

Neo Adult learners' Instructional learning model in Higher Learning Education

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Abstract: *Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is important for lifelong learning, allowing adults to acquire new skills, update their knowledge, and stay relevant in an ever-evolving job market. A notable area for improvement is observed in the availability of a comprehensive framework to direct the formulation of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) environments that aptly cater to the requisites of adult learners. There needs to be a comprehensive framework to guide the design of ODL environments that meet the needs of adult learners and which is supported by adult learning theories, online knowledge construction, and technology acceptance. This paper examines the instructional designs intended to improve adult learner achievement and meet the self-empowerment needs of adult working students. The research will investigate the theories and perspectives on adult learning in higher education based on the existing literature. This research proposes the existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory and the Heutagogy principle to capture the needs of adult learners from both positivist and subjectivist perspectives.*

Keywords: *Open and Distance Learning (ODL), adult learning, existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory, instructional designs*

1. INTRODUCTION

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has emerged as a transformative mode of education, offering flexible and accessible learning opportunities to a diverse array of students, including adult learners. This innovative approach to education, often delivered through online platforms, recognizes the unique needs and circumstances of adult learners and aims to provide them with an inclusive and adaptable learning environment. According to Subekti (2020), the use of online learning necessitates learners to possess self-directedness while also encouraging them to develop more vital visual and auditory learning skills in response to technological demands. Open and Distance learning is a field of education focusing on the Andragogy, technology, and instructional systems design that is effectively incorporated into delivering education to students who are not physically “on delivery site” to receive their education.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) represents an educational system that removes traditional barriers of time and space, enabling learners to engage in education from various locations and at their own pace. It leverages multiple technologies, such as the internet, videoconferencing, and printed materials, to deliver educational content to a wide range of learners. This flexible approach has gained prominence due to its ability to cater to the diverse needs of adult learners, who often have work, family, and other responsibilities that can make traditional, full-time education less feasible (Kyando, 2020). Adult learners have several hurdles, including the need to take ownership of their education and be self-directed, self-reliant, and capable of handling online learning without assistance (Subekti, 2021; Manoharan et al., 2022). The research will investigate the theories and perspectives on adult learning in higher education based on the existing literature. This study proposes the existence, relatedness, and development (ERG) theory and the heutagogy principle in order to address the requirements of adult learners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adult learners, as a distinct demographic within the ODL framework, typically embark on further education after completing their formal education. They are characterized by their unique motivations, expectations,

and life circumstances. Unlike traditional students, adult learners often pursue education for career advancement, personal growth, or simply out of a desire for lifelong learning.

The Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2015-2025 focuses on fostering a society of individuals committed to continuous learning. This objective is situated within the broader context of the MEB, demonstrating a deep dedication to fostering ongoing and enduring education across the country. The prioritization of continuous learning throughout one's life is not merely a conceptual aspiration but also a crucial strategic necessity for the educational and socioeconomic progress of Malaysia (Hee et al., 2019).

Adult learners are different from typical higher education students. Many adult learners have commitments (such as families and employment) that can obstruct their learning. Most of them enrol in educational programs freely and schedule their studies around employment and family obligations. Furthermore, most adult learners are highly driven and task-oriented (Kara et al., 2019).

The Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) has reported that the proportion of Malaysia's workforce with tertiary education stands at a mere 30%. This number carries substantial consequences for both the economic and social aspects of the country. Nations characterized by a more significant proportion of individuals with tertiary education exhibit a correspondingly enhanced workforce that is distinguished by higher levels of competence and specialization. On the other hand, Malaysia may encounter difficulties in effectively competing in global industries that necessitate a highly educated and skilled labour force, such as technology, innovation, and advanced manufacturing, since just 30% of its workforce possesses a higher education.

3. ERG THEORY (EXISTENCE, RELATEDNESS AND GROWTH) AND LEARNING THEORIES

Knowles defined Andragogy as the art and science of assisting adults to learn. Knowles's Andragogy was very practically oriented. In general, one could say that he explained Andragogy with a set of assumptions about adult learners and made some recommendations concerning planning, conducting, and evaluating adults' learning (Knowles, 1984)

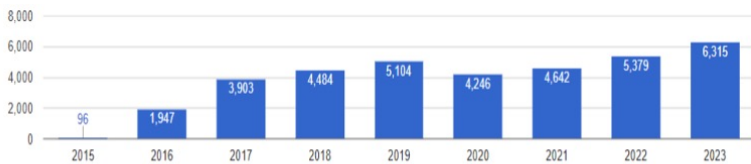
The research conducted by educational psychologists in the 20th century served to establish an empirical ground for pedagogy and reinforced it as an educational approach. However, when adult education began to be developed more systematically, it was criticized by some educators because it emphasized transferring knowledge, and the skills and assumptions developed for young learners were insufficient for adult learners (Knowles, 1980).

According to Knowles (1984), Andragogy posits that adult learners should autonomously identify their learning needs and devise appropriate solutions. Heutagogy is a learning theory that emphasizes self-determined learning. It is similar to the concepts of Pedagogy and Andragogy - the name heutagogy likewise is derived from Greek roots and conveys the notion of self-directed learning. The emergence of this phrase can be traced back to its development as an extension of Pedagogy and Andragogy. Heutagogy is a theoretical framework that elucidates the characteristics of adult learners in the context of lifelong learning. It places emphasis on the role of the internet and internet technologies as the primary learning environment and tools for these learners (Blaschke, 2012).

