Topic: The teaching methods employed for the learning of adults must be distinguished from that of children in order to deliver quality education and conducive learning environments to meet the needs of adult learners.

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**Introduction**

Adults and children share not only physical differences but also cognitive differences. Over the decades of educational research there have been two dominant theories that explains how groups of individuals learn. Pedagogy and Andragogy are the most widely used models. Pedagogy is concerned with the art and science of teaching children whereas Andragogy deals with the art and science of teaching adults (Knowles 1980 and Conner 2004 as cited in Taylor and Kroth 2009). Pedagogy has been the most dominant theory that is used by educators worldwide in the teaching and learning process. The thrust towards the achievement of the United Nations sustainable development goals of quality education magnifies the need for different learning theories to be explored and adapted in the teaching of both children and adults. Hence, enhancing equality in the attainment of quality education. This paper seeks to explore the extent to which andragogical principles are applied in the teaching of adult learners.

**Description of Pedagogy and Andragogy**

**Pedagogy**

The term Pedagogy has been a dominant educational model of learning as far back as the 7th and 12th century in the monastic schools in Europe. “The term originated from the Greek words paid, meaning “child” and agogus meaning “leader of” (Knowles, 1984 as cited in Samaroo, Cooper and Green 2013, p.78). Pedagogy refers to the art and science of teaching children (Knowles, 1970 as cited in Samaroo, Cooper and Green 2013). The pedagogical model of teaching places total instructional control in the hands of the teacher and requires that students strictly adhere to the teacher’s instructions. Students learn only the content provided by the teacher and are heavily reliant on the teacher's instructional guidance. According to Samaroo, Cooper and Green (2013) the pedagogical model remains the most widely used teaching model for both children and adults and hence has resulted in a high dropout rate among adult learners. The pedagogical model does not meet the needs of adult learners. According to Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) as cited in Chan (2010 p.27) “adult learners are self-directed, problem oriented, internally motivated, and independent learners.”

**Andragogy**

Andragogy is the theory of adult learning that scientifically sets out basic activities for learners and teachers in the planning, evaluating and correcting of adult learning (Zmeyov, 1998, as cited in Taylor and Kroth 2009). The terminology dictionary on Adult Education (Lukyanova & Anishchenko, 2014 as cited in Machynska and Boiko 2020) defines andragogy from various perspectives. Firstly, as a subdiscipline of pedagogy which deals with the enhancement of adults’ skills and knowledge throughout their lives. Secondly, a science that takes into consideration adult age, abilities, capabilities, individual experiences, cultural needs, personality and individual characteristics. Lastly, a branch of scientific and human knowledge, a theoretical discipline with a specific educational direction. Andragogy encompasses the use of various organizational forms, different methods of adult learning, use of a variety of instructional media and intensive training to meet adult’s learning goals. Andragogy is tasked with enhancing adult education by using relevant experience-based content, methods and organizational forms (Honcharenko, 2011, as cited in Taylor and Kroth 2009).

According to Loeng (2018) Andragogy was first introduced in 1833 by Alexander Kapp’s book ‘Plato’s Educational Ideas’. Kapp asserted that “andragogy intended to train adults through an educational process, to achieve the aims of society in general and particularly the benefits of the state” (Zamir 2010, p.75). Andragogy gained its popularity during the 1920’s when Edward Thorndike developed the psychological perspective based on adult capacity and their ability to learn and Eduard Lindeman social perspective of more applied setting of formal adult education and learning (Cartor, 1990 as cited in Taylor and Kroth 2009). Thorndik’s goal was to explore how human nature and variations impacted the way individuals learn. This included extensive research on adult teaching and learning. Lindeman, although not specifically using the term Andragogy on the other hand, focused extensively on adult education and explored ways in which it could become more effective and believed that adults learn best through their unique experiences and not through someone regurgitated experience. There continues to be a wide body of research on the best methods for educating adults. Numerous educators and scholars have invested a vast amount of resources in the study of Andragogy, traditionally known as adult learning. They examined the most effective strategies that can be employed when educating adults, especially those that have been out of a classroom for a prolonged period of time. Some of the most popular strategies or techniques identified by those researchers were group discussions, problem solving activities, collaborative goal setting, interviews and learning contracts (Cartor, 1990, as cited in Taylor and Kroth 2009). These strategies were regarded as ad hoc strategies until they were eventually categorized as Andragogical theories by Malcom Knowles in 1968 (Saunders, 1991 as cited in Taylor and Kroth 2009). These theories became prominent in education when differentiating child learning from adult learning. Consequently, a clear separation was made between andragogy and pedagogy, between adults and children. According to Knowles (1980) as cited in Taylor and Kroth (2009) adults are individuals to the extent that he or she regards him or herself to be responsible for his or her life or an individual is an adult to the extent that he or she engages in social roles culturally assigned, roles such as worker, spouse, parent and military personnel. Many other scholars such as Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), Forrest and Peterson 2006 have all provided definitions of who an adult is, all these definitions are centered on the social role of individuals and a set age is not applicable due to the varying cultural differences (Taylor and Kroth 2009).

