Unlocking Success: Key Enablers of Persistence in Adult Literacy Learning among Adult Learners in Eswatini

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the key enablers of persistence among adult literacy learners at Sebenta National Institute in Eswatini. Adult literacy serves as a fundamental pillar of national development, empowering individuals to actively participate in society and contribute meaningfully to the economy. However, high dropout rates among adult literacy learners remain a significant challenge, underscoring the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence those who persist until the completion of the programme. Employing a qualitative approach and a case study design, data were collected through individual interviews with five (n=5) facilitators and three (n=3) instructors, as well as focus group discussions with sixty (n=60) adult learners. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify key factors influencing learner retention, including the desire for self-improvement, a supportive learning environment, and access to resources. The findings revealed that the relevance of learning content to real-life applications significantly influenced persistence, as learners' perceived practical value in their education. Additionally, supportive learning environments, characterized by encouragement from adult educators and peers, played a crucial role in maintaining motivation for learning. Family and community support also emerged as vital enablers, fostering a sense of belonging and accountability. Lastly, participants expressed that hope for a better future and personal aspirations strongly motivated their commitment to completing the literacy program. These insights provide valuable recommendations for improving the design and development of adult literacy programs to enhance learner persistence and success.

Keywords: Adult Literacy, Lifelong Learning, Community Education, Learner Persistence

INTRODUCTION

Adult literacy is a lifelong learning endeavor that involves continuous engagement in educational and training programmes for various purposes (Challva, 2023). It is a crucial aspect of personal and national development, providing individuals with the skills necessary for effective participation in society. Located within the lifelong learning framework, adult learning projects both a reflection on past experiences and a means for shaping future opportunities (Walters, 2006). It encompasses a broad range of activities, including formal, informal, and nonformal education, through which individuals acquire skills and knowledge essential for problem-solving and daily life applications (Merriam & Bierema, 2013; Jarvis, 2004). This continuous learning process enhances participants' competencies, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt to evolving social and economic contexts.

The program design and development of adult learning programmes play a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of adult literacy initiatives. According to Azoulay (2022), adult education programmes align with the specific needs of learners, ensuring relevance and practical application. The motivation for continuous learning among adults is largely driven by the desire to acquire knowledge and skills that enhance employability, social integration, and personal development. Tailor-designed educational programmes help learners adapt to changing environments, fostering self-sufficiency and resilience (Lovell & Munn, 2017;

Comings, Parrella, & Soricone, 2020). This study explored the key enablers that influence persistence among adult literacy learners, with particular focus on factors that promote retention and engagement in adult literacy learning programmes. This was necessary to bridge the knowledge gap on how adult literacy curricula align with learners' real-life needs and aspirations, thereby augmenting the design and development of relevant adult literacy learning programmes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how adults learn. Introduced in the late 20th century, andragogy differs from pedagogy by emphasizing the unique characteristics of adult learners. Knowles (1978) argued that adults are self-directed learners who take responsibility for their education and prefer learning experiences that allow autonomy and control over their progress. Unlike children, whose learning is often dictated by structured curricula, adults bring prior experiences that serve as valuable learning resources, making experiential learning a key aspect of their education. Additionally, adult learners are more likely to engage in learning when they perceive it as relevant to their personal or professional lives. Their learning is often problem-centered rather than subject-centered, meaning they seek immediate application of knowledge to real-world challenges. Furthermore, motivation in adult learning is largely intrinsic, driven by personal development, career advancement, or the desire for self-improvement. In the context of adult literacy in Eswatini, Knowles' andragogy theory provides a useful lens for understanding the persistence of learners. Programs designed with an appreciation for self-directed learning, real-world applicability, and experiential engagement are more likely to foster sustained learner participation. By acknowledging the needs and motivations of adult learners, literacy programs can be tailored to enhance retention, improve engagement, and ultimately support lifelong learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation as a Driving Force for Persistence

Motivation is widely recognized as one of the most important factors in the persistence and success of adult learners. According to Knowles et al. (2012), adult learners are typically driven by internal factors such as personal growth, practical needs, and professional development. This intrinsic motivation is particularly evident in andragogical settings, where learning is centered around solving real-world problems, rather than abstract concepts. Moreover, Hossain and Terwelp (2015) stress the critical role of self-esteem in motivating adult learners, noting that achieving small milestones within a learning program can significantly boost learners' confidence and persistence.

