

AGEING POPULATION PERCEPTIONS ON EXPECTED LEARNING CONTENTS AND AGEING-CENTERED MODES IN THE SIX GEO-POLITICAL ZONES OF NIGERIA

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APA Citation: Ibrahim, A. K. (2020). Ageing population perceptions on expected learning contents and ageing-centered modes in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. *Indonesian Journal of Learning & Instruction*, 3(1), 37-42. doi: 10.25134/ijli.v3i1.3006.

Received: 09 -02-2020

Accepted: 12-03-2020

Published: 01-04-2020

Abstract: The purpose of the study is to determine perceptions of ageing population on preferred learning contents and modes towards possible consideration into existing adult life-long open education curriculum in Nigeria. The method involves descriptive, cross-sectional survey design with 378 adult retirees. Data collection instrument was, Ageing Perceived Learning Contents and Modes Scale'. Percentages and t – test statistic was used to analyse the data. The results indicated 61.90 years as mean age, perceived learning contents were, activities for group with specific knowledge and abilities (59=15.61%); preventing security threat (71=18.78%); modalities for starting a petty trading and skill acquisitions (51=13.49%); diverse family and community roles (41=10.85%); ageing social and health care (65=17.19%); changes in legislations and policies (43=11.38%) and favoured learning modes indicated, life-long open education and learning for adult later life (39=10.32%); use of technological innovations (59=15.61%); consideration of gender, culture and economic status (121=32.01%). The result also discovered a significant gender difference on preferred learning contents ($t = 4.69 < 2.101$) and learning modes ($t = 2.91 < 1.957$) among participants. The study concluded that dynamic of ageing preferred learning contents and modes calls for consideration on exiting adult life-long open education curriculum in Nigeria and other similar areas.

Keywords: ageing population; learning contents; ageing-centered learning modes.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of low enrolment and retention among ageing population may be traced to non-inclusion, timely updating and modification of existing open life-long education and learning curriculum to integrate the ageing preferred contents and modes of learning in Nigeria. This becomes more important based on the growing population of ageing (United Nations, 2013; Help Age International, 2013), following the idea of optimization (Mulder & Jansen, 2015; Simpson, 2013), a significant ratio of the ageing can still be engaged in growth and developmental learning activities, if the curriculum of life-long open education and learning for the ageing incorporate ageing group preferred contents and modes of learning.

To actualize the idea of ageing inclusiveness into teaching and learning process, there must be deliberate contact and interaction with the groups so as to determine their preferred choice of leaning contents and modes to be included, developed, modify or integrated into the existing curriculum (Koumi, 2015). The premise is

that if the ageing preferred learning contents and learning modes are incorporated into the

existing life-long open leaning, there is likelihood of increase in enrolment and retention of the group and contribution to overall growth and development wherever they may be. The situation of the ageing in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria suggests rapid changes in group learning expectations that need to be determine and considers in term of contents and mode of learning. Meeting the changing demands of the ageing through provision of continuous and updated knowledge will lead to adjusting efficiently with societal expectations (COL, 2014).

The development emphasises where the ageing groups will need functional and effective life-long open educational and learning (Elletson & Burgess, 2015). Also emphasised in the Nigeria education policy (Akande, 2014), educational opportunities and supports has to be constantly provided to the citizens without discrimination on age, gender, religion or tribe with objective reviews of curriculum toward ensuring that no group or individuals are left behind.

The uniqueness of older adults, also referred to as the ageing are unique and diverse, so for any learning contents and modes toward their

education and learning to be successful, it must be based on their choice and demand (Mitteldorf, 2017). Many ageing are still productive (Chmielewski, Boryślawski, Strzelec, 2016), especially those retirees who are out of work due to government or employers' retirement policies (Apena, 2015), and not due to non-productivity. This is making the groups' demand for preferred learning contents and learning modes to be on increase and calls for urgent investigation (Adkins, 2013), that may be used to develop, update, modify or integrate the existing open life-long adult training, education and learning curriculum.

Whenever this done, ageing group enrolment and retention into available life-long open learning institutions will be strengthen and adequately provided for (Warrington, McGowan, Paterson & White, 2019), in addition, the philosophy of open education believes that everyone in the society should have access to high quality education and learning, experiences and resources, and elimination of barriers that might be influence the attainment of adult living satisfaction (Joel, Olabisi, Oluwatoyin, Oluwaseun & Sunday, 2017), which the present study attempts to provide for in the context of its findings.

The possibility of using ageing empirically derived preferred learning contents and modes of learning towards increase enrolment and retention, develop, integrate or modify existing curriculum of life-long open adult teaching and learning may be seen in continuity theory (Sergiev, Dontsova, Berezkin, 2015), in which the ageing are postulated to use continuity as an adaptive strategy to learn how to cope, adjust and understand themselves better than anybody, also indicated that researching on their perceived expected learning contents and modes of learning can be justify.