The fundamental assumptions underlying andragogy is that adults should be taught differently from children because the cognitive abilities and learning processes of adults and children are vastly different (Birzer, 2004; Cartor, 1990; Cross, 1981; Knowles, 1975, 1980,

1984a, 1984b; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998 as cited in Taylor and Kroth 2009). According to Knowles there are six key assumptions that form the foundation for adult learning. The first assumption is self-concept which shifts from being dependent to being self-directed. Adults tend to prefer situations in which they are given autonomy, where they are given the opportunity to self-direct their learning by engaging in collaborative activities such as discussions, group engagements, problem solving and critical thinking opportunities. They also do not favoursituations where others impose their will on them. The second assumption is based on adult experiences. The amount of life experience that adults bring to the teaching and learning environment is greater than children. Hence, they contribute authentic experiences that enhance the teaching and learning process and provide information that is relevant to their daily lives which may enhance their professional development. The third assumption is adults' readiness to learn. Adults are presumed to be more mature than children and therefore when they are making decisions about engaging in any educational program they might be more committed to accomplishing their academic goals especially if the educational program is relevant to their current situation or social role. Adults' orientation to learn is the fourth assumption. Adults' motivation to learn is dependent on how much the acquired knowledge will assist in solving a current problem that they are experiencing or will enhance their current job performance. The fifth assumption is an adult's motivation to learn. As adults mature they are presumed to be more motivated to learn in order to reach their self-actualization goals. This motivation is usually intrinsic. The last assumption is the need to know. Adults who recognize that acquiring knowledge is vital for their development and see it as valuable will be more committed and will invest in the learning process.

These assumptions are not without their criticisms. According to Taylor and Kroth (2009) adult experience may be relevant in situations where there is substantial new information that has to be taught and learnt in a particular field. This may be a challenge for adults as they may find it difficult to accept anything that is contrary to their experience. Additionally, children may also have a wealth of authentic experiences that are relevant and should be incorporated in the instruction. In so doing instructors help students make sense and learn from their experiences. Adults' readiness to learn is dependent on the social benefit that they receive from the acquisition of knowledge. This implies that adults do not acquire new skills or hobbies for the mere enjoyment of it, an assumption that is far from the truth. As individuals mature their orientation to learning shifts from subject centeredness to problem centeredness. This process is believed to be conditioned. However, in reality adults engage in meaningful learning without setting out to solve any defined problem or accomplish any set goal. Adults are also viewed as being intrinsically motivated whilst children’s motivation comes from external pressures. This view is believed to be limited to classroom settings and children love learning new things that engage their curiosity such as reading about apes and the planets.

In addition to these assumptions Knowles also presented four principles of adult learning. The first principle posited that adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction. Adults tend to be more motivated to learn the course content when they are actively involved in the planning and evaluation process. They are able to design and connect the learning of material and activities with their goals. Hence, they would have a greater desire and motivation to accomplish the set tasks. The second principle is that experience determines what learning activities are adopted. When adult experiences are incorporated in the teaching and learning process they become more motivated to learn since their experience is seen as valuable and they view themselves as active participants and contributors to learning. According to Houde (1992) as cited Taylor and Kroth (2009) students whose experiences are not valued by the teacher develop internal conflict and are likely to disregard the instructors’ experiences in favor of their own personal experiences. The third principle postulates that adults are more interested in subjects that have an immediate impact on their current jobs or personal situations. This is because adults are usually seeking to attain self-actualization and anything that will contribute to its attainment will be embraced. The final principle is that adults are motivated to learn subjects that provide a solution to current problems they might be experiencing. Hence, the learning strategies employed by the instructors must be problem-centered where solutions are presented.

