



Challenges Facing ODL Students in Initiating Adult Literacy Classes in Mwanza Region, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study shares findings on the challenges faced by Open and Distance Learning (ODL) students in initiating literacy classes in Mwanza region, Tanzania. This study employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design. Convenient and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 14 ODL students and 6 lecturers from the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) at Mwanza Campus. Data were collected through interviews with participants. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings show that the challenges faced by ODL students in initiating literacy classes included limited community understanding of adult education programmes, societal stigma, family and work responsibilities among students, shortage of teaching and learning materials, and financial constraints. These obstacles limit the broader impact of adult education on community development in Tanzania. In conclusion, the findings underscore that the challenges faced by ODL students are significantly categorised into pronounced situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the Ministry responsible for education, through the IAE, raise awareness among the community on the importance of adult education programmes; the IAE, in cooperation with local government authorities, should provide teaching and learning materials ensuring ODL students have access to adequate resources necessary for effective teaching; and IAE establish a funding mechanism, whether through non-government organisations, local businesses, or community donations for transport allowances to adult learners.

Keywords: Literacy Classes, Challenges in initiating literacy classes, Adult Learners, ODL students, Teaching Practice

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Introduction

Literacy denotes the ability to read, write, and perform simple arithmetic in any language at an acceptable level (UNESCO, 2015). Beyond these fundamental capabilities, modern literacy involves the appreciation and application of skills to solve practical problems in daily life (Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013). As a foundational instrument for development, literacy equips citizens with the critical competencies required for active civic participation and social transformation (Wanyama, 2014). Conversely, individuals lacking basic literacy and numeracy face deep-seated vulnerabilities, including economic exclusion, structural poverty, and marginalisation from key political and social decision-making spaces. Recognising its indispensable role, UNESCO has treated literacy as a fundamental human right since 1948, noting that literate adults are vital drivers of societal development (Kimaro et al., 2022). In an increasingly technological environment, sustained literacy serves as a lifelong continuum of learning, empowering individuals to command their destiny and navigate complex realities.

Evidence from around the world demonstrates that implementing and sustaining adult basic education initiatives remains an intricate endeavour, consistently hindered by systemic policy deficits and inadequate institutional frameworks (Black & Yasukawa, 2024). In the United States, foundational literacy frameworks intersect across distinct tracks, such as Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL); however, these instructional initiatives remain plagued by persistent student retention deficits and volatile, erratic classroom attendance patterns (LBAEC, 2025). Disruptions in adult learning are primarily caused by three factors: situational obstacles, such as erratic work shifts; instructional issues, such as poorly timed public transit; and personal psychological hurdles, including a lack of student self-esteem (Park & Su, 2026).

Similarly, in the Sub-Saharan context, such as Nigeria, the budgetary allocation to adult education is grossly inadequate, and the government allocates limited financial resources to adult education compared to formal education. More

importantly, non-formal education is excluded from the share of two percent of the consolidated fund meant for basic education despite policy provisions (Chinweikpe, 2025). Nigeria's budgetary allocation for adult education has historically fallen short of the recommended international benchmarks, leading to severe infrastructural deficits, uncompensated facilitators, and a lack of multi-sectoral accountability frameworks (Owede, 2022).

These international scenarios (USA and Nigeria) offer vital insights into the Tanzanian context, demonstrating that formal policy proclamations are insufficient if local implementation barriers are not addressed (Msoroka & Amundsen, 2023). Similar to the situational hurdles in the United States and funding gaps in Nigeria, adult literacy initiatives in Tanzania must navigate distinct, field-level operational dynamics. Tanzania has a celebrated history of combating adult illiteracy, beginning immediately after achieving independence in 1961, when approximately 80% of the native population was illiterate (IAE, 2020). The post-independence government inherited a society marked by technological backwardness, severe poverty, and poor life expectancy (Mushi, 1990). To counteract this, the First Five-Year Development Plan (1964–1969) prioritised adult education over primary education, recognising that adults could achieve immediate economic impact (URT, 1964). Mass campaigns intensified following Mwalimu Nyerere's declaration of 1970 as the Adult Education Year, which successfully mobilised millions of adults to join literacy classes and drastically reduced the national illiteracy rate from 80% to 9.6% by 1986 (Kassam, 1978; URT, 2020).