In addition to intrinsic motivation, external factors also play a role. Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2014) argue that motivation is enhanced when the learning objectives align with learners' personal and professional goals. Adult learners are more likely to persist in their education when they see clear, immediate benefits—whether improving their job prospects, advancing in their careers, or gaining personal satisfaction.

Motivation is also influenced by the social context of learning. For instance, group learning environments can stimulate a sense of collective responsibility and mutual encouragement, which enhances individual persistence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This is consistent with Vallerand's (1997) research, which underscores the importance of autonomy and competence in fostering self-determined motivation.

Supportive Learning Environment

A supportive learning environment is crucial for adult learners' persistence, as it helps learners feel respected, valued, and capable of succeeding. Tinto (2012) emphasizes that the integration of learners into their academic and social environments increases their commitment to the educational process. In particular, adult learners often face significant challenges in balancing education with family, work, and other life responsibilities. Therefore, creating a supportive academic atmosphere that encourages social and academic integration is essential for fostering persistence.

Positive relationships between instructors and students are a key aspect of this support. As Baker (2016) suggests, instructors who actively engage with adult learners, understand their needs, and provide individualized feedback create a positive learning atmosphere that enhances motivation and persistence. Collaborative learning opportunities, such as group projects and peer reviews, can also create a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation, which many adult learners experience (Gonzalez, 2018).

Furthermore, access to resources such as tutoring, counseling, and career services can help adult learners navigate personal and academic challenges. These resources provide learners with the support they need to overcome obstacles and stay engaged in their educational journeys. A well-supported environment can empower learners to manage stress, maintain focus, and persevere through difficulties (Gonzalez, 2018).

Family and Community Support

The role of family and community support in adult education cannot be overstated. Bennett (2019) highlights that strong support from family members can provide adult learners with the emotional and practical encouragement needed to persist in their educational pursuits. When family members recognize and support the learner's goals, learners are more likely to stay motivated and committed to completing their studies.

Additionally, community support networks, such as local educational organizations, volunteer groups, and peer support networks, can enhance learners' sense of belonging and help them stay motivated. According to Smith and Jones (2020), these community-driven initiatives are particularly beneficial for adult learners, as they provide a collaborative environment where learners can share resources, experiences, and advice. Moreover, these support systems often offer practical assistance, such as childcare or transportation, which can help remove barriers to participation and persistence in education.

Community involvement also reinforces the broader value of education. When learners understand that their educational achievements are valued within their community, they may feel a stronger sense of responsibility and motivation to succeed. Community-based initiatives that involve learners in civic activities or local projects can reinforce the social relevance of education and its benefits for both individuals and society (Smith & Jones, 2020).

Strategies for Enhancing Persistence

To effectively enhance persistence among adult literacy learners, educational programs need to implement strategies that address the specific needs and challenges of this learner population.

One important strategy is the creation of personalized learning plans. Programs that tailor content and learning pathways to the individual's goals, interests, and prior experiences are more likely to engage adult learners and encourage persistence (Miller, 2021). These individualized plans provide learners with a clear roadmap of how their learning will support their personal and professional aspirations.

Fostering a community of practice is another key strategy. Wenger (1998) suggests that learning environments that promote peer collaboration and shared learning experiences create a sense of mutual support and collective responsibility. This encourages learners to persist by providing a social network of like-minded individuals who can offer advice, encouragement, and accountability.

Additionally, ongoing professional development for educators is essential. Darling-Hammond (2017) highlights that when educators are equipped with the latest pedagogical strategies, including those specifically designed for adult learners, they are better able to create engaging and supportive learning environments. Educators trained in adult learning theories, such as andragogy, are particularly adept at motivating adult learners and addressing their unique needs.

Lastly, institutions should ensure flexibility in learning delivery. Offering a blend of in-person, online, and hybrid learning options allows adult learners to manage their education alongside other commitments, such as

work or family. This flexibility is a key factor in enhancing persistence, as it allows learners to fit education into their busy lives without feeling overwhelmed or excluded from the learning process (Baker, 2016).

