which 581 students are registrants of the RPL pathway) and the results of in-depth interviews show that educational accessibility at UT Majene is interpreted through three main dimensions:

Geographical and Time Flexibility: The distribution of RPL students crosses coastal and mountainous areas in West Sulawesi Province (such as Majene Regency, Polewali Mandar, Mamuju, Central Mamuju, and Pasangkayu). The LMS/Tuton-based Open and Distance Higher Education System (PTJJ) allows working students to still be able to access materials and lecture assignments without having to leave the location of their daily operational duties.

Effectiveness of RPL Policy: The Past Learning Recognition (RPL) mechanism has proven to be effective in cutting the duration of study through the recognition of previous work experience and non-formal/informal training. Most RPL students gather in the PGSD study programs of In-Service Teacher Input, S1 Management, and S1 Law, where their work experience can be administratively recognized as the weight of credit acquisition (Credit Transfer).

Financial Affordability: Affordable tuition schemes and the need for daily transportation and accommodation costs to a physical campus are important determinants for working students in maintaining their household financial stability.

Career Development Expectations Driving Enrollment Decisions

The results indicate that career development expectations are the extrinsic main drivers for workers in West Sulawesi to take advantage of the RPL pathway at UT Majene:

- Adjustment of Qualifications and Formal Diplomas: For RPL students in the PGSD In-Service study program, registration is encouraged by government regulations that require a minimum qualification of S-1 for teachers to maintain their certification status and professional allowances.
- Promotion and Promotion/Group Promotion Opportunities: For working students in the government sector (ASN/PPPK) and the private sector who take Management and Law study programs, the possession of an S-1 diploma is an absolute requirement for submitting diploma adjustment, promotion/class, and opening promotion opportunities to a higher structural or functional level.

- Certainty of Employment Status: Increasing formal education qualifications through RPL provides a sense of job security and long-term career certainty amid the increasingly stringent dynamics of workforce qualifications in the agencies where they work.

Dynamics of Learning Motivation and Dual-Role Management

Despite being driven by career expectations, RPL students face real challenges in the form of double burdens (work-life-study balance). The dynamics of student learning motivation are revealed through two main patterns:

- Synergy of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: Initial extrinsic motivation (diploma and career demands) transforms into intrinsic motivation as academic understanding increases. Students feel an increase in competence and self-efficacy in completing tasks at work.
- Independent Time Management Strategy: RPL students develop a dual-role adaptation strategy by allocating independent study time at night or on weekends, utilizing digital learning media, and building a learning network among fellow student workers in the same area (peer support group).
- The Role of Environmental Support: RPL students' motivation to learn is maintained thanks to the support of flexibility from the leaders of the agency/school where they work and understanding from their families, which are important support systems in preventing the risk of mental fatigue (burnout) and dropout.

DISCUSSION

Relevance of Findings to Theory

The findings of this study strongly confirm and expand the relevance of the three main theories used:

Malcolm Knowles' Theory of Adult Learning (Andragogy): Findings show that UT Majene RPL students act as self-directed learners. Recognition of work experience through the RPL pathway has been proven to increase their learning readiness because the lecture material feels directly relevant to daily work problems (problem-centered learning).

Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory: The decision process of RPL applicants is very much in line with Vroom's rational calculations. Students believe that the sacrifice of effort and distance study time (Expectancy) will result in a formal diploma (Instrumentality), which has a very high benefit value (Valence) in the form of promotion, certification, and career promotion.

Martin Trow & Terenzini's Theory of Higher Education Accessibility: UT Majene has been proven to carry out the function of democratization and massification of higher education in West Sulawesi. Accessibility is not only interpreted physically, but also as a form of breaking down geographical barriers, time flexibility, and affordability for adult learners in developing areas.

Relevance to Previous Research

The results of this study reinforce previous findings regarding the importance of distance education flexibility in encouraging lifelong learning for the workforce. However, this study provides a differentiating perspective from previous studies:

If previous research highlighted more technical-administrative obstacles in the conversion of RPL credits or the reliability of IT infrastructure in Java, the findings of this study prove that psychological-organizational driving factors (career expectations and agency regulations) are much more dominant in determining the sustainability of RPL students' studies in developing regions.

This study corrects the conventional view that remote students are vulnerable to dropouts due to a lack of physical interaction. The findings show that the clarity of career expectations and the flexibility of the RPL system at UT Majene actually form resilience and high learning motivation in working students.

Novelty

The conceptual novelty in this study lies in the formulation of a qualitative analysis model that integrates Educational Accessibility, Career Development Expectations, and Learning Motivation holistically in the Open and Distance Higher Education (PTJJ) ecosystem. This study does not only test the three variables separately, but also unravels the in-depth narrative of how the flexibility of the institutional system (PTJJ) and the Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) policy act as enabler variables. This facilitator variable has been proven to be able to bridge and transform extrinsic encouragement in the form of career qualification demands into intrinsic learning motivation commitments of adult learners. The flexible process on the RPL pathway collapses the dual-role anxiety, so that lecture activities are no longer seen as an additional burden that is disruptive, but rather as an investment in human capital development that blends harmoniously with daily work routines.

In addition to conceptual novelty, this study offers empirical novelty through the utilization and mapping of longitudinal secondary databases from four consecutive registration periods, namely the 2024 Odd semester, 2024 Even, 2025 Odd, and 2025 Even. By basing the qualitative analysis on the real data population of 3,628 new students, 581 of whom are registrants of the RPL pathway at UT Majene, this study succeeded in presenting very solid qualitative analysis results. This novelty bridges the statistical analysis of the trend of geographical distribution and secondary data-based study programs with the exploration of in-depth qualitative narratives regarding the lived experiences of working students in developing regions with the geographical characteristics of islands such as West Sulawesi Province, which have been very rarely explored in the literature on Human Resources Management and Higher Education.