Despite these historical triumphs, the illiteracy rate increased from 9.6 % in 1986 to 30.2 % in 2002 (URT, 2006). The 1980s economic crisis was a turning point, increasing the illiteracy rate, as Tanzania experienced an increase in oil prices, the rise of food imports due to extraordinary drought and floods, and the rise in infrastructure costs with the break-up of the East African Community. This led to a series of government measures to address structural economic problems and not educational problems (Bhalalusesa, 2020). Under an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Tanzania began the Economic Recovery Plan Programme (ERP) of 1986-1990 (URT, 1986). Unfortunately, adult education, including adult literacy, was no longer central to development initiatives (Tomasevski, 1995). The emphasis was on oriented post-literacy programs which were introduced in 1987 to replace the initial post-literacy programs of 1975 to promote functional literacy and prevent neo-literates from reverting to illiteracy, which also declined since they faced the same problem of being adversely affected

by economic crises (Bhalalusesa, 2020). In the same context, the majority of adult education classes were no longer functioning due to high dropout (Kadege et al., 1992). Overall, during the 1980s, the future of adult education was generally unclear, and efforts to reach the remaining and emerging illiterate population became a lower priority among national leaders, as they were preoccupied with the issue of economic recovery. According to Mlekwa (1990), the 1980s was characterised by inadequate monetary and logistic support which resulted in the failure of adults due to inadequate sensitisation and mobilisation from political leaders for adult educators' participation and attendance of literacy classes; lack of suitable and appropriate learning materials that resulted in low motivation among adult learners to attend literacy classes; and lack of competent personnel to manage adult learners for learning. Although the economic crisis of the 1980s adversely affected the adult education sector, Tanzania continued to struggle with developing adult education. To revamp adult education in the country, the Integrated Community-Based Adult Education (ICBAE) programme was introduced in 1993 to cover 2348 wards with an enrolment of 6.3 million adults by 2003 (Bhalalusesa, 2020). In contrast, the Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) programme was introduced in 1997 in collaboration with UNICEF. Another evident government effort to revamp adult education was the development of the Adult Education and Non-Formal Education (AE/NFE) Sub-Sector Medium Term Strategy 2003-2007, resulting from the national status report of the adult and non-formal education sub-sector (Mushi & Bhalalusesa, 2002). The strategy was operationalised, and some tangible results were evident. For example, the number of out-of-school children and youth (11-18 years old) was reduced from an estimated 2.5 million to 1.4 million (Bwatwa & Kamwela, 2010).

Despite the observed increase in the literacy rate, the MKUKUTA Report (2008/2009) noted that illiteracy levels remained high, limiting the contribution of literacy to the country's poverty reduction efforts and sustainable socioeconomic development. The government decided to develop a new strategy for the period of 2010/2011–2014/2015. The strategy aimed at addressing the problem of the remaining illiteracy rate among the adult population, as well as the remaining out-of-school children and youth. (Mo EVT, 2014). However, the adult literacy survey in eight regions in Tanzania mainland conducted by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in 2014 reported that illiteracy rate was still high, particularly in rural areas (22.4 %), and there were rich indicators that the country's illiterate population was growing annually, as there was a low level of participation and high

dropouts in adult education programmes (Bhalalusesa, 2020). This situation was perceived as a big problem for attaining the national and international agenda, especially MKUKUTA II, which had a target of 80% literacy rate by 2015 to attain poverty reduction (URT, 2014). Despite these efforts, illiteracy remains a challenge in Tanzania. Data from the 2022 Population and Housing Census indicate that the national adult literacy rate stands at 83.0%, leaving an illiterate population of 17.0% (URT, 2025). In the Mwanza region, while the aggregate literacy rate is 85.6%, a stark geographic disparity exists: urban literacy reaches 94.3%, whereas rural literacy drops to 79.0%, resulting in an overall regional illiteracy rate of 14.4% (URT, 2025). To address this persistent gap, the IAE, under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, launched the National Adult Literacy and Mass Education Rolling Strategy (NALMERS 2020/2021–2024/2025). The NALMERS operational framework relies heavily on strengthening adult literacy and mass education programs in Tanzania. Its implementation for five years (2020/2021–2024/2025) aimed to eliminate illiteracy and transform people's livelihoods (IAE 2020). To respond to this, the IAE designed a curriculum that directed students pursuing Ordinary Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education (ODACE) and Bachelor's degree in Adult and Continuing Education (BACE) through conventional and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) models to initiate adult literacy classes during their teaching practice conducted in a whole semester of approximately four months as a way to alleviate illiteracy in different communities (IAE, 2020a; IAE, 2020b). Since its inception, no study has examined the challenges faced by ODL students in initiating literacy classes in the Mwanza region, which is rapidly expanding and has the second-largest urban and peri-urban population in Tanzania. Therefore, this study addresses this empirical gap by answering the following central question: *What are the challenges faced by ODL students in initiating adult literacy classes in Mwanza region?*