Alderfer's ERG theory contains fundamental needs and the employee seeks to fulfil them as each need is fulfilled; it serves as motivation to fulfil different needs. Ivancevich and Matterson (2008) argue further that ERG is predominantly applied to the study of human motivation in the workplace as a means of boosting morale and productivity. It has assisted Educational Administrators in understanding what factors contribute to job satisfaction and in identifying incentives. According to Song, Wang, and Wei (2007), ERG is a motivational construct concerned with understanding the factors that contribute to an individual's human behaviour. It is one of four content approaches that evaluate the intrinsic factors that motivate an individual to perform particular actions. Chen (2008) opines that such understanding is useful to organizations, students and educational practitioners seeking to comprehend and improve performance.

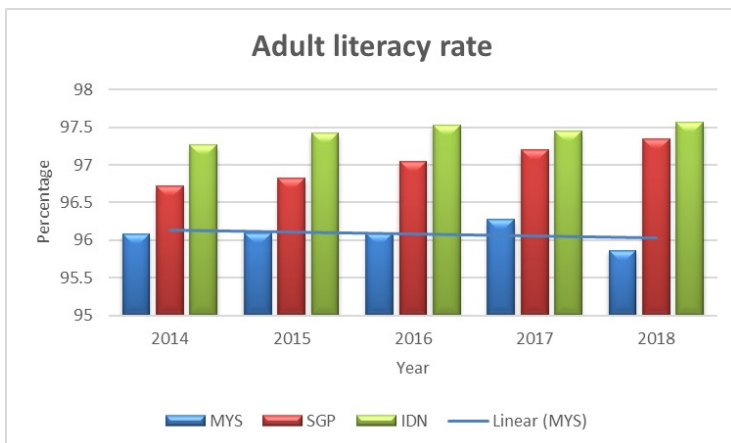
4. DISCUSSION

The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) program is one of the main initiatives to support adult learners in Malaysia. Adult education plays a crucial role in Malaysia's educational landscape. APEL is a mechanism for recognizing and accrediting the knowledge and skills adults acquire through employment, life experiences, and non-formal education (Figure 1). Figure 2 show the comparison of adult literacy rate in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Indonesia's adult literacy rate has shown significant improvement, but is generally ranked lower than both Singapore and Malaysia. Even though Malaysia's adult literacy rate is lower than Singapore's, it still performed well when compared internationally.



Source: Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)

Figure 1 APEL.A Application in Malaysia



Source: Education Statistics, The Worldbank 2023

Diagram 1 indicates that Alderfer's ERG theory posits that there are three fundamental needs that employees must satisfy. It has been suggested that adult learners have many requirements that must be fulfilled simultaneously. Failure to provide opportunities for growth to adult learners may result in a regression towards relatedness. The academic institution should acknowledge this specific situation. Subsequently, appropriate measures can be implemented to direct the students' focus toward their relatedness needs until such time that the students are capable of pursuing their growth needs (Lujekwute et al., 2021)

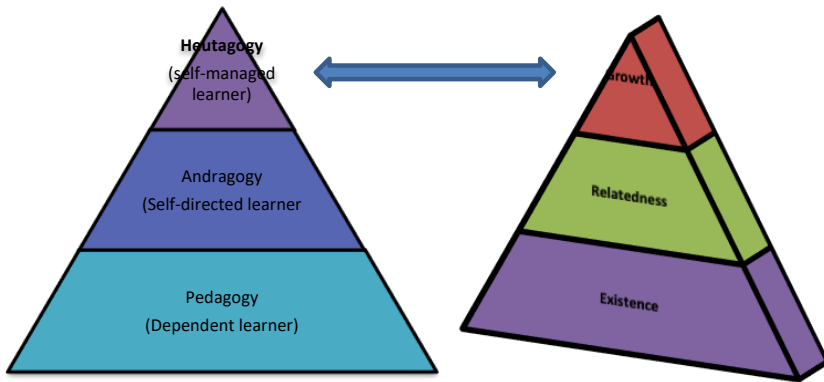


Diagram 1: Progression from pedagogy to Andragogy, then to heutagogy (Canning, 2010) and Interaction with ERG Theory Source: Alderfer (1969)

5. CONCLUSION

As a response to these developments in higher education, heutagogy provides certain principles and practices. A heutagogical learning environment facilitates the development of capable learners and emphasizes both the growth of learner competencies and the development of the learner's relatedness to learn. The approach has been proposed as an ODL framework based on existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory and Heutagogy for applying emerging technologies as learners' instructional learning models in distance education. It also provides guidance for distance education practitioners in the development and delivery of instruction using newer

technologies. Online distance education will continue to gain significance among adult learners. The challenge for educators is to learn how to provide a positive “social” environment through technology to facilitate student learning and development. As new technologies emerge, technology will continue to evolve. Instructors will need to adapt, alter, and continue to learn how this online education environment can be utilized to promote social engagement and enhance the adult learning environment.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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