**Discussion**

**Andragogy: An international and regional perspective**

Knowles (1962) as cited in Peterson and Ray (2013) lamented the fact that although Andragogy has been recognized as an educational theory numerous country such as England, Sweden and Denmark have addressed the concept of Andragogy haphazardly and the continued lack of structure of adult education in these countries. This Knowles attributed to the lack of consensus on the meaning of adult education. In the traditional economy life was simpler, teaching methods were simplified and was restricted to brick and mortar, and teacher centered teaching methods. Information was passed on from generation to generation with little emphasis being placed on adult education because of the belief that children were taught what they needed to survive in the traditional educational systems. However, this has changed significantly in the 21st century due to industrialization, rapid technological advancement, globalization, the Knowledge Economy (KE) and social change. Hence, lifelong learning and adaptation became necessary in order for individuals to continue to be productive contributors to society and to thrive in a rapidly changing global environment. As a result, Andragogy has and continues to gain popularity in the teaching profession.

Conventional school age begins at age 5 and ends at age 18 in most countries. Learning, however, does not cease at age 18. It can be postulated that the world’s famous scientist, engineers, technicians and educators did not end their educational journey in the traditional government school systems but went on to higher education at universities. Lifelong learning continues beyond age 18, beyond age 18 is regarded as higher education pursued by adults. Lifelong learning is a necessity for economic survival in this evolving technological age. Individuals constantly seek to increase their knowledge and skills in order to remain economically, socially and politically relevant.

The 21st century learning environment necessitates that individuals engage in continuous learning as a result of the rapid changes in Information and Communication Technology which has drastically transformed the world economy from an industrialized foundation to a Knowledge based economy. This change has increased the need for individuals to continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills at all phases of their lives, specifically in Information and Communication Technology which is constantly changing. The 21st learning environment is characterized by innovation, creativity and problem solving. These skills are consistent with the assumptions of Andragogy where adults are more motivated to learn in situations where they can actively solve problems. According to Wood (2008) this new paradigm impacts instructional strategies, structures and practices. According to Ajayi (2019) adult learning and education systems must be viewed as an extension of the conventional formal education system. Hence, creating a conducive learning environment which supports lifelong learning is imperative.

Nigeria has traditionally differentiated between the skills and values needed in the education of children and the education of adults. According to Adewale (2003) as cited in Ajayi (2019) the Nigerian education system was designed to foster community togetherness, to uphold values, train potential leaders and to acquire skills necessary for the production of goods. Adult education (ALE) in Nigeria began in the colonial era when Christian missionaries in South West Nigeria trained adults as clerks, interpreters, stewards, cooks and workers trained to function in government offices and commercial enterprises. ALE is increasing in its relevance in Nigeria due to increased industrialization, technological advancement, and an increase in the awareness of human rights to quality education (Ajayi 2019). The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) is the organization tasked to promote lifelong learning in Nigeria. The NPE promotes equal access to education through the provisions of continuing education and adult literacy education (Ajayi 2019). According to Ajayi (2019) adult education in Nigeria began with the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic specifically in the English Language. Over the decades adult education has grown to include the enhancement of adult’s occupational and personal skills, vocational programs, recurrent and civic programs such as industrial training, trade apprenticeship, distance learning, rural education, women education, part-time tertiary education, health and agriculture education to name a few (Ajayi 2019).

These programs were delivered using a variety of methods namely teacher-oriented such as lectures and quizzes, interactive methods such as discussions, group work, field trips and role play, and independent methods such as program and modular instruction and independent learning packages (Ajayi 2019). However, it was realized by a number of researchers that although these strategies were very interactive and participative they failed to raise the consciences and self-confidence of the learners. This is because in reality facilitators predominantly utilize traditional methods such as writing on the board and note taking to introduce new content without considering learners previous experiences. These strategies were also hindered by the lack of resources, untrained facilitators, inadequate funding and conflict of interest between facilitators and learners (Bakare 2010; Zuofa and Olori 2015 as cited in Ajayi 2019). Bolanle Simeon-Fayomi et al. (2017) as cited in Ajayi (2019) noted that these methods fail to address the inquisitiveness and independence of adult learners. Additionally, they do not provide many opportunities for self-directed learning, for the use of meaningful resources which includes authentic application of learner experiences, and for the motivation to continuously acquire new skills and knowledge.

