

SOCIAL FACTORS AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF OLDER STUDENTS IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN OWERRI EDUCATION ZONE 1

By

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Abstract

The researcher in this study investigates the social factors as correlates of academic performance of older students in adult education Centers in Owerri Education Zone I. In order to guide the study, three research questions were posed and three null hypotheses formulated. The correlational research design was adopted. 59 respondents (24 males and 35 females) were used for the sample. A researcher-made-test was used to determine the students' Academic Performance. The students' unresolved conflict tension level was derived from the adapted Unresolved Conflict Tension Scale for Adults. Information on their socio-economic background and gender were derived from the bio-data questionnaire. The Researcher Made Test comprised a set of questions prepared in English Language, Basic Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics. Each of the subjects comprised ten questions. A reliability of 0.81 was raised with the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) which proved that the instrument was reliable. Research Questions were answered with the use of Crammer's Correlation. The research questions and the hypotheses were answered and tested using Crammer's correlation coefficient and chi-square test statistics. Findings showed among others that there is no significant relationship between unresolved conflict and academic performance of the students. It was then recommended among others that adults desiring to enroll in the adult education programme should not be deterred by the fear of unresolved conflicts.

Key Words: Social Factors, Unresolved Conflicts, Socio-Economic Background, Gender, Academic Performance.

Introduction

Adult education is an educational process whereby people regarded as adults are given the opportunity to improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge with the aim of completing a level of formal education, or to acquire knowledge or competencies in a field of endeavor or refresh their knowledge in a particular field. It is also the practice whereby adults can engage in systematic and sustained educational activities so as to gain new forms of knowledge, competence, skills, attitudes, or values. Moreover, it is a process whereby teaching and learning is provided for desiring adults. Adult education reflects a philosophy that is based on the belief that adults need to, can learn, and are able and willing to take responsibility for their learning. It equally indicates that learning itself needs to respond to the needs of the adult citizens (Okafor, 2021). Driven by the needs and aspirations of the adult, the available opportunities, and the manner in which the adult learns, adult education may be affected by some social factors such as: factors of unresolved conflicts, socio-economic background factors, and gender factors.

One perceived factor that might distort the efforts of the older students in achieving their targeted educational outcome (academic performance) in the adult education Centres is the issues relating to their unresolved conflicts. As a social factor, conflict, especially when unresolved, can cause the victims tension which distracts them from works, education and other activities that require optimum commitment and concentration. Unresolved conflict which signifies inadequate solution given to some heated disagreement between people, is a common occurrence amongst adults. As people grow up, they are bound to encounter conflicts with others. These conflicts build tensions which create uneasiness of the mind. According to Okonkwo (2019), unresolved conflicts that persists overtime can lead to tension at work or at home, weaken the quality and satisfaction of relationships, and even make people physically ill or in pain. Most importantly, unresolved conflict can have a negative impact on teacher/student relationship which could indirectly influence the students' academic performance at school. According to Varnham (2015), conflict is a serious disagreement and argument about something important. It happens when two people or groups have a heated dispute or disagreement. It is unresolved when no conciliation has

taken place. As a matter of fact, the correlation between unresolved conflict and older students' academic performance has not yet been researched. The relationship between the two variables is therefore investigated in this context in addition to other social factors such as the older students' socio-economic background.

The older students' socio-economic background seems to be another social factor that undermines the academic performance of the older students in their educational struggle at the adult education Centres. Socio-economic backgrounds differ amongst individuals, just as there are individual differences in their other potentials. As people advance in age, their economic needs expand and as such, people who could not finish their education at their younger ages, especially those highly engrossed with financial difficulties may no longer find it financially easy to meet up with the financial demands of the adult education due to their little financial reserves (Okoro, 2020). This condition might therefore undermine the chances of excelling in the adult educational pursuit (Ude, 2015). On the contrary, Agwu (2019) posits that financial constraint does not actually inhibit adults' efforts to succeed at school, but their self-concept. In the views of Onuoha (2016), the author equally advocates that people of older ages who wish to complete their educational endeavours should not be despaired by lack of finance, but should develop self-concept which will definitely lead them to success. Based on the divergent views expressed by scholars on this matter, there is the need to carry out an investigation in order to ascertain the relationship between the socio-economic background and academic performance of the older students in the adult education Centres. This is investigated in addition to the older students' gender which is another social factor in this context.

Gender has to do with issues, activities and functions pertaining to masculine or feminine relations. It concerns the fact of being male or female as well as their roles. In the words of Obasi (2016), gender refers to socially or culturally constructed characteristics, qualities, behaviours and roles which different societies ascribe to the female and/or male. This definition, according to the author shows that as it is in race, and social class, the way that some individuals have greater power than others matter in gender relations. Sociologically, gender is seen in this context as the different roles culture ascribes to a particular set of individuals in any

given society. It is a broad analytic concept that highlights women's role and responsibilities in relation to those of men (Okehi and Okoroji, 2023).

The issue of academic performance relates to the students' level of success or failure in meeting the short- or long-term goals in education which is based on the stipulated grades. As a matter of fact, academic performance entails the grades gotten by a learner at the completion of his/her schooling or educational programme. Therefore, in this context, academic performance indicates the level of grades the older students make at the end of their educational programme at the adult educationCentres.

