

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AS DETERMINANT OF ADULT EDUCATION AS A CHOICE OF STUDY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The thought of people and most especially students of higher learning is that adult education as a course is meant to teach people who are typically adults in a contemporary situation with grey hairs, old, weak and would soon wither away. To this set of people, such a course of study is not meant for new generation. The paper was therefore set to establish how career opportunity affects the choice of AE as a University course. The study used the survey design method. A total of 288 students from the Department of Continuing Education and Community Development, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai picked through Multi-stage sampling technique were used for the study. Stone and Pellowski (2016) career decision model was adapted to determine students' decision to study AE through questionnaire titled "Carrier Opportunities of Adult Education as a University Course" (COAEUC) supplemented with Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Descriptive and inferential statistics at 0.05 alpha level were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents in the Department used for the study 226 students (78.5%) did not pick Adult Education as their chosen course. Also, majority of the students never believed there were any carrier opportunities in offering the course except to teach in a formal education setting. About 96 (33%) respondents would want to continue

the course to postgraduate level. There was a significant difference in the interest to continue and finish the course at the undergraduate level between those that were admitted with O' Level and Direct Entry results. It was recommended that the University need to revisit the nomenclature of the Department to reflect that the course is not meant to train students in teaching adults alone. It was also recommended that regular orientation for students and lecturers should be encouraged through Personality Lecture Series from those that have excelled in the field.

Keywords: Adult Education, Career Opportunities, Undergraduates, Nigeria

Introduction

Adult education (AE) is a very young field of study as an academic discipline (Akinpelu, 2002 cited by Kester, Ogidan & Oke, 2018). It started at University of Ibadan in 1949 as Department of Extra-Mural Studies with the primary objectives of creating well-informed and discriminating Nigerian publics, and to run courses that will consolidate and improve Nigeria's administrative services at all levels (Kester, et al 2018). By 1965, the name (and mode of operation) of the Department in University of Ibadan changed to Department of Adult Education with mandate of training and preparing adult educators who would be equipped with the techniques and methods of adult education to operate in various fields of adult education (Braithwaite, Adeola & Adekanmbi, 1989).

By 1978, Kester, Ogidan, Oke and Oni (2015) reported that, there was a phenomenal development to the department and discipline of adult education in Nigeria. The main objectives for its establishment according to Akinpelu and Osuji (1989), was to create well-informed and discriminating Nigerian publics, and to run courses that will consolidate and improve Nigeria's administrative services at all levels.

It is important to note that AE can be seen as programme, process or discipline; it depends on which of the areas one perceives it. For this paper, it is seen as a discipline and a course of study been offered in the higher institutions of learning. It is generally perceived as a means of creating access to people who have missed an earlier opportunity in basic education clarification. The angle at which one looks at it define what it means to an individual.

However, perceptions of people and most especially, students of higher learning is that the course is meant to teach people who are typically adults in a contemporary situation with grey hairs, old, weak and would soon wither or dying away. To this set of students, such a course of study is not meant for new generation but for old people. They perceive that AE is not needed in national building and its' wasteful.

Internationally, AE has been identified as a rally point for national development having the potentials of tackling every sphere of development. It has always been argued that parents who are not educated will produce uneducated children since the parents do not value education, their children may not be encouraged to enrol in school. Those enrolled may likely be discouraged to continue of finish their education to the standard level that would make them to be responsible citizen of the nation.

As mentioned above, students' perception of AE therefore relies on the fact that they do not have a good knowledge of what adult education is all about, or who an 'adult' is in 'adult education'. This attitude manifest in the life of students generally right from inceptions to their last day in the University.

As pointed out by Obasi (2014), the lack of understanding might not be unconnected to the fact that the field suffered neglect and remained largely under-explored, and its products were underutilized for national development. Obasi (2014) posited further that, its relevance was recognized mainly for literacy purposes in the post-independence period. This narrow conception of the field unduly influenced official thinking towards supporting only adult literacy programmes to the detriment of other important aspects of the discipline.