Understanding the factors that promote persistence in adult literacy education is critical for developing effective educational programs. By focusing on motivation, creating supportive learning environments, and leveraging family and community support, adult learners are more likely to engage deeply with their studies and persist until completion. Future research should further investigate how these factors interact and explore additional strategies that can help remove barriers to adult learners' success in literacy and other adult education programs.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the enablers of persistence among adult literacy learners at Sebenta National Institute. Qualitative methods were selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, motivations, and perceptions regarding their literacy learning journey. The approach aligns with the exploratory nature of the research objective, allowing for the collection of rich, descriptive data that can provide insights into the complexities of adult learning persistence (Creswell, 2013).

Sample Selection

The study utilized purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that allows for the selection of participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research question (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sample comprised 60 adult learners enrolled in literacy programs, 5 facilitators, and 3 instructors at Sebenta National Institute.

Adult Learners: The selection of adult learners ensured a diverse representation of backgrounds, ages, and levels of literacy. This diversity provided a comprehensive view of the factors influencing persistence, including varying personal, social, and educational contexts.

Facilitators and Instructors: Facilitators and instructors were included to offer insights into the educational environment, the teaching strategies employed, and the support systems in place for learners. Their perspectives enriched the data by reflecting the operational and institutional factors that influence learner persistence.

This purposive sampling strategy facilitated the collection of varied and relevant perspectives, enhancing the study's richness and depth.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Both methods allowed participants to share their experiences and perspectives in detail, while also enabling the researcher to probe deeper into key themes related to persistence in adult literacy.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with 5 facilitators and 3 instructors. The semi-structured interview format allowed for flexibility, enabling participants to share their experiences and insights, while the researcher guided the conversation with predetermined questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The questions focused on understanding:

Motivation: What motivates learners to persist in their literacy programs?

Support Systems: What support mechanisms are in place to help learners maintain engagement and commitment?

Challenges and Enablers: What challenges do facilitators and instructors face in helping learners persist, and what factors or strategies have proven effective in addressing these challenges?

The interviews with facilitators and instructors helped contextualize the learning environment and identify key factors affecting persistence from an educational standpoint.

Focus Group Discussions

Data were further collected through focus group discussions with the 60 adult learners, divided into 4 groups of 15 learners each. Focus group discussions provided an opportunity for learners to share their collective experiences, reflect on the educational environment, and discuss the challenges they face in the learning process. The group format facilitated interaction between participants, allowing them to exchange ideas and perspectives, which enriched the data (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

The focus groups were designed to address key themes such as:

Personal Motivations: What personal factors (e.g., career advancement, self-esteem, family support) influence persistence?

Perceptions of Support: How do learners perceive the support offered by facilitators, instructors, and the institution?

Barriers to Persistence: What obstacles do learners encounter, and how do they overcome them?

The group dynamic allowed learners to voice shared concerns and explore common experiences, providing a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing persistence in the literacy programs.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach involved identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within the data that were relevant to the research questions. The following steps were followed in the analysis process:

Familiarization with the Data: Transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions were read and re-read to ensure familiarity with the data.

Initial Coding: Key segments of the data were coded based on recurrent ideas or concepts related to motivation, support, barriers, and enablers of persistence.

Theme Development: Codes were organized into broader themes, representing the key factors that influenced persistence among adult learners. Themes were further refined and linked to the research objectives.

Interpretation and Reporting: The identified themes were interpreted in light of existing literature and the study's research objectives. This process facilitated a deeper understanding of the factors influencing adult literacy learners' persistence.

By applying thematic analysis, the study aimed to provide a nuanced and detailed understanding of the experiences and perspectives of adult learners, facilitators, and instructors at Sebenta National Institute.

This methodology ensures that the study captures a range of perspectives, providing valuable insights into the enablers of persistence among adult literacy learners. The combination of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions allows for a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing learner engagement and success.

FINDINGS

Relevance of Learning to Real-Life Situations and Support for Persistence

The study revealed that the relevance of learning content to real-life situations significantly influences the persistence of adult learners in literacy programs at Sebenta National Institute. Participants reported that when the curriculum addressed practical, real-world skills—such as budgeting, job applications, and effective communication—they were more motivated to engage in the learning process. Learners highlighted that the ability to immediately apply the knowledge they gained in their personal or professional lives reinforced their commitment to the program. This connection between learning and everyday experiences not only enhanced their understanding but also fostered a sense of purpose in their educational pursuits.