To further support the assertion that at the period of ageing individual can still learn and use the benefited learning to improve self and contributes to society growth and development were supported by Antonio, Paz Ramirez, & Vicente (2015), in which ICT learning by older adults generates more positive attitudes toward the use of computer, behaviour, training expectations and self-confidence, Raquel, Fernando & M.-Jose (2015), discovered in a group of adults desire to keep active, up-to-date and communicated, Jordao, Ferreira, Pinho, & St. Jacques (2019), recommended open-ended methods for effective education of ageing in order

to avoid bias due to mind wandering instructions, Hudes, Rich, Troyer, Yusupov & Vandermorris (2019), reported improvements in adults perceived memory ability, memory self-efficacy, strategy use, memory-related effect, psychological well-being and quality of life.

Further studies, Jaroslawska & Rhodes (2019), proved a manageable effect of processing on older adults' memory performance, Yoon & Stine-Morrow (2019), shows that younger and older adults successfully adjusted referential expressions to current partner's knowledge state in a live conversation, Paterson & White (2019), ageing adults showed normal levels of comprehension for text including words with transposed letters, Yeon & Matz-Costa (2018), shows that adults perceived neighbourhood safety to be significantly associated with psychological health regardless of respondents' physical functioning.

The stage of adult ageing can be of great benefits to the individual, group and the society at large, but for this to happen it has to be properly planned and provided for. To achieve this, the author is of the opinion that appropriate learning contents or learning activities and modes should be research on, outline and integrated into the existing life-long open education and learning.

An analytical look of the empirical works of Antonio, Paz Ramirez, & Vicente (2015); Raquel, Fernando & M.-Jose (2015); Jordao, Ferreira, Pinho, & St. Jacques (2019) Hudes, Rich, Troyer, Yusupov & Vandermorris (2019); Jaroslawska & Rhodes (2019); Yoon & Stine-Morrow (2019); Warrington, McGowan, Paterson & White (2019); Yeon & Matz-Costa (2018), have not distinctly and specifically investigated ageing population preferred contents to learn and appropriate methods to facilitates the delivery of the preferred contents of learning, more specifically in Nigeria and it is this observation that prompted this study. On the basis of this, the following research questions were framed to guide the study:

- 1) What is the average age of samples in the six state capitals that represented the geo-political zones of Nigeria?
- 2) (2) What are the preferred learning contents by the samples in the six states capitals that represented the geo-political zones of Nigeria are?
- 3) What are the preferred learning modes in the six states capitals that represented the geo-political zones of Nigeria are?

While, the following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- 1) There is no statistically significant gender difference on the expected learning contents in the six state capitals that represented the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.
- 2) There is no statistically significant gender difference on the perceived ageing-centered learning modes in the six state capitals that represented the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive, cross-sectional survey carried out in six geo-political zones of Nigeria. It involves the use of the state capital for each zone. This arrangement gave a total of six states capitals out of the thirty-six states in Nigeria.

The population comprised of retired civil servants; teachers, artisans and professionals in the six state capitals that represented the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The population comprised of formerly employed individuals by Federal, State or Local government institutions. The estimated total was 23,215.

The sample size of 378 was randomly selected covering six state capitals. The sample size was determined with the use of Krejcie & Morgan (2006 modified edition) and the procedure is interpreted as, $n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$, where, n = sample size; N = population size; e = sampling error (usually between 0.01 and 0.05). The selected sample varies from one state to the other based on the total number of retirees available in each state.

The sizes are as follows: 1. First state is referred to as state A=87. 2. Second state, B=75. 3. Third state, C=63. 4. Fourth state, D=54. 5. Fifth state, E=52 and 6. Sixth state, F=47. Total number of male =189 and Female = 189.

The validity was ensured through face and content validity by a group of experts in psychology, adult education and life-long learning with experiences in open education. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot study which included a different population but similar characteristics. The instrument was pilot tested with a group of retirees in Federal Capital territory, Abuja with sample of 55. The instruments yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.811, it was therefore deemed suitable for use in this study.

Data for pilot study were collected in November, 2018 and data for the actual work were collected between February and April, 2019. The researcher was assisted by six student counsellors working with the National Open University of Nigeria at the six state capital of the Study Centres used for the study.

To every individual retiree that participated in the study, the purpose and objectives of the study were explained before been asked to participate in the study. They were given the scale to instantly complete for those that feel like doing so and others were also allowed to fill the scale at their pace but they should endeavour to return the completed scale to the secretariat within the agreed date. Although, some of the samples were able to meet up with the agreed date while others could not. After all the challenges, the researcher was able to collect all the completed copies of the scale.

For the data analysis, the study used frequency count, percentage and t-test for independent variables to test differences between male and female samples responses on expected learning contents and perceived ageing-centred learning modes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 indicated that the age spans from 55 to 65 years (mean age = 61.90 years).