As University course, Obasi (2014) opined that the AE has not been fully appreciated to be meaningful to socio-economic development of Nigeria. She wrote further that majority of the Universities where the course is offered do not share the same curricula while non-trained professional dominated as lecturers for the course in the higher institutions. She said further that:

some of these lecturers dominated the discipline to an extent and even influenced its curriculum contents and direction over the years. The result was that various departments had diverse curricula offered at different levels in our universities
(Obasi, 2014 p27)

In appreciating the situation regarding Adult Education, Kester, Ogidan and Oke (2015) posited that regardless of the attention and importance attached to Adult

Education by successive governments in Nigeria, there are evidences that most of the expectations from the practice have not been met. This therefore shows the failure of Adult Education policies to play their parts in meeting the developmental needs of Nigeria.

Since the course is not popular as other University courses, its value to national development is eroded in the mind of the students offering the course in the Universities. As reported again by Obasi (2014) graduates of the discipline in some universities were neither trained for the classroom nor for a specific professional field of practice except for areas that also overlapped with other disciplines such as community development, extension services, health services among others. The matter was made worse when those who were even trained in the area of literacy were hardly employed in agencies responsible for mass and adult literacy. It is not surprising therefore as pointed out by Seya (2005) that the popularity of adult education in Africa started eroding in the early 80's concomitantly with the rise of formal basic education.

Experience of the researcher have also shown cases of students offering the course been rejected from Teaching Practices, Practicum and even National Youth Service Corps with the pretext that the course is not relevant when compared with other Humanity courses in the Universities. To this end, this paper is seeking to examine carrier prospects of students studying AE in Nigerian Universities with the view to relate their importance to national development especially for the achievement of Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals.

Statement of the Problem

Adult Education (AE) as course of study is offered in Colleges of Education and Universities but identified in different nomenclature in these institutions of higher learning.. Although, there is increase in enrolment about the potential of Adult Education in Nigerian Universities, most students offering the course are either force / coerce or pick the course through the change of course form without knowing the prospects awaiting them in the nearest future. Students posted to study AE therefore exhibit reservation and reluctant to settle down with the course because many of them do not see any potentials of studying course when compared with other university courses. This paper therefore seeks to examine the carrier knowledge ability and prospect of AE among undergraduate in Nigeria after graduation, using students of Department of Continuing Education and Community Development of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai as case study.

Objectives of the Study

- a. Examine how the students learn about the field of study as a University course.

- b. Determine what influence the decision to study the course in the University.
- c. Examine the prospects of Adult Education as a University Course to carrier opportunity to students offering it in the University.
- d. Find out if the students would recommend others to study the course with the experience gathered studying the course.

Research Questions

1. How did you first learn about adult education as a field of study and University course
2. What influence your decision to study the course in the University?
3. Are there any carrier opportunities available in the study of Adult Education?
4. How likely would you recommend the field to other prospective candidates for admission in the University?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the choice of Adult Education as a University Course between UTME and DE students of IBB University.

Methodology

The study used the descriptive research of the survey type to obtain information from the respondents. The area of study is the Department of Continuing Education and Community Development, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State with population of about 1194 students from 2016 to 2019 as shown in the table 1 below. Multi stage sampling technique was adopted in picking the samples. First stage was a combination of purposive and random sampling of all direct entry and UTME students from the population. For the second stage, a simple random sampling was used for selecting 288 respondents representing 25 percent of 1194 students from 100 to 400 level. A combination self-designed questionnaire titled Carrier Opportunities towards Adult Education (COAEUC) and FGD were used to elicit responses from the respondents. Data were obtained from the FGD, questionnaire and observation of students' academic progress. Mode of entry into the University; performance in teaching subjects were part of data used to determine student's response to carrier opportunity in AE. Simple tables, bar and pie charts, frequency and percentages were adopted in the presentation and analysis of the data produced.