This finding aligns with Knowles' (1978) assertion that adult learners are intrinsically motivated by the relevance of educational content to their life goals. Learners expressed a sense of achievement when they could apply what they learned to solve real problems, reinforcing the value of the educational process in shaping their personal and professional lives. As Merriam & Bierema (2013) suggest, when learning is seen as practical and purposeful, learners are more likely to persist through challenges and remain engaged.

Impact of a Supportive Learning Environment on Motivation and Retention

A supportive learning environment emerged as a critical factor in motivating learners and improving retention. The study found that encouragement from instructors and positive interactions with peers played an essential role in enhancing learners' confidence and engagement. Facilitators who offered constructive feedback and fostered an inclusive, supportive atmosphere helped learners feel a sense of belonging, which in turn increased their commitment to the program. Participants emphasized that a positive and welcoming classroom environment created a space where they felt respected and valued, which alleviated feelings of isolation that could lead to dropout (Richards, 2020).

Moreover, learners noted that collaborative learning activities—such as group discussions and peer sharing— motivated them by allowing them to connect with others, share experiences, and work together toward common goals. This not only facilitated learning but also helped in the formation of a community of practice that encouraged perseverance. The sense of camaraderie and mutual support helped learners navigate challenges more effectively, fostering a collective sense of responsibility toward completing the program.

Influence of Support from Peers, Family, and Community on Persistence

The support from peers, family, and the broader community was identified as a vital enabler of persistence among adult learners. Learners who received emotional and practical support from family members, such as spouses and children, were more likely to stay committed to their education. This familial support provided emotional reinforcement, as well as practical assistance—such as help with childcare or transportation— thereby reducing barriers to participation (Idoko, 2018).

Additionally, the support of the community played a significant role in learners' persistence. Participants shared that encouragement and recognition from local organizations and community groups gave them a sense of accountability and motivation to continue their studies. This community involvement helped learners feel that their efforts were valued and that they were contributing to a larger social purpose, which strengthened their determination to complete the literacy program. Knowing that their success was not only important to themselves but also to their families and communities served as a powerful motivator.

Psychological Aspects of Hope and Their Effect on Learner Retention

Hope was found to be a significant psychological motivator for learner retention. Many participants expressed a strong belief in the possibility of a better future through education, which was intrinsically linked to their

goals. Hope was often associated with improved employment prospects, better quality of life, and the ability to contribute positively to their families and communities (Snyder, 2002).

Learners who maintained a hopeful outlook toward their education were more resilient when faced with challenges. They viewed obstacles as temporary setbacks rather than insurmountable barriers. This mindset helped them to persist through difficulties, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning. Participants who expressed hopefulness were more proactive in seeking solutions to problems and were more likely to stay engaged in their education, reinforcing their commitment to completing the program. This finding highlights the importance of fostering an environment where adult learners can develop and sustain a sense of hope about their future, as it contributes to greater retention and success in their learning journey.

These findings demonstrate the complex interplay of personal, social, and psychological factors that support adult learners' persistence in literacy programs. By focusing on the relevance of learning content, fostering a supportive learning environment, and recognizing the value of external support from family and community, educational programs can enhance learner engagement and retention. Additionally, promoting hope as a psychological resource can further bolster persistence, helping learners navigate challenges and stay committed to their educational goals.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings in Relation to Literature

The findings of this study strongly resonate with the existing literature on adult literacy, emphasizing the essential role of relevance in learning, supportive environments, and social support systems in fostering persistence among adult learners.

The relevance of learning to real-life situations has been repeatedly highlighted as a central motivator for adult learners. Knowles (1978) asserts that adult learners engage more deeply with education when they perceive it as directly applicable to their lives. This study's results further validate this notion, as participants expressed a higher level of engagement and persistence when they could see the practical application of their studies, such as in budgeting or improving their job prospects. This confirms that real-world connections between curriculum content and learners' everyday lives can boost motivation and retention.

Similarly, the significance of a supportive learning environment is consistent with the literature, which underscores the positive impact of supportive interactions between learners, instructors, and peers. As Richards (2020) emphasizes, a supportive and inclusive classroom environment fosters motivation and reduces dropout rates. Our findings demonstrate that learners who felt supported and valued by instructors and peers were more likely to persist. This finding aligns with Merriam and Bierema (2013), who argue that creating a nurturing environment leads to a sense of belonging, which is a key enabler of perseverance in adult education.

