

Ageing Population Perceptions on Expected Learning Contents and Ageing-Centered Modes in the Six Geo-Political Zones of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study adopted a descriptive, cross-sectional survey design. Randomization sampling technique was used to select 378 retirees from six State capitals in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was: Ageing Perceived and Expected Learning Contents and Modes Scale' (APELCMS). The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validity and for the reliability, a pilot test was conducted and a test re-test was administered after three weeks, yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.811. Frequency count, percentage and t – test statistical method was used to analyse the data. Findings indicated that the mean age for the sampled from the six geo-political zones = 61.90 years, expected learning contents were, learning activities on demand and development for group with specific knowledge and abilities (59=15.61%), preventing security threat from neighbourhood and larger society (71=18.78%); modalities for starting a petty trading and skill acquisitions for extra income (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%); unpaid careers and support institutions for the ageing group (41=10.85); coping with life after retirement (07=1.85), and the perceived ageing-centred learning modes indicated life-long open education and learning that provides for adult later life education (39=10.32%), technological innovations (59=15.61%), considers gender, culture and economic status (121=32.01%), government and non-government supports (119=31.48%) and life-long open education and learning that did not place complete priority on certificate and grade (40=10.58%). The finding also discovered a statistically significant gender difference on the expected learning contents ($t = 4.69 < 2.101$) and statistically significant gender difference on ageing-cantered learning modes ($t = 2.91 < 1.957$). Recommendations were made towards integration of individual ageing group perceived and expected learning contents and modes into the life-long open education and learning programmes in Nigeria and other similar areas.

Key words: Ageing Population, Learning Contents and Ageing-Centered Learning Modes

Introduction

The ageing population within the ages of 60 and above has continued to increase and the age group is said to comprise the fastest growing group with significant spread in the developing countries (Help Age International, 2013). Also cited in Gao, Raven & Tang (2007) was that the older adult population has been estimated to be two billion by 2050 and that 80% of them will be resident in developing countries. Adebusoye, Ladipo, Owoaje & Ogunbode (2011) similarly asserted that, 5.3% of Nigeria population is over 59 years, representing 8.8 million people, quoted from Help Age International (2013). Still in Nigeria, the National Population Commission (2003) indicated that the six geo-political zones of Nigeria can said to be experiencing rapid changes in the relative numbers of the ageing population. This development emphasises where the ageing group will need functional and effective life-long open educational and learning. Also emphasised in the Nigeria National Population Commission (2003), was that the problems of the ageing population must be addressed in a broad and holistic national context which should incorporate responsive legislative and administrative policies and programmes as well as inter-sectional and multi-disciplinary strategies.

Literatures suggest that the older adults are characterized by unique and diverse individuals who may require a variety of life-long open education and learning with professional to meet their ageing needs. Provision of appropriate learning contents and modes of learning for the ageing population based on their expectations is rising, and caring for the group demands specific knowledge, abilities and empirical information (Ferreira & Ruiz, 2012). Therefore, the author's experience as a practitioner in life-long learning and education understands that empirical information is the key to ageing population integration to life-long open education and learning. Such information includes; the dynamics of ageing, changing needs and how to strengthen life-long learning and education with more robust open learning institution capacities. The essence is to accommodate and make provisions for the ageing group that should be based on the ageing population perceived and expected learning contents and modes.

Empirical study on determining the perceptions of the ageing population on their expected learning contents and modes should be carried out. Findings from such study will guide toward making comprehensive provision for the ageing population in open education and learning institutions. Whenever this arrangement is made, well-being of the ageing may be addressed. Moreover, the philosophy of open education believes that everyone in the society should have access to high quality education and learning, experiences and resources, and eliminating barriers that might influence the attainment of adult education (McAndrew, dos Santos, Lane, Godwin, Okada et al., 2009). In addition, open education philosophy should encourage ways by which people produce, share and build on knowledge for the benefits of all and in this case, integration of the ageing population as parts of all should be one of the priorities to life-long education planners (Open Learning Conference, 2010; Straub, 2008; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007 and Barkley, Cross & Majoy, 2004).