Some Institutions where Adult Education is offered in Nigeria

1. Adekunle Ajasin University

2. Bayero University Kano
3. Ekiti State University
4. Enugu State University of Science and Technology
5. Fountain University
6. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University
7. Niger Delta University
8. Nnamdi Azikiwe University
9. University of Benin
10. University of Calabar
11. University of Ibadan
12. University of Ilorin
13. University of Jos
14. University of Lagos
15. University of Maiduguri
16. University of Nigeria
17. University of Port-Harcourt
18. Usman Dan Fodio University

Literature Review:

Carrier Opportunities in Adult Education

Adult Education as has been seen in multidimensional angles. It could be seen as a discipline, process, practice as well as a field of study. In whatever form one look at it, it relates to how people considered to be adults in their environments take up responsibility of learning which had been deprived or misuse and such an individual wishes to come back to start afresh or continue from where he or she had stopped. It therefore provides opportunity of learning that suits the conditions at which an individual lives and conditions that require learning in the first instance.

As a practice, Adult education involves systematic and sustained self-educating activities which an individual engages in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. It can mean any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfilment as a lifelong learner. Adult education has and follows series of principles and philosophy of learning that differentiate it from children learning because the purpose and the need of learning are determined by adults. What to be learnt and how to go about it are also determined by the learners, hence learning activities should move along with the needs of the learners.

As a course of study, prospective students who wish to take Adult Education as a University course must have five (5) credits in English and Mathematics and any

other three subjects from the Arts, Sciences and Commercial just like any other University courses. However, unlike other University courses, picking the course as determinant for future career has been hampered by various misconceptions people have about the course. This ranges from the word 'adult' which to many people refers to those aged people.

Career Opportunity Defined

The word career is seen as the progress and action taken by a person learning a job today with the hope of becoming a professional in the chosen field. Since career relate to occupation, many students offering Adult Education are not necessarily familiar with the discipline until after admission into a University or College of Education. A career is often composed of the job held, titles earned and work accomplished over a long period of time, rather than just referring to one position.

Danful and Hammond (2020) citing Anuja (2017) asserted that aspiration to pursue a particular career may come early in life and may depend on the socioeconomic status, gender and even the genetics of the individual. Thus, chosen Adult Education as a University course in anticipation for future occupation is determined by the prospects in terms of interest, knowledge and attitude as well as job opportunities available to the prospective candidates. Unfortunately, one of the problems facing literacy delivery and development in Nigeria is insufficient personnel in terms of facilitators and professional in the field of Adult Education. It suffices to say that promotion of literacy education in Nigeria can only be achieved when stimulating job opportunities that can stand the test of time be created in the field.

There are four determinant issues that create good room for choice of a career. They are as follows:

- (1) Current position: Individual need to review and reflect on his learning experience and the place current knowledge has in the world or works. This reflection gives you insight of what you have known already and what you need to know more in order to get the appropriate skills to move higher in your choice of career. This action is also determined by learning from others around you that have excelled. Modern technology also provides new methods of working and changes in the demand of the work.
- (2) Current need/what one want to be: There are various goals and objectives that need to be achieved in each profession. Career guide make it important that an individual project into the future what he intends to become in the future which might come as a result nature of the work to be done and when it should be done. This aspect of the guide makes an individual to create specific objectives including dates by which one wants to achieve such goals.
- (3) Requirements to have to get what one wants/need: Looking at the overall career goals and objectives, one is required to make a note of what one needs

to do to achieve them. This may include further training on the job or changes in the direction one has been following before. For example, having a chat with your manager about a new responsibility or finding out about new technology from a colleague who has experience of it.

- (4) Assessment of the progress made to acquire the career of one's choice: This is the last segment of the career choice guide. One needs to set a date in advance for review of the objectives that are already set down. The assessment will guarantee you of the success so far and the stubbing blocks and how to manipulate to fit in the career one has chosen for himself.