Furthermore, the role of social support from family and community corroborates previous research, including Idoko's (2018) findings, which highlight the importance of external encouragement in sustaining adult learners' commitment to their studies. Our study found that learners who had strong familial and community backing were more likely to stay engaged and complete their programs. The psychological aspect of hope also supports Snyder's (2002) theory, which suggests that hope is a critical motivator for achieving personal goals in educational contexts. The participants in this study who maintained a hopeful outlook were more resilient, overcoming challenges and remaining committed to their literacy programs.

Implications for Program Design and Development

The findings of this study carry substantial implications for the design and development of adult literacy programs. Below are key recommendations:

Curriculum Relevance

Programs should prioritize aligning their curricula with the real-world needs of learners. Practical skills—such as financial literacy, job readiness, and effective communication—should be integrated into the program. By incorporating content that learners can immediately apply in their daily lives, programs will foster a stronger sense of relevance and motivation, increasing persistence.

Supportive Learning Environments

Instructor training should focus on creating supportive and inclusive classroom environments. Educators should be equipped with strategies to build positive relationships with learners, encourage collaboration, and provide personalized support. A learner-centered approach that respects adult learners' unique experiences and goals is essential for fostering motivation and retention (Freire, 1970). Professional development programs should also emphasize empathy and the importance of creating a space where adult learners feel heard, valued, and motivated.

Community and Family Engagement

Engaging families and communities is crucial to the success of adult literacy programs. Programs should actively involve families by hosting workshops to help them understand the importance of literacy and how they can support learners at home. Community engagement can also take the form of partnerships with local organizations to offer additional resources and support to learners.

Psychological Support

The incorporation of psychological support systems, such as goal-setting workshops, counseling services, or mentorship programs, can enhance learners' resilience and hope. Encouraging learners to focus on their longterm goals, despite challenges, can contribute to greater retention and overall success. Programs should actively promote a culture of hope and perseverance, which can be crucial in helping learners overcome barriers and persist in their educational journeys.

Enhancing Adult Literacy Programs through Understanding Enablers

By understanding the key enablers of persistence identified in this study—relevance, support, and psychological well-being—program developers can create more effective adult literacy programs. Below are several strategies that can enhance these programs:

Tailored Learning Experiences

Programs should focus on personalizing learning experiences by aligning learning objectives with the learners' personal and professional goals. This tailored approach increases motivation by helping learners understand how their education will contribute to their broader life goals. This strategy can lead to better engagement, retention, and learning outcomes.

Building Community Connections

Fostering community connections within literacy programs is another essential element for promoting persistence. Creating partnerships with local organizations and leveraging community support can provide learners with a safety net of resources and encouragement. A strong community connection can also create a shared sense of purpose, motivating learners to continue their studies and succeed.

Fostering a Culture of Hope

A culture of hope should be actively promoted within literacy programs. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, peer support groups, and success stories that inspire current learners. Sharing narratives

of individuals who overcame significant challenges to achieve their goals can serve as a powerful motivator for others, reinforcing the belief that persistence leads to success.

The study's findings underscore the importance of addressing the unique needs of adult learners in literacy programs. By focusing on the relevance of content, fostering supportive environments, and promoting psychological well-being, adult literacy programs can enhance learner persistence and success. By addressing these key enablers, educational programs can better equip adult learners to overcome barriers and achieve their goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings of this study, several practical strategies are proposed to enhance adult literacy programs at Sebenta National Institute and similar institutions. These recommendations aim to improve curriculum relevance, foster a supportive learning environment, and strengthen community engagement to ensure greater learner persistence and success.

Increase Relevance of Curriculum

Develop Real-World Curriculum: Ensuring the curriculum directly applies to learners' daily lives—such as financial literacy and job application processes—enhances engagement by showing the immediate value of education.

Solicit Learner Input: Involving learners in the curriculum development process helps tailor content to their specific needs, increasing its relevance and encouraging participation.

Use Contextualized Learning Materials: Learning materials should reflect local cultural contexts and community-specific issues, making learning more relatable and impactful.

Foster Supportive Environments

Training for Instructors: Ongoing professional development for educators on creating inclusive and supportive classroom environments can improve teaching effectiveness and strengthen rapport with learners.

Peer Support Programs: Peer mentoring systems offer emotional and social support, helping reduce isolation and enhancing motivation through mutual encouragement.