The establishment of the adult education was motivated by the aim of bringing about social transformation and reconstructing the society in order to make it modernized, participative, productive, and value oriented. This is the reason why Agulanna and Nwachukwu (2014) opine that many adults get into and benefit from various kinds of formal educationalprogrammes. Such programmes encompass the adult literacy classes, weekend schools, and evening courses, job training courses at training centres, extension work seminars and workshops which are no longer restricted to the conventional school years. Adult education as it is, redresses the imbalance between education received when one is young and that of a later life. It was however, observed that the academic performance of some older students' performance in the adult education Centre is poor. It seems that these adults are faced with some problems which may be linked to their unresolved conflicts, socio-economic background or gender issues. These problems therefore appear to have always affected the education of the adults and consequently, have been a worrisome situation to educational stake-holders and researchers. The question therefore is: what is the relationship between these social factors and the academic performance of the older students in their adult education Centres? It is based on this premise that the researcher investigates the social factors as correlates of academic performance of older students in adult education Centres in Owerri education zone I, based on issues relating to their unresolved conflicts, socio-economic background and gender.

Empirically, Egunyomi and Ekom (2018) conducted a study on a comparative analysis of influence of some socio-economic variables on academic performance of adult learners in Southern Nigeria. The result

showed significant relationship between socio-economic factors and academic performance of adult learners. Adesiji, Bolarin, Obaniyi, and Uyanwa (2019) examined the factors influencing adult learners' participation in literacy programmes in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State. The result of the study identified that factors affecting participation in literacy programmes are lack of funds, insufficient and far centres, as well as lack of time for study, low assimilation and ill-health. Chi-square analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between unresolved conflict, gender and participation in literacy programme.

When it comes to learning process adults are different from children and adolescents in various ways especially as their cognitive abilities are encompassing which reflects in their ability in adult education programmes for many reasons such as acquiring basic literacy skills, having avenues to gain new form of knowledge and so on.

It is on the basis of this that the researcher investigated the relationship between social factors and academic performance of older students in adult education centres in Owerri education zone I based on their unresolved conflicts, socio-economic background and gender.

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the social factors as correlates of academic performance of older students in adult education Centre in Owerri education zone I.

Research questions

The following research questions are posed to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between unresolved conflicts and academic performance of older students in adult education Centres?
2. What is the relationship between socio-economic background and academic performance of older students in adult education Centres?
3. What is the relationship between gender and academic performance of older students in adult education Centres?

Method

This research adopts the correlation research design. The researcher seeks to find the correlation between the social factors and the academic performance of older students in the adult education Centres of Owerri Education Zone I. The population of this study comprises all the

342 adults in the selected adult education Centre of Owerri Education Zone 1 of Imo State. (Source: Department of Research and Statistics Unit in National Commission for Mass Literacy Adult and Non-Formal Education, Abuja, 2019/2020. The researcher sampled 59 respondents (24 males and 35 females) from the public adult education Centre in Owerri Municipal of Owerri Education Zone I where the adult education Centre is located. This sample was used because of the limited number of adult education older students available in the JSS II class that was used. It was also drawn using purposive sampling technique because it made use of only the older students in JSS II. JSS II was used because of convenience since those in JSS III were preparing for promotion examination.

The students' Academic Performance was derived through the use of a researcher-made-test. The students' unresolved conflict tension were derived from the Unresolved Conflict Tension Scale for Adults. Information on their socio-economic background and gender was derived from the bio-data information on their socio-economic background and gender. The Researcher Made Test was a set of questions prepared in English Language, Basic Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics. Each of the subjects comprised ten questions. They were gotten from national cognitive tests: including English language, General Science, Social Studies and Mathematics for Junior Secondary Students. It was meant to be used to derive the students' Academic Scores. Items for the data collection for the Researcher Made Test were drawn from three (3) textbooks: National cognitive tests: including English language, General science, Social studies and Mathematics for Junior Secondary Students.(22nd ed.) . The Unresolved Conflict Tension Scale for Adults was adapted from the "Social Readjustment Rating Scale" by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe. This scale was first published in the "Journal of Psychosomatic Research", Copyright 1967, Vol. II p. 214. It was used by permission of Pergamon Press Ltd. Three copies of the instruments were given to five specialists, two from the field of: Education Measurement and Evaluation while three were from educational foundation (sociology of education particularly), to make necessary input on the instrument. These specialists ensured that each item sought the information that it was meant to seek and that the content of the study was covered. The specialists were guided by the purpose, research questions and hypotheses of the study. Their corrections and comments were used

for the corrections which were incorporated during the final draft of the research instrument. The researcher used the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to establish the coefficient of reliability of the instrument. The coefficient of reliability was found to be 0.81, which means that the instrument is reliable. Research Questions were answered using Crammers Correlation. The hypotheses on the other hand, were tested using chi-square.