Career opportunities for Adult Education graduates include but not limited to the following:

- University/Colleges of Education as Lecturers.
- Adult Literacy and Remedial Education Teacher.
- Human Resources Training Specialist.
- Human Resources Training Manager.
- Adult learning and instructor.
- Corporate Training Specialists.
- Education Administration.
- Adult Education Counsellor
- Basic Education Facilitator

Successful Personalities that studied in AE in Nigeria

Writing on the misconception of Adult Education, Olayinka (2019) asserted that the programme show case various practices such as basic literacy, community development, remedial education, workers' education, skill acquisition programmes, open distance education, social work and human development programmes sponsored by local, national and international partners. This submission put to rest the fear among students offering the course of wide range of where to work after finishing their undergraduates' course.

Products of Adult Education programme as a University may not necessary end up becoming a teacher or facilitators as been thought. There are many examples of people that studied the course and have rose up in their chosen profession. For examples, Prof M.A. Omolewa on Federal Government of Nigeria recognition served as the Nigerian Ambassador to UNESCO for ten years during which he became the first African to serve as the Chairman of UNESCO General Conference. He is currently an Emeritus Professor in both University of Ibadan and BABCOCK University and in some overseas Universities (Aderinoye and Egunyomi, 2019).

Other important dignitaries acknowledged by Aderinoye and Egunyomi (2019) were Ayo Ogunsheye who apart from serving as Dean of his Faculty but was a member of University Governing Council; Director of Henry Stephens in Lagos and later became Chairman of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce. Tugbiyele was a Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of London; Ahmed Joda was a Permanent Secretary at the Federal level and Chairman of National Communication Commission (NCC). J.T. Okedara became the Founding Vice Chancellor of Bowen University in Iwo.

M.B.M. Avoseh is a double recipient of the J. William Fulbright Award for U.S IN 2013/2014 and 2019 when he received another Fulbright Award of the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) Outstanding Service Medallian Award. He is currently a Professor of Adult & Higher Education at the University of South, Dokata, United States. Just recently, Aderinoye served as Deputy Executive Secretary of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and Executive Secretary of National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE). All aforementioned personality studied adult education and rose to become relevant in various capacities as Nigeria citizens

Demographic Data on Respondents

Two-hundred and eighty eight respondents used for the research were made up of 100 level 97(33.7%), 200 level 49 (17.4%), 300 level 48 (16.6) and 400 93 (32%) students. Out of this number, 120 (42%) were male and 168 (58%) were female. 170 (59.1%) were admitted through UTME, 90 (31.2%) through JAMB DE while the remaining 28 (9.7%) were those admitted through IJMB, a programme coordinated by ABU for candidates of DE admission. One hundred and fifteen (40%) respondents were between the ages of 16-19 years, 52 (18%) were between the ages 20-29 years, 78 27%) were between the ages 30-39 years, 35 (12%) were between 40-49 years and 8 (3%) were between 50-59 years. The demographic distribution of the respondents is as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Distribution of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Age Range (Years)		
16- 19	115	40%
20-29	52	18%
30-39	78	27%
40-49	35	12%
50-59	8	3%
Total	288	100
Number of Students in each level		
100 Level	97	33.7
200 Level	49	17.4
300 Level	48	16.6
400 Level	93	32.3
Total	288	100
Distribution of Respondents by Sex		
Male	120	42
Female	168	58
Total	288	100
Mode of Entry		
UTME (JAMB)	170	59.1
D.E (JAMB)	90	31.2
IJMB	28	9.7
Total	288	100
Distribution of Respondents by Teaching Courses		
English	24	8.3
Sociology	39	13.5
Geography	16	5.6
Mass Communication	29	10.1
Political Science	45	15.6
Sports Kinetic	78	27.1
Business Administration	32	11.1
Economics	25	8.7
Total	288	100

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the choice of Adult Education as a University Course between UTME and DE students of IBB University.