This study is grounded in the Characteristics of Adults as Learners (CAL) Model developed by Cross (1981). Cross classified the factors that create barriers to adult learning as situational, institutional, and dispositional. These factors operate both before and during the learning activity. Situational factors consist of broad circumstantial conditions that hamper adult learners' ability to gain access to and pursue educational opportunities. These factors include the multiple and often conflicting roles and responsibilities of most adults in relation to their work, family, and community; the number of unrestricted resources, time, energy, and finances; and the distance that adult learners must travel to reach the learning centre

(MacKeracher et al., 2006). Institutional challenges include practices, procedures, and structures set by the organisation or government that discourage adult learners. This applies directly to initiation challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of flexible scheduling, and lack of essential support services for learners, including libraries, advising and counselling services, and transport facilities (Potter & Ferguson, 2003). Dispositional barriers include self-confidence, personal attitudes toward the benefits of learning, and feelings of isolation within the learning community (MacKeracher et al., 2006; Kalenda, 2024). Therefore, the CAL model serves as an ideal analytical lens for this study, as it highlights the factors that create barriers to the initiation of adult literacy classes in the study area. These include situational barriers such as the multiple roles and responsibilities of adult learners, time constraints, and financial limitations that hinder adults from attending classes. Additionally, institutional barriers encompass practices, procedures, and structures set by the government or organisations that fail to create a conducive environment for adults to participate in learning. These include inadequate funds for facilitator honoraria, a lack of transport allowances for adult learners, and a scarcity of essential teaching and learning materials, all of which discourage adult learners from attending classes. Furthermore, dispositional barriers among adult learners encompass low self-confidence, negative personal attitudes toward the benefits of learning, and feelings of isolation within the community.

The challenges affecting the initiation of adult literacy classes are many and may be categorised into individual, institutional, and policy- and program-related challenges (Kimaro et al., 2022). Individual challenges that encompass adult learners include family obligations and acute sociocultural stigma (Malisa & Ndiaye, 2023; Sligo et al., 2017). Adult literacy programs are characterised by severe institutional vulnerabilities. The biggest hurdle is the lack of guaranteed public financing and political will (Lutinwa, 2022; Vally, 2024). This is because adult and non-formal education is rarely prioritised over formal education (primary or secondary education), and newly established literacy programmes frequently suffer from a shortage of teaching and learning materials and trained professional facilitators (Lwoga & Mapunda, 2025; Nisid & DVV, 2022). Bwatwa and Kamwela (2010) indicate that insufficient honoraria for adult education facilitators pose a significant challenge to delivering adult education in established literacy class.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research approach with a case study design to provide a clear picture of the situation and gain an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives, practices, and experiences, offering richer insights into the challenges of initiating adult literacy classes. The sample consisted of 20 participants. Convenience sampling was employed to select 14 ODL students from a total of 29 students who attended field practice in the 2024/2025 academic year, pursuing the ODACE-ODL and BACE-ODL programmes at the Institute of Adult Education, Mwanza Campus. Purposive sampling was used to select six lecturers from 12 based on their administrative positions, teaching roles, and work experience in field practice assessment. A limitation of this study is its focus on a single-campus sample from the Mwanza campus, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other geographical campuses or to broader institutional contexts. In-depth interviews were used to better understand ODL students' and lecturers' experiences, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes regarding the initiation of literacy classes during their field practice. The semi-structured interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder in Swahili. To ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence, the audio files were first transcribed verbatim in Swahili by the primary researcher, who is fluent in both English and Swahili. The transcripts were then translated into English using a professional translator. To ensure the accuracy and conceptual validity of the translated text and direct participant quotations, a back-translation method was employed: an independent bilingual language expert translated a random selection of English text back into Swahili. Any semantic discrepancies were discussed and resolved collaboratively to preserve the original meaning, context, and cultural nuances of the participants' responses. Each in-depth interview took 25 minutes and included providing study-related information and obtaining consent from the participants. To prevent technical losses, field notes were actively maintained during the sessions, and audio files were saved immediately with anonymous filenames.