As a result, new strategies were explored and traditional folklore as an andragogical facilitation method was introduced. Simeon-Fayomi (2015 p. 867) as cited in Ajayi (2019) describes it as “an oral tradition that is a vehicle for cultural expression and a means of transferring knowledge, morals, values and norms from one generation to another ''. The effective use of songs and stories has proven to be very effective in the teaching and learning process. Ajayi (2019) proposed its incorporation using Knowles Andragogical assumptions. According to Ajayi (2019) the use of folklore can exploit the self-directive elements in Andragogy since it permits adults to select the preferred learning strategies and activities. Additionally, learners would entertain folklore that speaks to their problems. Hence, allowing the facilitators to better address their educational needs. Adults have a wealth of knowledge that steamed from their childhood which includes traditional activities upon which they can reflect. They can share these experiences with their colleagues as well as the facilitator in order to make the teaching and learning process more authentic and help them deal with their current realities. According to Ajayi (2019) traditional folklore can help learners access their long-term memory and assist them in discovering ways to express and understand their situation. Adults orientation to learn is dependent on the degree to which it helps solve their problems. Hence, folklore exposes how people solve problems in various situations. Adults will tend to make decisions based on the solutions presented in the traditional folktales. Folklore generally promotes positive messages such as overcoming oppression, justice and resilience. Listening to such positive messages can motivate adult learners to be serious about their learning and strive for success. Other countries such as Canada use folklore in adult learning. They use Inuit folktales, legends and myths in adult basic education (Nunavut Arctic College 2012 as cited in Ajayi 2019).

In spite of these major developments in these countries other countries such as Israel neglect the need for adult education. The Government of Israel established the Ministry of Education after its independence in 1948. Adult education in Israel became an academic subject or a subject in leisure studies (Zamir 2010). The government has made no allocations to support adult education in the marginalized population. Many schools for students above the age of 12 remain closed making it very difficult for persons to attain an adequate salary and to provide proper living conditions for themselves and their family. According to Zamir (2010) there is only one teachers’ college in Israel where Andragogy is a subject of study. On the contrary, countries such as Germany have more than 70 educational centers that train teachers for adult education. The educational structure in Germany is committed to lifelong learning and holds adult learners in high regard. On the contrary in Israel the immigrants and the underprivileged person lack options when it comes to furthering their skills since the state directs educational choices to uphold the needs and interests of the state. This dominance in the educational system by the state is referred to as colonialist andragogy (Zamir 2010).

In Latin America and the Caribbean there has been an increase in the number of higher education institutions and enrollments. However, only half of students enrolled successfully complete their degrees (World Bank 2017 as cited in Asia News Monitor 2017). One of the reasons sighted for this high dropout rate is academic unpreparedness and the lack of flexibility to address the changing needs of adult learners. Students are not adequately prepared for higher education and lack the willingness to learn. The sensitization of young adult learners about the requirements of adult learning and possible strategies that they can use to be successful prior to enrollment should be undertaken. It would force them to reflect on their motivation, self-concept and educational readiness. Further, the lack of equality among countries makes it difficult for the lesser developed countries to provide professional training for facilitators of adult learning. Thus, forcing them to continue with the traditional pedagogical strategies where they follow a set curriculum and teach new concepts by dictating notes or writing on a board.

**Comparison of Pedagogy and Andragogy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Andragogy**  | **Pedagogy** |
| Adults are viewed as autonomous beings and independent decision maker  | Children are directed by adults |
| Adults and facilitators collaborate during training | Children are dependent on teachers during instruction |
| Adults and facilitators have a mutual understanding of their role and responsibility  | Teachers mentor children during the teaching and learning process. |
| Communication is diverse and involves everyone’s input  | One way communication where the teacher dominates the communication process |
| Adults are able to better connect to life experiences |  Children have limited life experiences |
| Everyone’s experience is viewed as a valuable resource  | Teacher experience is used in the teaching and learning process  |
| Adults have clear learning goals  | Learning goals are defined by a curriculum  |
| Greater collaboration and group work based on individuals interest | Children are grouped based on their performance |
| Facilitators assist in identifying adults learning needs | The teacher decides what should be taught |
| Knowledge and skills are applied immediately  | Children store knowledge and skills and learn for the future.  |
| Problem solving in emphasized  | Subject is emphasized  |

(O. Pashko 2013 as cited in Machynska and Boiko 2020, p.27)