Related theories on ageing such as Activity theory (Lemon, Bengtson & Peterson, 1972; Knapp, 1977 cited in Hooyman & Kiyak, 1999 and further explored by Apena, 2015), sees ageing as dynamic with the idea that many programmes and services for older adults rest on the proposition that activities in and of themselves have important benefits and that they contribute to increased life satisfaction for everyone.. The Life-course theory (Levy, Ghisletta, LeGoff, Spini & Widmer 2005; Mayer, 2009 and Elder & Giele, 2009), sees the ageing stage as a transition that requires progress and for the ageing to attain the progress, they must adjust to a number of tasks, part of which is declining health, depreciation arising from inability to replace what has been worn and torn out, learning to cope with reduced income which may also not be regular, able to adjust to the death of a spouse or family members, adjust to living arrangements different from what they are accustomed to. On the side of continuity theory (Kelly, 1993; Onega, 1997; Atchley, 1999 and Diggs, 2008) which states that adults in later life try to preserve and maintain internal and external structures by using strategies that maintain continuity. Atchley, 1999 cited in Diggs (2008), opines that in the continuity theory, the ageing tends to use continuity as an adaptive strategy to deal with changes that occur during normal ageing. Each person understands himself better than anybody will, so he knows what his body needs, when to do what. At the stage of ageing, a person could make re-entry from one job to another. Some engage in social or religious activities; a form of unpaid career in order to stay healthy.

The convention that life-long learning and education provides an unending circle of benefits such as in the area of proper adjustment, behaviour and attitude formation and changes to skills modification, adaptation and development to different categories of learners has continue to generate different but related studies. For instance, Antonio, Paz Ramirez, & Vicente, (2015) study on ICT learning by older adults age 60 proved that direct contact with computers generates more positive attitudes toward the use of computer, behaviour, training expectations and self-confidence. Raquel, Fernando & M.-Jose (2015) study on active ageing and access to technology, discovered a match up with previous studies that pointed a noticeable increase in the use of the internet caused by elderly people's desire to keep active, up-to-date and communicated. In other studies, Jordao, Ferreira, Pinho, & St. Jacques (2019) meta-analysis study on ageing effects in mind wandering, found a large effect in older adults. The age-related decrease in MW was more pronounced for probe compared to the self-caught procedures, when task-related interfering thoughts were measured separately. In discussing the theoretical and practical implications of their findings, the authors recommended the need for open-ended methods in order to avoid bias due to mind wandering instructions, Hudes, Rich, Troyer, Yusupov & Vander Morris (2019) tested memory-strategy training interventions on adults and the results indicated that

memory interventions produce positive effects on several participant-reported outcomes, including improvements in perceived memory ability, memory self-efficacy, strategy use, memory-related effect, psychological well-being and quality of life.

Other studies such as, Jaroslawska & Rhodes (2019) meta-analysis study of adult age differences in the effects of processing on storage in working, revealed a small but disproportionate effect of processing on older adults' memory performance. Yoon & Stine-Morrow (2019) study in audience design revealed that both younger and older adults successfully adjusted their referential expressions to the current partner's knowledge state in a live conversation. Warrington, McGowan, Lynn (2004) study on subjective age perceptions in the UK shows that in overall; respondents indicated a self-perceived age of more than 10 years younger than their chronological age. Paterson & White (2019) study on the effects of adult ageing on letter position coding in reading and evidence from eye movements discovered that both age groups showed normal levels of comprehension for text including words with transposed letters. Yeon & Matz-Costa (2018) study on perceived neighbourhood safety, social cohesion, and psychological health of older adults indicated that perceived neighbourhood safety was significantly associated with psychological health regardless of respondents' physical functioning and Joel, Olabisi, Oluwatoyin, Oluwaseun & Sunday (2017) study of perception, knowledge and attitude of nursing students towards the care of older patients showed that 66.1% were positive.

Statement of the Problem

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, through open education and learning. 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 Joel, Olabisi, Oluwatoyin, Oluwaseun & Sunday (2017); 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) and Lynn (2004) has not distinctly and specifically distinguish between ageing population perceptions and expectations of what aspects of learning that should form the contents and of what modes should the ageing population perceived contents be appropriately delivered, more especially in Nigeria and it is this observation that prompted this study.

Research Questions

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. The expected learning contents perceived by the samples in the six States capitals that represented the geo-political zones of Nigeria are?
3. The samples perceived ageing-centred learning modes in the six States capitals that represented the geo-political zones of Nigeria are?