Data collection was concluded after interviewing the 20 sampled participants (14 students and six lecturers), as the continuous repetition of data indicated that thematic saturation had been reached. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. Data were scrutinised to identify commonalities and contradictions, to draw explanations from clusters of them, and then coded manually using markers and sticky notes. To ensure trustworthiness, the findings were shared with ODL students to confirm accuracy, and data source triangulation was employed to

compare students' interview responses against lecture feedback to verify cross-cutting challenges. Additionally, the dependability of the data was maintained by creating a thorough audit trail, including meticulous records of raw interview audio, final transcripts and structural notes. The study will be conducted from September to December 2025. The researcher requested permission from the IAE Mwanza Campus Manager to collect data from the target population while adhering to ethical guidelines concerning participants' privacy, confidentiality, and free and informed consent. Additionally, anonymity was ensured by assigning numbers 1,2, 3,4, 5, and 6 to represent the names of lecturers and letters "A to T" to represent students instead of their names.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results regarding the challenges faced by ODL students in initiating adult literacy classes.

Limited Community Understanding of Adult Education Programmes

ODL students engaged in field practice expressed that one of the challenges in initiating literacy classes was community members' limited understanding of adult education programmes. These community members were unaware of the vital role that adult education programs play in social development. This challenge was clearly highlighted by Student D:

I faced many challenges during the initiation of the literacy class, including a limited understanding of its purpose. Many people believe that adult education is only for those who have not had access to education or for those who have failed in the formal schooling system. This misconception affects adult learner enrolment, as they do not value adult education and may not see the need to attend classes on reading, writing, and R. They often manage to sustain their lives without these skills as well. To address this issue during advocacy, I introduced entrepreneurial programs to boost their income and alleviate their poverty.

The students' responses indicate that the community adults approached during the literacy class advocacy campaigns were unaware of adult education programmes; most believed that attending adult literacy classes was strictly for acquiring basic 3Rs skills, which they felt they could survive without. Most adults respond better to learning that immediately enhances their financial well-being and their quality of life. This finding suggests that literacy programmes should not be taught in

isolation; instead, they must be embedded within practical life and business skills training. This finding is consistent with that of Kimaro et al. (2022), who found that most community members are unaware of the existence and practice of adult education and believe it has nothing to do with improving their lives, since they can live without the 3Rs. Adult education encompasses functional education that attracts adults to learn and acquire reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. Similarly, the study conducted by Mlaki (2012) found that people still have a skewed view of adult education, associating it with the acquisition of the 3Rs and connecting it with people with 3Rs problems. This implies little awareness in society and a negative attitude toward adult education.

Societal Stigma Faced by Illiterate Adults

Societal stigma emerged as a dispositional barrier to the successful initiation of adult literacy classes in the study. ODL students reported that most adults in the community felt intense shame when admitting they lacked the basic 3Rs. Their fear of public exposure and mockery by community members prevented some illiterate adults from enrolling in the adult literacy centre located at the nearest primary school. Student “G” stated:

When I was mobilising adults to join literacy classes, I encountered this challenge, as many adults were ashamed and afraid of being looked down upon by their peers if they were seen with exercise books and going to study at the literacy centre, which was also the school where their children were studying. Some told me that it would be acceptable for them to learn at the Ward Executive Officer’s office, where they usually meet for village meetings. To solve this, my fellow students and I requested to use the Ward Executive Officer’s office, and we were granted permission to do so. We also prepared a place to keep their exercise books after the lesson; thus, the adult learners agreed to participate in the study.

Commenting on the noted challenge, one of the lecturers reported that:

One of the challenges I observed during the assessment of students on practical training was adults feeling ashamed of being seen studying in primary school classrooms, which serve as literacy centres. For example, some students initiated a literacy class at the Ward Executive Officer’s office. When I asked them why they initiated a centre in the office, they told me that adults proposed that the venue for studying should be in the office to avoid embarrassment from their children and other community members.