CONCLUSION

This conclusion presents a summary of the essence of the research findings regarding the analysis of educational accessibility, career development expectations, and learning motivation of students for the Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) pathway at Majene Open University for the 2024–2025 period. Based on the results of the analysis of qualitative and confirmatory data on secondary data on new student registration, the following conclusions and relevant practical and academic suggestions are presented:

Accessibility of Education as an Inclusive Facilitator:

The accessibility of education at UT Majene has proven to play an effective role as an enabler in reaching adult learners in West Sulawesi Province. The flexibility of the Open and Distance Education (PTJJ) system that crosses geographical barriers, affordability of costs, and the effectiveness of the credit transfer mechanism through the RPL route provides easy access for workers without damaging their financial stability and daily workload.

Career Development Expectations as a Key Driver:

Career development expectations are the most dominant extrinsic driving determinants that influence RPL student enrollment decisions. The need for adjustments to formal S-1 diplomas to meet teacher certification qualifications (PGSD In-Service), adjustments to ASN/PPPK groups, and the opening of job promotion opportunities are the main motives for workers to enroll at UT Majene.

Dynamics of Learning Motivation and Dual Role Management:

RPL students' learning motivation has been transformed from extrinsic drivers (career demands and regulations) to intrinsic motivation as their confidence and work competence increase. Students have successfully overcome the challenge of dual roles (work-life-study balance) through independent time management strategies, the use of peer support groups, and flexibility support from agency leaders and families.

ADVICE

For the Managers of the Majene Open University:

It is recommended to continue to improve the quality and speed of socialization administrative assistance/RPL governance system, as well as strengthen Student Support System schemes (such as time management training and special academic guidance) to help working students maintain learning motivation and prevent the risk of dropout.

For Local Governments and Employer Agencies in West Sulawesi:

It is recommended that local government agencies (BKPSDM/Education Office) and private companies formulate human resource development policies that are more synergistic with the RPL program. Support in the form of certainty of study permits, ease of adjustment of diplomas, and clear career incentives will encourage a culture of lifelong learning and improve the quality of regional human capital.

For future researchers:

It is recommended for the next researcher to expand the scope of research using a quantitative approach or mixed methods to measurably test the level of influence of RPL flexibility on the work performance of students in their workplaces, as well as compare the characteristics of RPL students between UPBJJ in other regions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2017). Digital learning compass: Distance education enrollment report 2017. Babson Survey Research Group.
2. Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. W. H. Freeman and Company.
3. Bratton, J., & Gold, J. (2017). Human resource management: Theory and practice (6th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
4. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
5. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
6. Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). The SAGE handbook of qualitative research (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
7. Garrison, D. R. (2017). E-learning in the 21st century: A community of inquiry framework for research and practice (3rd ed.). Routledge.
8. Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2015). The knowledge capital of nations: Innovation, growth, and the economics of education. MIT Press.
9. Inayatullah, I., & Sutrisno, S. (2021). Accessibility of distance higher education for workers in 3T areas. Journal of Open and Distance Education, 22(1), 15–28.
10. Knowles, M. S. (1970). The modern practice of adult education: Andragogy versus pedagogy. Association Press.
11. Knowles, M. S. (1984). Andragogy in action: Applying modern principles of adult learning. Jossey-Bass.
12. Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. SAGE Publications.
13. Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
14. Noe, R. A. (2020). Employee training and development (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
15. Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative research & evaluation methods (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
16. Pratiwi, D., & Hidayat, R. (2022). The effect of past learning recognition (RPL) on adult learners' learning motivation. Journal of Higher Education Management, 10(2), 112–125.
17. Prawiradilaga, D. S. (2016). Mosaic of educational technology: E-learning. Kencana.

18. Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2019). Organizational behavior (18th ed.). Pearson.
19. Setiani, A., & Wibowo, A. (2023). Analysis of work-life-study balance of working-class students. Journal of Human Resource Management Research, 5(1), 45–58.
20. Simonson, M., Zvacek, S. M., & Smaldino, S. (2019). Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education (7th ed.). Information Age Publishing.
21. Sutopo, H., & Rahayu, S. (2021). Implementation of the RPL program in improving the qualifications of teachers in office. Journal of Education and Culture, 14(3), 201–215.
22. Terenzini, P. T. (1996). Rediscovering the core: The nature of accessibility in higher education. The Journal of Higher Education, 67(4), 430–445.
23. Trow, M. (1973). Problems in the transition from elite to mass higher education. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.
24. Trow, M. (2007). Reflections on the transition from elite to mass to universal basic education. In J. J. F. Forest & P. G. Altbach (Eds.), International handbook of higher education (pp. 243–263). Springer.
25. Open University. (2023). Catalog of the Open University implementation system 2023/2024. UT Press.
26. Vroom, V. H. (1964). Work and motivation. John Wiley & Sons.
27. Wlodkowski, R. J., & Ginsberg, M. B. (2017). Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
28. Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
29. Yusuf, A. M. (2017). Quantitative, qualitative and combined research methods. Prenadamedia Group.
30. Zulfa, M., & Firmansyah, A. (2020). Career expectations and their influence on the loyalty and learning motivation of employees of advanced S-1 college applicants. Journal of Applied Management and Business, 6(2), 89–101.