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between unresolved conflicts and academic performance of adult education students?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between unresolved conflicts and academic performance of adult education students

Table 1: The Calculated Chi-Square, χ^2_{cal} , tabulated Chi-Square χ^2_{crit} , and Crammer’s Correlation Coefficient ϕ^1 for the Relationship between unresolved conflict and Academic Performance

| N | χ^2_{cal} | χ^2_{crit} | ϕ^1 | df | lev. of Sign | Decision |
|----|----------------|-----------------|----------|----|--------------|-----------------|
| 59 | 1.68 | 9.49 | 0.12 | 4 | 0.05 | not significant |

Table 1 shows that the Crammer’s correlation coefficient between the unresolved conflict of older students and their academic performance is 0.12. Since the χ^2_{cal} of 1.68 is less than the χ^2_{crit} of 9.49, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, the relationship between unresolved conflict had by the older students and their academic performance is not significant at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between adult education students’ unresolved conflicts and their academic performance.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between socio-economic background and academic performance of adult education students?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic performance of adult education students.

Table 2: The Calculated Chi-Square, χ^2_{cal} , tabulated Chi-Square χ^2_{crit} , and Crammer's Correlation Coefficient ϕ^1 for the Relationship between socio-economic background and Academic Performance

| N | χ^2_{cal} | χ^2_{crit} | ϕ^1 | df | lev. of Sign | Decision |
|----|----------------|-----------------|----------|----|--------------|-----------------|
| 59 | 4.22 | 9.49 | 0.18 | 4 | 0.05 | not significant |

Table 2 shows that the Crammer's correlation coefficient between the socio-economic background of adult education students and their academic performance is 0.18. Since the χ^2_{cal} of 4.22 is less than the χ^2_{crit} of 9.49, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, the relationship between socio-economic background of the adult education students and their academic performance is not significant at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between adult education students' socio-economic background and their academic.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between gender and academic performance of adult education students?

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between gender and academic performance of adult education students.

Table 3: The Calculated Chi-Square, χ^2_{cal} , tabulated Chi-Square χ^2_{crit} , and Crammer's Correlation Coefficient ϕ^1 for the Relationship between Adult Education Students' Gender and their Academic Performance

| N | χ^2_{cal} | χ^2_{crit} | ϕ^1 | df | lev. of Sign | Decision |
|----|----------------|-----------------|----------|----|--------------|-----------------|
| 59 | 2.00 | 5.99 | 0.18 | 2 | 0.05 | not significant |

Table 3 show that the Crammer's correlation coefficient between the adult education students' gender and their academic performance is 0.18. Since the χ^2_{cal} of 2.00 is less than the χ^2_{crit} of 5.99, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, the relationship between gender of the adult education students and their academic performance is not significant at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between older students' gender and their academic performance.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between Unresolved Conflict and Academic Performance of Older Students in Adult Education Centres

Findings of the study indicate that there is no significant relationship between older students' unresolved conflict and their academic performance.. This is to say in other words that the unresolved conflicts of these older students do not actually affect their effective studies. It also means that unresolved conflict is most of the time, common among adults and can be said to be a natural part of life which may not actually distort one's determination in his education. This contradicts the finding of Adesiji, Bolarin, Obaniyi, and Uyanwa (2019) which revealed that there is significant relationship between unresolved conflict and participation in literacy programme. However it could be that the level of unresolved conflict experienced by the participants in that study was overwhelming. In any case, based on the finding of this study, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between older students' unresolved conflicts and their academic performance.

Relationship between socio-economic background of Older Students and their academic performance at the Adult Education Centres

It is observed also that the result of this study reveals that there is no significant relationship between adult education students' socio-economic background and their academic performance. This finding equally disagrees with that of Egunyomi and Ekom (2018) who conducted a study to investigate comparative analysis of influence of some socio-economic variables on academic performance of adult learners in South-South, Nigeria of which the findings showed a significant relationship between the socio-economic variables and the academic performance of the older

students. It might however be that the administrators of the adult educational programme were bent on imposing high payment of fees and other service charges on the learners. In any case, based on the finding of this study, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic performance of older students.

The Relationship between Gender and Older Students' Academic Performance

The result of the analysis also shows that there is no significant relationship between older students' gender and their academic performance. This implies that being male or female does not affect academic performance of the older students. This, in other words means that both males and females are given equal chance of excelling in the academic endeavours in the adult education programme. This finding disagrees with that of Adesiji, Bolarin, Obaniyi, and Uyanwa (2019) which equally proved that there is a significant relationship between unresolved conflicts, gender and participation in literacy programme. Probably, the students in this case were all serious with their studies irrespective of their gender. There might equally be other hidden factors that caused the variation in the results of the different studies. However, based on the finding of this study, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between gender and academic performance of the older students.

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the older students' unresolved conflicts, socio-economic background, as well as gender and their academic performance.

Recommendations

1. Adults who desire to go for educational programmes should not be despaired due to fear about the impacts of unresolved conflicts. They should go ahead knowing that the incidence of conflicts is a way of life.
2. Adults who have low socio-economic background and wish to enroll in education programmes should forge ahead in their adult educational studies. They should not back out due to fear of finance.

3. Adults of different genders should not be afraid of enrolling in adult education. They should bear in mind that both male and female adults can excel in their adult education struggles.

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