From the aforementioned excerpt, most of the participants reported that most adults feel embarrassed to be seen by their children as being unable to read, write, and do

basic arithmetic. This situation led adults to choose the ward executive office area where their children do not visit to avoid encounters at school. Some adults failed to register because they were embarrassed. These findings align with those reported by DVV International (2005), which indicated that adult learners, especially highly respected individuals or elders in the community, experience profound shame if they are seen attending classes in primary school centres. Some adults often refuse to use children's school infrastructure, such as sitting at a primary school desk, because they feel underrated and ridiculed. These dynamics led the program to adapt by utilising neutral administrative spaces, such as local governance offices, to ensure learner confidentiality and safety. These results are similar to those reported by NALA (2010), who found that stigma is the critical barrier preventing adults from attending literacy classes. NALA reports indicate that men and older adults are particularly vulnerable to this barrier, as their primary deterrents are the fear of ridicule by peers and children and the intense embarrassment of exposing foundational vulnerability.

Family and Work Responsibilities

A primary structural challenge faced by ODL students in the initiation of adult literacy classes is the intense role conflict generated by simultaneous occupational duties and family responsibilities, which severely restricts their time to mobilise community classes. During the interview, Student "E" said:

Work and family responsibilities are among the challenges in initiating literacy classes for women. There are times when I could not visit different areas to mobilise adults, resulting in the enrolment of very few adult learners.

This perspective aligns with lecturer No. 1 reported that:

During the assessment of ODL students' teaching practice, I read some of their field reports in which they described challenges in initiating literacy classes due to a lack of time caused by work and family responsibilities. I also witnessed this issue during the assessment itself, when one student was called by his workplace supervisor to perform urgent official duties and requested to be prioritised for an early assessment so that he could return to work.

This shows that ODL students are overwhelmed with work and family responsibilities, which prevents them from reaching out to different places to mobilise adults to join the literacy programme. These findings agree with those of Kimaro et al. (2022), who pointed out that ODL students' studies have been identified as a critical issue due to the need to combine family, work, and field practice studies at the same time. Additionally, some female students are unable to

effectively mobilise adult learners because family responsibilities require them to return home early for household chores. Similar findings revealed that most ODL students are employed and have families; hence, they have limited time due to difficulties in balancing time for studies, work, and family responsibilities (Budiman, 2015; Musingafi et al., 2015).

Shortage of Teaching and Learning Materials

ODL students revealed that one of the challenges in the initiation of adult education classes at their learning centre was a lack of teaching and learning (T/L) materials like exercise books, chalks, flip charts, soap, chemicals, and chemistry apparatus like beakers, which were needed in teaching and learning, as demonstrated by student “C” during the interview, who stated that:

Teaching and learning materials are limited; I have only three books and no chemical supplies for teaching soap-making as requested by adult learners. Additionally, I did not have flip charts or other essential teaching resources. To address this, I borrowed some teaching materials from the school, although they were few and primarily designed for primary school-aged children. I also decided to use stones, small sticks, and soda bottle caps as teaching aids. However, the students were not comfortable using these materials because of their age and the unconventional nature of the resources used.

Based on the transcript, the initiation of the literacy class requires teaching and learning materials: The scarcity of teaching and learning resources functions as a structural bottleneck that prevents the successful initiation of literacy classes in rural areas. The data revealed that while adult learners expressed clear demands for practical, life-skills-based programmes, ODL students were poorly equipped to deliver such programmes. Therefore, a lack of these materials creates challenges in delivering various programmes requested by adult learners. These findings are consistent with Okongo et al. (2015), who stated that the most influential factor that would discourage adult learners’ achievements in skills, knowledge, and attitudes that would impact them and their society is the lack of instructional materials, specifically textbooks as the main instructional material. Similarly, Mbadiwe (2019) discovered that the prerequisites of teaching and learning facilities at adult learning centres improve the quality and significance of acquired skills for adult learners. In addition, Musingafi et al. (2015) reported that one of the challenges that adult learners enrolled in various learning centres running adult education programs faced was a lack of teaching and learning facilities, including textbooks,

revision books, and resources, which are important in extending learners' knowledge.