Flexible Learning Options: Offering evening classes or blended learning formats ensures that learners with varying schedules can still participate, thus promoting retention.

Engage Community and Family Involvement

Community Workshops: Engaging families and communities through workshops raises awareness about the importance of adult literacy, helping them support learners at home.

Partnerships with Local Organizations: Collaborating with businesses, NGOs, and local organizations creates a network of support, providing resources, mentorship, and possible job opportunities for graduates.

Recognition and Celebration of Achievements: Highlighting learner achievements through ceremonies or showcases motivates both learners and the broader community, reinforcing the value of adult literacy education.

By implementing these strategies, Sebenta National Institute and similar institutions can foster a more supportive and relevant learning environment that maximizes retention and success for adult learners.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the essential factors that contribute to the persistence of adult literacy learners at Sebenta National Institute in Eswatini. Key findings emphasize the importance of curriculum relevance, a supportive learning environment, family and community involvement, and the psychological aspect of hope in motivating learners to persist in their educational journeys.

The findings suggest that when adult education programs align with real-life applications, such as financial literacy and job-readiness skills, learners are more likely to engage and remain committed. Additionally, a supportive learning environment—characterized by positive feedback from instructors and peers—strengthens learners' confidence and reduces feelings of isolation. Family and community support further enhances motivation by providing a sense of responsibility and accountability, ensuring that learners stay committed to their educational goals. Finally, the role of hope as a psychological motivator was found to be critical in helping learners overcome challenges and maintain resilience.

This study underscores the need for a holistic approach to adult education in Eswatini. It advocates for the development of curricula that directly address learners' needs and experiences, the creation of supportive environments that foster engagement and collaboration, and the active involvement of families and communities in the educational process.

The research also opens avenues for future exploration. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to assess the long-term impacts of these enablers on adult learners' outcomes. Furthermore, future research should examine additional factors that may influence persistence in diverse educational settings, offering valuable insights into improving adult education in various contexts.

Ultimately, by understanding the factors that drive persistence, educational stakeholders can implement more effective strategies to support adult learners, contributing to enhanced literacy rates and better quality of life in Eswatini.

Future Research Directions

Future research in adult literacy education should focus on longitudinal studies that track the persistence of adult learners over time. These studies could provide valuable insights into how various enablers of persistence, such as curriculum relevance, supportive environments, and community involvement, interact with each other and influence long-term educational outcomes. By examining learners over extended periods, researchers can better understand the sustained impact of these enablers on engagement and success, offering a more comprehensive picture of the factors that contribute to persistent learning.

Additionally, exploring the impact of digital literacy on persistence in online adult education programs is an area that warrants further investigation. As the use of technology in education continues to grow, understanding how learners' digital skills influence their ability to engage with and complete online courses will be crucial. This is particularly relevant in today's educational landscape, where the shift toward online and blended learning formats is becoming more prevalent. By exploring how digital literacy affects persistence, researchers can provide insights that will help improve the design and accessibility of online programs, ensuring that adult learners are adequately supported in this increasingly digital world.

Comparative studies across different contexts also hold great potential for advancing our understanding of adult learners' persistence. Research could explore how the enablers identified in this study function in different settings, such as urban versus rural areas. These comparative studies would highlight the contextual factors that influence learner engagement and outcomes, providing important insights for tailoring adult education programs to meet the diverse needs of learners across various environments.

Further research should also explore the role of socioeconomic factors in adult learners' persistence and success. Economic challenges, such as financial constraints, limited access to resources, and balancing work

and family responsibilities, can significantly impact learners' ability to remain engaged in education. Understanding how these factors intersect with academic and social support structures could help design more inclusive and equitable adult literacy programs that address the barriers faced by economically disadvantaged learners.

Finally, research into the integration of holistic support services into adult literacy programs could provide valuable insights. Services such as counseling, childcare, and financial assistance may play a significant role in enhancing learners' ability to persist in their studies. Investigating how these services, alongside academic support, influence learner retention could lead to the development of more comprehensive and supportive adult education programs that address learners' diverse needs.

By expanding research in these areas, stakeholders in adult education will be better equipped to develop more effective strategies that cater to the evolving needs of adult learners. This, in turn, will contribute to improved educational outcomes, ensuring that adult literacy programs are more successful in fostering lifelong learning and enhancing the quality of life for adult learners.

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