Table 2: t-Test Analysis of the Difference between male and female undergraduate Choice of Adult Education

Variable	UTME students	DE students	t-cal	t-cri	Remarks
Adult Education	5.81	12.23	10.78	1.96	Significant

The above table shows that the calculated t-value of 10.78 was greater than the critical t of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level. This implies that a significant difference between UTME and DE choice in Adult Education as an undergraduate course. As observed in the mean scores of the UTME and DE students, the DE students with higher mean score of 12.23 are more disposed to Adult Education than their UTME counterparts. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The implication of this finding might not be unconnected with DE students; exposure and experience from their previous institutions. It is also indicative that majority of the UTME students are youths between the age of 16 and 29 years with inspiration of studying courses different from AE. This fact cannot be underestimated. It is therefore necessary for the University to consider candidates opinion before been considered for admission.

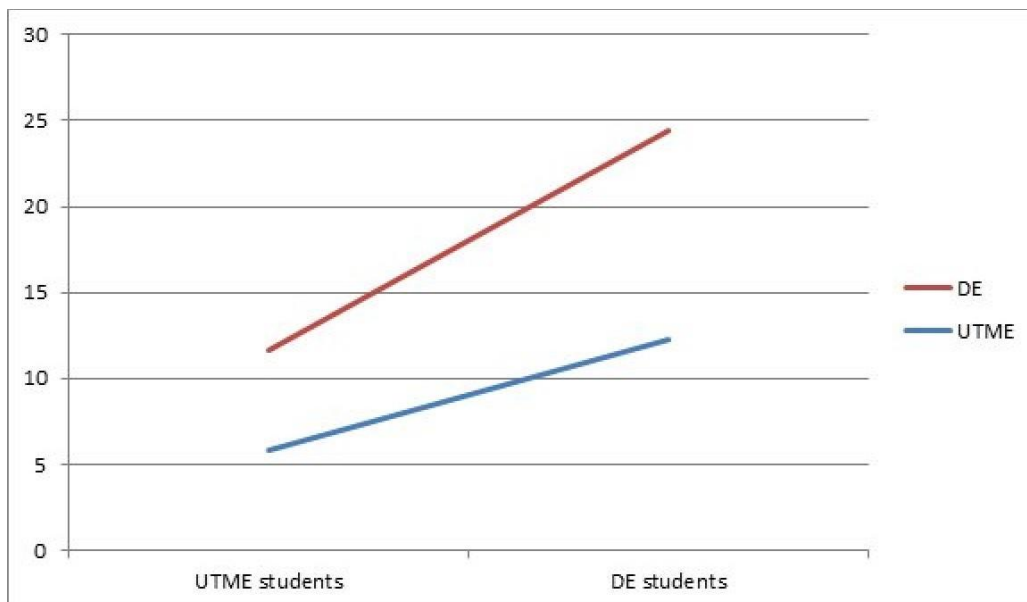


Figure 3: Distribution of t-test Analysis of Difference between UTME and DE students Choice of Adult Education

Results

Research Question 1: How did you first learn about adult education as a the field of study and University course?

Figure 1 below shows that majority of the respondents 181 (63%) learnt of the course in the process of admission through the University Academic Office, this was followed by 123 (43%) who learnt of the programme through JAMB brochure. Order of responses are 57 (20%) that learnt of the programme through relatives that are currently running the course in the University; 43 (15%) learnt from friends in the Department who advised them to apply for the course; none surf for the course in the Internet and the print media while "Other" 35(12%).