Financial Difficulties among Students

During the study, ODL students expressed that one of the challenges in initiating literacy classes is financial difficulties since they had to incur some funds to buy stationery, teaching and learning materials, and pay adult learners transportation allowances as motivation to attend class. As one of the ODL students, "B", stated:

My fellow ODL learners and I faced financial difficulties when we initiated the literacy classes. During the mobilisation of adult learners to join the literacy class, some adults kept asking us for transport fares to reach the learning centre. This led us to decide to register eight adult learners for the course. During the meeting to explain the schedule and class hours to our students, they requested to be paid Tsh 3,000 per session for transport allowance and to buy *dagaa* (sardine dish) for their families. We planned to hold three sessions per week, so the collective group of ODL students had to pay a total of Tsh 24,000 per session for all eight adult learners to motivate them to attend class. If we had enrolled a larger number, we could have paid more; therefore, we decided to enrol a few students to meet their demands.

Also, ODL student "H" stated that:

During the initiation of the literacy class, we faced financial challenges because we were required to print flyers to promote literacy education in our community. Since this is a village, printing costs are slightly higher than those in towns. Other challenges included transport to reach various areas within the village to mobilise adults to join, as well as paying allowances to the village leaders who assisted us with the mobilisation in certain areas that required us to be accompanied.

Responses highlighted that financial difficulties were among the challenges faced by ODL students in initiating literacy classes. Indeed, the initiation process entails various financial costs, such as transportation to reach different areas for mobilisation, stationery for printing posters, incentives for adult learners, and allowances for local government officials who assist with advocacy. This is supported by Maina and Orodho (2016), who highlighted that adult literacy faces obstacles during initiation due to insufficient funds; hence, compelling programmers to invest their own funds for mobilisation, printing basic learning materials, and paying incentives to adult learners to successfully open a literacy program. These findings are supported by UNESCO (2016), which indicates that financial constraints significantly hinder adult learners' ability to participate in adult

education programs, as most adult programs are underfunded. This situation demands compensation for transportation and other allowances to meet families' needs. Similarly, Abdazi (2003) asserts that financial constraints represent one of the most enduring structural barriers to the initiation and sustainability of adult literacy programs worldwide. Despite substantial allocations of national education budgets to primary and secondary education, adult and non-formal education initiatives frequently encounter systematic marginalisation, resulting in insufficient funding. This ongoing financial neglect significantly undermines the efficacy and reach of adult education programs, ultimately hindering their ability to fulfil their intended educational outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results showed that the challenges faced by ODL students in initiating literacy classes for adult learners are severely constrained by situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers. These include a limited understanding of adult education programmes, societal stigma faced by illiterate adults, family and work responsibilities, a shortage of teaching and learning materials, and financial constraints on Open Distance Learning (ODL) students. These obstacles not only affect access to adult education but also limit the broader impact of community development and sustainability. These outcomes strongly validate Cross's model of the core typology of barriers to adult learning participation, which includes institutional barriers such as inadequate funds, limited information about adult education programmes, a shortage of teaching and learning materials, and a lack of special curriculum. Situational barriers: family and work responsibilities and the distance the adult learner must travel to reach the learning centre. Lastly, dispositional barriers included societal stigma and feelings of embarrassment.

Based on these findings, the study recommends the following: First, the Institute of Adult Education (IAE), in cooperation with local government authorities, should provide teaching and learning materials, ensuring that ODL students have access to adequate resources necessary for effective teaching practice. Second, the MoEST, the Prime Minister's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG), and IAE should establish a funding mechanism, whether through local government, non-government organisations, local businesses, or community donations, for transportation and other allowances that significantly encourage a significant increase in enrolments among adult learners. Third, the MoEST, through

the IAE, should increase community awareness programmes using the media to combat negative attitudes toward adult education. These programs should emphasise the value of adult education, illustrating how literacy skills can improve personal and community well-being and economic opportunities. Fourth, the IAE should encourage ODL students to integrate entrepreneurial programs into literacy classes, which can serve dual purposes. The promotion of practical skills enhances income generation in the community. Implementing these recommendations can significantly improve the prospects of adult learners in ODL programmes, leading to greater engagement, skill acquisition, and community development.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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