**Advantages and disadvantages of Pedagogy and Andragogy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages of pedagogy** | **Disadvantages of pedagogy** |
| 1. More structured guidance if given to learners
2. It is easier to assess learners academic progress
3. May require limited time and resources
 | 1. Less opportunity is given to learners to exercise their independence
2. Does not appreciate learners’ experiences
3. Does not give the learners to be active participants in their learning since it is teacher centered.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advantages of Andragogy** | **Disadvantages of Andragogy** |
| 1. Learner focused education
2. Promotes learner independence
3. Values learners experiences
4. Promotes problem solving
 | 1. Tests and grades are not preferred
2. Some learners my feel uncomfortable with the level of freedom
3. Increased learning disruptions as learners schedule may not permit them to prioritize learning.
4. Limited resources
 |

(Machynska and Boiko 2020)

**Recommendation**

There is no doubt that the concept of Andragogy should be adopted in the teaching and learning process due to its significant benefit to adult learners. Educators should tailor their instructional material, strategies and teaching environment to suit the needs of adult learners. They should also be aware of the different experiences that the adults present which should be incorporated as resource material. In so doing this will foster critical thinking and solve problems that are currently being faced in everyday situations. Educators should also be provided with adult training opportunities in the andragogical assumptions. This would allow educators to better guide adults to be more in touch with the way they learn, their self-concept, their level of motivation and their short- and long-term educational goals. Educators should realize that the skills are not the same for all educators and the same for all learners. Educators who teach adults must employ different instructional strategies than those used for teaching children. The andrological teacher’s role is to engage students based on the student’s experiences and to acknowledge them as independent adults who possess the autonomy to self-direct his or her learning.

UNESCO (2016) as cited in Ajayi (2019) stated that adult education is the key to developing sustainable economies, reducing poverty and to increasing the standard of living of citizens. Hence, in order to rip these benefits, adults must be equipped with the knowledge and skills that are necessary so that they can exercise control over their lives and provide for themselves and their family and in so doing become productive contributors to the economy. This can be achieved through the provision of training opportunities which employ adult learning strategies based on Knowles andragogical assumptions. Therefore, resourceful staff must be trained in the use of andragogical strategies so that an enriched adult learning environment can be created. It is incumbent on higher education institutions to embark on robust staff development programs which will equip adult education facilitators with the knowledge and skills they will need to successfully aid adult learners in the accomplishment of their personal and professional goals. Further, adequate resources must be allocated for this purpose and the training needs of adult education facilitators should be constantly monitored. The goal of these training sessions should avoid the use of conventional methods of teaching and set curricula that focuses on the development of learner independence.

**Benefit to me and my community**

Prior to the completion of this essay my knowledge on the theory of Andragogy was extremely limited. The previous teacher training programs that I had engaged in predominantly taught teaching and learning strategies based on the teaching of children. Hence, all that I have and continue to use in my classroom is pedagogy. This is partly due to the fact that I teach students between the ages of 12 to 17. The studying and the wide body of research that I encountered has heightened my awareness of my own learning preferences. It has plunged me into deep reflection about how my experiences impact my learning even as I embark on this course of study. This course of study has given me the opportunity to engage in independent learning and has forced me to dig deep for my sources of intrinsic motivation. Additionally, my readiness to learn all streams from my current personal and professional dispositions. All of which are key andragogical assumptions. I intend on sharing the knowledge that I have gained with my colleagues who are pursuing higher education. Additionally, I will also be engaging my students in discussion about adult education and the realities of higher education after leaving the conventional school system. It is my hope that this would better equip them in their educational journey as adult learners.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is clear that in order for adult education to meet the educational goals of all stakeholders andragogical strategies must be effectively employed in the teaching and learning process. Andragogy in spite of its many criticisms proves to be the most viable facilitative method for the delivery of adult education. Further, it is impractical to continue to apply children centered strategies to a classroom filled with adult learners whose self-concept, experiences and motivations are significantly different from children. Hence, the need to use different educational tools when teaching adult learners such as familiar childhood materials (folklore) which they are familiar with, which allows them to draw from their experiences. Focus must also be placed on the training and development of adult education facilitators. A failure to provide adequate training and resources may result in personal and professional failure of adult learners as well as adverse effects on society and the economy.

In order for andragogy to acquire and remain the dominant theory in adult education focus must be placed on addressing its major criticisms that continue to question its authenticity and impact on adult education. Therefore, educators, scholars, researchers and theorists must embark on the establishment of well documented empirical data and instruments that measure the effective use of its application. The development of a andragogical framework of good practice can also be formulated.

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