Table 1. *Sample perceptions of average age that formed the old age in the six geo-political zones selected for the study (N=378)*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
below 54	33	8.73
55-65	234	61.90
66-70+	111	29.3

Table 2. *Sample responses on preferred learning contents (N=378)*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Learning activities on demand and development for group with specific knowledge and abilities	59	15.61
Learning activities on preventing security threat	71	18.78

from neighbourhood and larger society

Learning modalities requires for starting a petty trading and skill acquisitions for extra income based on trends in society	51	13.49
Learning activities on diverse family and community roles	41	10.85
Learning activities on available ageing social and health care	65	17.19
Learning activities on changes in legislations and policies	43	11.38
Learning activities on unpaid careers and support institutions for the ageing group	41	10.85
Learning activities on coping with life after retirement	07	1.85

Table 2 shows a clustered and condensed summary of samples responses to the scale on expected learning contents. The result study shows that the perceived expected learning contents by the samples include, learning activities that will enhance further demand and development of ageing group with specific knowledge and abilities, learning activities on security threat from neighbourhood and the larger society; this supported Yeon & Matz-Costa (2018), that adults perceived neighbourhood safety to be significantly associated with psychological health regardless of respondents' physical functioning.

The other perceived expected learning contents indicated learning activities on petty trading and skill acquisitions for extra that will enable the ageing earn income based on the trends

in society, learning activities on diverse family and community roles, learning activities on available health care and social support for the ageing, learning activities on changes in the legislations and policies, learning activities on unpaid careers and support institutions for the ageing group and coping with life after retirements.

The perceived expected learning contents may be associated with the common characteristics of ageing retirees for the need to continuously engage in practical and life stress free activities based on current demands (COL, 2014; Sergiev, Dontsova, Berezkin, 2015; Antonio, Paz Ramirez, & Vicente, 2015; Raquel, Fernando & M.-Jose, 2015; Jordao, Ferreira, Pinho, & St. Jacques, 2019; Hudes, Rich, Troyer, Yusupov & Vandermorris, 2019).

Table 3. Sample responses on preferred ageing-centred learning modes (N=378)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Life-long open education and learning with adult later life education	39	10.32
Life-long open education and learning supported by technological innovations	59	15.61
Life-long open education and learning that considers gender, culture and economic status	121	32.01
Life-long open education and learning that is based on government and non-government supports	119	31.48
Life-long open education and learning that did not place complete priority on certificate and academic grade competitions	40	10.58

Table 3 shows a clustered and condensed summary of samples responses to the scale on perceived learning contents. The result on preferred ageing-centred learning modes for ageing teaching and learning indicated that life-long open education and learning is perceived appropriate when it focused on adult later life education, learning mode that uses technological innovations, and learning that respects and considers gender, culture and economic status which exists among the ageing, learning modes that is supported by government and non-government and learning mode that does not give complete priorities on certificate and grade; free from competitions. The processes outlined based

on the perceived learning modes by the samples and the differences of perceptions on the expected learning contents and modes analyzed based on gender (male and female) notwithstanding, is expected because of the varying experiences and expectations being a pluralistic society agreed with Antonio, Paz Ramirez, & Vicente, (2015); Raquel, Fernando & M.-Jose (2015); Jordao, Ferreira, Pinho, & St. Jacques (2019); Hudes, Rich, Troyer, Yusupov & Vandermorris (2019); Jaroslawska & Rhodes (2019); Yoon & Stine-Morrow (2019).

Table 4 shows that there is a statically significant gender difference among the samples on expected learning contents ($t = 4.69 < 2.101$).

Table 4. *t – Test analysis of gender difference on perceived learning contents in the six state capitals that represented the six geo-political zones selected for the study*

Variables	n	\bar{x}	Sds	df	t-cal.	t-table
Male	189	22.5	8.12	376	4.69	2.101
Female	189	18.89	6.992			

Table 5. *t – Test analysis of gender difference on perceived ageing-centered learning modes in the six state capitals that represented the six geo-political zones selected for the study*

Variables	n	\bar{x}	Sds	df	t-cal.	t-table
Male	189	38.84	15.68	376	2.91	1.957
Female	189	32.79	18.07			

Table 5 shows that there is a statically significant gender difference among the samples on perceived learning modes ($t = 2.91 < 1.957$).

CONCLUSION

Following overall analysis, it can be concluded that findings of the study showed that the ageing group perceived expected learning contents and learning modes varies on gender, culture and socio-economic status and technological supported mode of learning. Therefore, life-long open education and learning practitioners are requested to develop strategies on how the study findings; learning contents and learning modes can best be integrated, modify or form part of curriculum of life-long open education and learning possibly through the use of OER or MOOCs, micro-accreditation and Digital badges towards increase in ageing group enrolment and retention in life-long open education and institution.

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