Research Hypotheses

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.

Methodology

Research design and setting

The study adopted a descriptive, cross-sectional survey conducted in the 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 of Nigeria.

Population

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 the six states capitals. The sample size was determined 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. The age characteristics of the sample 55-65 (mean age = 57.2 years). Total number of male =189 and Female = 189.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected with the aid of a structured scale titled, Ageing Perceived and Expected Learning Contents and Modes Scale' (APELCMS). Items on the scale were developed following review of related literature on ageing. The scale comprises of four sections: Section A consists of the demographic data aimed at determining the average age of the samples, Section B contain items that elicit information on expected learning contents and it includes 8 items that were selected following pilot study; Sample responses were based on modified 4-point Likert scale ranges from Highly expected, HE, Expected, EXP, Not expected, NE and Not at all expected, NAE summed to give a total score of 8 to 32. Section C comprises of items on the perception of samples on ageing-centred learning modes. It has 5 items based on pilot study and sample responses were coded on a modified 4-point Likert scale. Responses range from very appropriate, VA, appropriate, A, Not appropriate, NA and Not very appropriate, NVA summed to give a total score of 5 to 20.

Reliability and validity of research instrument

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.

Procedure for data collection

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 of the students' counsellors working with the National Open University of Nigeria at the six state capital 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 filled 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 scale.

Method of data analysis

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

Table 1: 1. Samples Perceptions of the Average Age that formed the Old Age in the Six geo-political zones of Nigeria (N=378)

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

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

Table 2: Samples Responses on the Expected 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 from neighbourhood and larger society | 71 | 18.78 |
| 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.

Table 3: Samples Responses on the Expected Learning Contents (N=378)**Table 3: Samples Responses on the Perceived 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.

Table 4: t – Test Analysis of Gender Difference on the Expected 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 | 22.50 | 8.12 | 376 | 4.69 | 2.101 |
| Female | 189 | 18.89 | 6.992 | | | |

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

Table 5: t – Test Analysis of Gender Difference on the 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 ($t = 2.91 < 1.957$).

Discussion

Findings from this study shows that the expected learning contents by the samples includes activities that will enhance further demand and development of ageing group with specific knowledge and abilities, security threat from neighbourhood and the larger society, petty trading and skill acquisitions for extra income based on the trends in society, diverse family and community roles, ageing social and health care, changes in the legislations

and policies, unpaid careers and support institutions for the ageing group and coping with life after retirements. These 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. Apena (2015); Levy, Ghisletta, LeGoff, Spini & Widmer (2005); Mayer (2009) and Elder & Giele (2009); Kelly (1993); Onega (1997); Atchley (1999) and Diggs (2008); Atchley, 1999 cited in Diggs (2008).

The findings on the appropriate ageing-centred learning modes for facilitating the ageing perceived expected learning contents indicated that life-long open education and learning is appropriate when combined with adult later life education, technological innovations, and consideration of gender, culture and economic status, government and non-government supports and modes that does not give complete priorities on certificate and grade 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 by the Nigerian 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) and Warrington, McGowan, Lynn (2004) earlier cited in the study.

Recommendations

Base on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ageing population perceived contents and modes of learning expressed in this study can be used to attract ageing group to life-long open education and learning system.
2. Qualitative studies should be conducted to further explore the ageing population perceived and expected learning contents and modes of learning.
3. Gerontological training should be introduced or integrated in the contents of life-long open education and learning in Nigeria and other similar countries.
4. At broad and holistic national context, responsive legislative and administrative policies and programmes as well as inter-sectional and multi-disciplinary strategies should be championed by the Commonwealth of Learning and other government and non-government organisations.
5. Experts in life-long and open education and learning need to assist on how OER or MOOCs can be made useful and how micro-accreditation and Digital badges can be integrated into ageing population learning contents and mode of facilitation. This may also be investigated through qualitative approach.

Conclusion

This study shows that the ageing group need specified varying individual learning contents with appropriate learning modes. Therefore, life-long open education and learning practitioners are requested to develop strategies on how the study perceived learning contents and learning modes can best be integrated through OER or MOOCs, micro-accreditation and Digital badges.

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