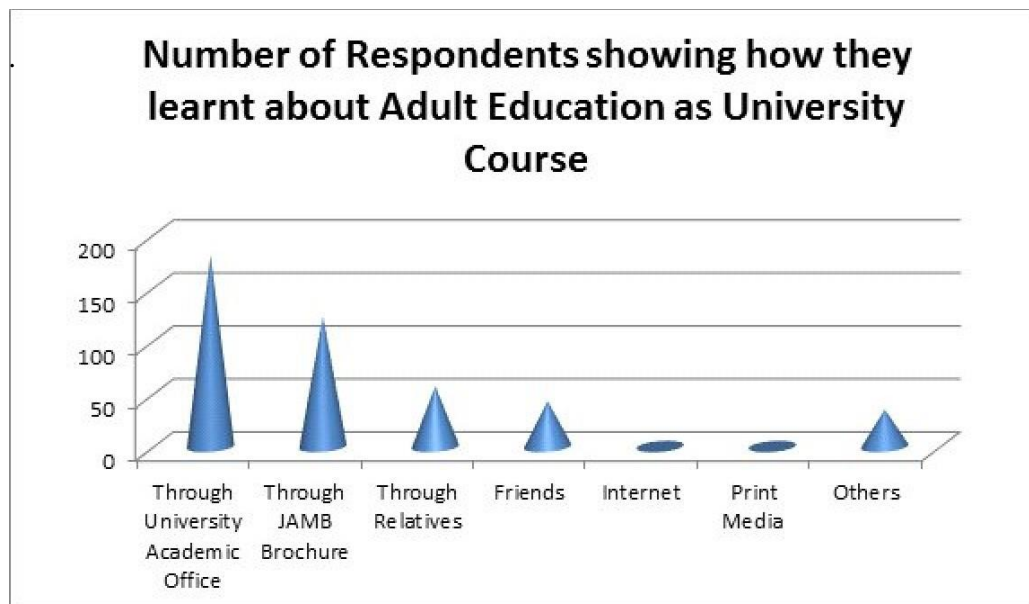
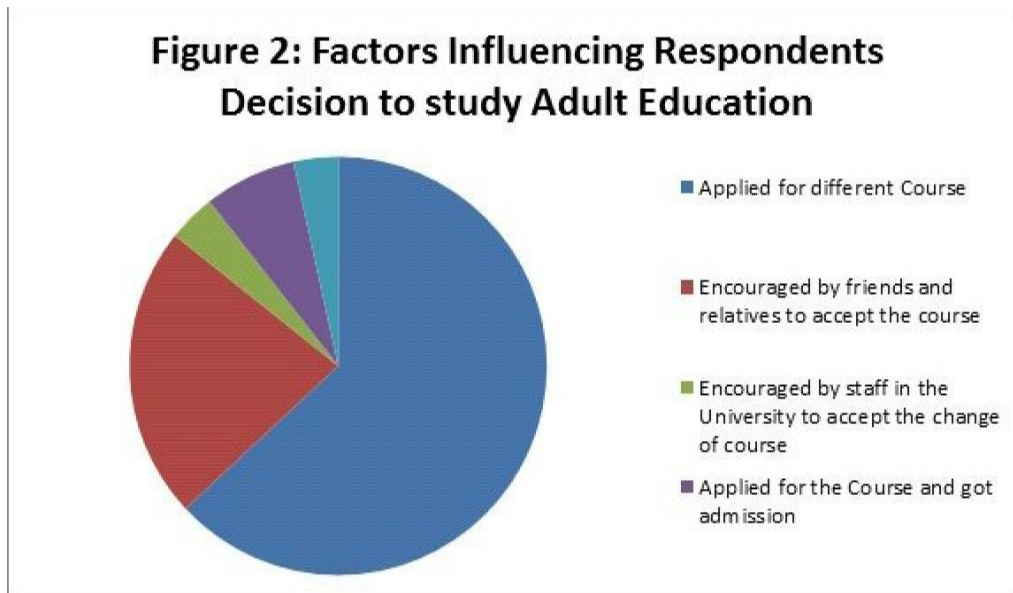


Figure 1: How Respondents learnt about Adult Education

Research Question 2: What influence your decision to study the course in the University?

Figure 2 explains what influences students decision to pick Adult Education as a course for admission as undergraduates in the University. In rank, almost all the respondent 256 (89%) were admitted into the programme because there was no opportunity in the courses they actually applied for in the University, hence were given the course as alternative for admission. Some students were influenced by their friends and relatives that had studied the course before 92 (32%); 15 (43%) were encouraged to offer the course by member of staff in the University while 29 (10%) already had interest in the course, hence actually applied for the course. Those

that picked other source of influence were 14 (5%). Other sources of influence as identified by respondents were variations of time they had been applying for admission and were looking for it by all means.



Research Question 3: Are there any carrier opportunities available in the study of Adult Education?

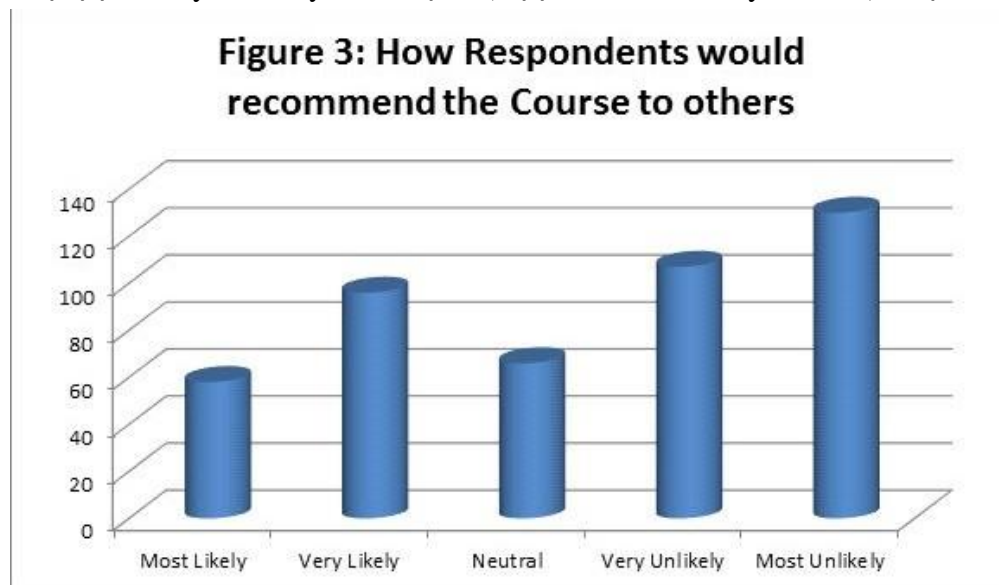
Five students were picked each from each level making twenty to constitute Focus Group Discussion which was used to elicit responses from them. Majority of the participants, 13 (65%) believed that they are being trained only to work in the Ministry of Education and or Agencies of Adult Education. Some of the respondents 5 (25%) are of the opinion that apart from working with governments, they can as well either float NGOs or work in any of the NGOs working on literacy development. Halve of the group, 10 (50%) did not see any prospects in the course when compared with other courses in the Faculty. Other participants, 8 (40%) had reservation to the course after they finished their undergraduate programme while one-third of the participants (7) would want to pursue Adult Education for their Masters Degree.

Another major finding from the FGD is the apathy the participants showed to the name of the Department most especially the word 'Adult'. To the majority of the participants, their colleagues laugh at them and see their course as not been relevant when compared with other courses in the University. They considered changing of

the Department name and incorporating courses that would sell them in the labour markets. Cases of students of the Department turned back at National Youth Service Corps Camp as discouraging them and making them inferior to other students in the University.

Research Question 4: How likely would you recommend the field to other prospective candidates for admission in the University?

Using a 5-point Likert scale, figure 3 shows the responses on if respondents would recommend the course to others for admission, the responses are as follows: (a) "Most likely" , 58 (20%); (b) "Very Likely" , 95 (33%); (c) "Neutral" , 66 (23%); (d) "Very Unlikely" , 107 (37%); (e) "Most unlikely" , 130 (45%).



Discussion of Findings

This study investigated how undergraduates' students see Adult Education as a Career opportunity in Nigerian Universities. Majority of the respondents 181 (63%) learnt of the course in the process of admission through the University Academic Office followed by 123 (43%) who learnt of the programme through JAMB brochure from the sample size of 288 respondents. Also indicated in the demographic is the fact that age range fell between 16-19 years (40%) and 18% were between the ages 20-29 years. Thus, virtually majority of the respondents were young whose aspiration to become successful through academic pursue would be determined by

their socioeconomic status as indicated by Anuja (2017) who asserted that aspiration to pursue a particular career may come early in life and may depend on the socioeconomic status, gender and even the genetics of the individual.

Indication from Figure 2 shows students' decision to pick Adult Education as a course for admission in the University was ranked as follows: 256 (89%) were admitted into the programme because they were not admitted for the courses they had applied for, hence were admitted to the Department as an alternative forgone. This was followed by 92 (32%) that were influenced by their friends and relatives. Only 29 (10%) already had interest in the course, hence actually applied for the course while 15 (43%) were encouraged to offer the course by member of staff in the University. The implication of this finding is what Obasi (2014) considered as lack of understanding about the course which might not be unconnected to the fact that the field suffered neglect and remained largely under-explored, and its products were underutilized for national development. Majority of the FGD participants were of the opinion that there was no prospect in the future of the students studying the course as compared with other University courses.

All the FGD participants were of the opinion to wear the Departmental kits from their teaching courses rather than the main Departmental kits. Unlike Stone & Pellowski (2016) study that reflected working in a helping profession directly influenced participants' decision to pursue a career, none of the respondents used in the study never had work related to Adult Education.

Findings from the study also show that majority of the respondents were not ready to pursue the course beyond the undergraduate level as indicated in figure 3 where 82% were not likely to recommend the course to others. The FGD participants recalled that lecturers from their teaching courses looked down on them and treat them differently against the way they handled students in their Department. Some claimed that other students also referred to them as teachers of adults. However, some Career opportunities available to students studying Adult Education include but not limited to the following:

- University/Colleges of Education as Lecturers.
- Adult Literacy and Remedial Education Teacher.
- Human Resources Training Specialist.
- Human Resources Training Manager.
- Adult learning and instructor.
- Corporate Training Specialists.
- Education Administration.
- Adult Education Counsellor
- Basic Education Facilitator

As indicated in list above, it is not farfetched to agree with Akinpelu and Osuji (1989) products of the programme help to improve Nigeria's administrative services at all

levels.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Majority of the respondents 181 (63%) learnt of the course in the process of admission through the University Academic Office, this shows that the course is not as popular and accepted like other Faculty courses and teaching courses for the undergraduate students. Unlike other courses where students were proud to show their identity in offering them, students offering Adult Education were always reluctant to claim the course; this was as a result of not understanding potentials available in studying the course. Though staff in the Department were encouraging the students, it is important to say that lecturers from other Departments and students were ignorant of the fact that Adult Education is as good as any other University courses. Main reason in misconception about the course was because of the word 'Adult' because many perceive the course to be mainly for teaching of adults learning.

Wrong' perception of AE relies on the fact that outsiders do not have a good knowledge of what adult education is all about, or who an 'adult' is in 'adult education'. It is evident from the study that the Course is not as popular as many of the students in the Department would want, most especially as it affects labour market. Many of the students claimed other students and lecturers from other Departments laugh at them and do not take their programme as anything in the University. As a result of this, some students are ashamed of claiming to belong to the Department publicly.

Sequel to above conclusion, the study recommends the following:

- (a) Revisit of nomenclature and adoption of new names of the Department, most especially replacement of the word 'Adult' that is been mis-interpreted.
- (b) Regular orientation and celebration of breakthrough in Adult Education.
- (c) Need for national body of students studying Adult Education and incorporate the students Union into Nigeria National Council for Adult Education so as to build more interest through Conference and symposium.
- (d) The Department should incorporate into the curriculum, skill acquisition towards the achievement of SDGs to enable products of the University jobs creator rather than job seekers.
- (e) The University should involve students being considered for admission into the Department into the process before admitting them so as to create more awareness on the programme.
- (f) There is need to discourage apathy been experienced by students and

lecturers from other Departments.

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