



## LIFELONG AND LIFEWIDE LEARNING STUDENTS PERCEPTION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION

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### ABSTRACT

This work centered on lifelong and life wide learning students' perception in tertiary institution in Rivers state. It further examines the concept of formal, informal and non-formal learning. Questionnaire was source of data collected, and the data collected was analyzing using mean, standard deviation and z-test statistical tool to strengthen the validity of the findings. The sample size of this study comprised 200 respondents. The study found that there is no significant difference between the rating of male and female students on the extent lifelong learning affect the choice of carrier, extent in which students combined the knowledge acquire from school and that of informal learning in resolving social issues in the society and it concluded that life wide learning is a continues process and it take the shape of formal, informal and non- formal learning.

**Keywords:** Lifelong, Lifewide, Informal, Formal and Non-Formal, Learning, Tertiary Education.

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### INTRODUCTION

When we look at the society today, we see the alarming increase in number of children that are out of school. The question that comes to the mind is what will be the fate of these children in future, what methods will they use to enhance their knowledge and ideas that will position them positively in the society. The answer to these questions is simple, lifelong and lifewide learning is the way out.

Lifelong and lifewide learning takes the shape of informal, formal and non-formal learning. In the course of carrying out our day to day activities we interact with different persons and in doing so knowledge is transmitted. Despite the fact that we already have some form of knowledge, skills and ideas, yet knowledge need to be enhanced, reasons being that the society is dynamic. The ideas and skills we use to handle issues today, may not give the same result tomorrow and the one we have tomorrow will not give us the same result in future.

Hence, knowledge needs to be enhanced and it is a continuous process. Castle in Ogbondah (2005) maintains that education is everything that happened to us from the day we are born to the day we died. It involves a continues process, learning is an integral part of human nature, all humans needs to acquaint themselves with new ideas, skills and knowledge from time to time, to enable them face the wave of changes that is going on in our societies . The acquisitions of these new ideas, skills and knowledge is very essential in the life of all individuals in our society, some scholar like Uriah (2005) argue that change is inevitable, and any society or individual that fail to follow the wings of change will be doom or will face isolation from the new methods of handling and resolving issues in the society.

### **Statement of Problem**

Lifelong learners often want to enhance their knowledge. They may wish to expand their experiences without attending formal institutions; they may explore a new discipline, take courses, workshops, or simply participate in any activities to enrich their experiences. The premium newspaper of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018 reported that a survey conducted by United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) revealed that 13.7 million Nigerian children are out of school. Does it mean that being out of school will prevent this category of persons from expanding their knowledge? If we cannot find a satisfactory answer to the question above, then one can argue that the children may engage themselves in lifelong and lifewide learning such as adult education, education or skill acquisition to enable them enrich their experience in future.

Since learning is part and parcel of human nature, lifelong learners must continuously participate in series of events and activities in the society, if they are to enrich their experiences. Also the premium time's newspaper of 12<sup>th</sup> may 2017 reported that 357 prison inmates sat for the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board examination in 2017 in search of admission into tertiary institutions.

Despite the fact that prisoners are confine in a place for a long period of time, and their aspirations for formal education destabilize. Nevertheless, prison inmates may expand their experiences through lifelong and lifewide learning. Going by this scenario, it is an evident that lifelong and lifewide learning exist. Hence, this study aims to investigate the perceptions and opinions of students on lifelong and lifewide learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this study is to investigate the perceptions and opinions of students on lifelong and lifewide learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state.

Specifically the study aim to:

- Examine the extent lifelong learning affect the student's choice of work in Rivers state.
- Examine the extent students enhance their knowledge and skills after the formal education settings in Rivers state
- Investigate the extent students combine the knowledge acquired from lifelong and lifewide learning to resolve social issue in Rivers state

## Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted in this work is constructivism theory. The constructivism theory has its origin from the work of John Dewey in 1933. The theory suggest that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences. It is believed that knowledge is constructed rather than acquire, ones experience in the past will help to build future experiences. The constructivism theory suggest that knowledge is constructed base on personal experience from the environment were the individual lives and the learner test this knowledge through personal negotiations and interactions in the society. Each person has different ways of interpreting and constructing knowledge. Finally, the theory concluded that the learner is not blank (tabula rasa) as claim by some scholars, rather the learner brings in previous experiences to build the present.

## METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive research design method. The study considered variables such as Gender (Female and Male).The population for the study were 2000 students from two Universities, one college of health science and one polytechnic in Rivers state, Nigeria. Two hundred (200) students were used to represent 10% of the entire population. The breakdown of students selected is shown in the table below.

| S/N   | Tertiary Institution       | Male Student | Female Student | Total |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------|
| 1     | UNIPORT                    | 25           | 25             | 50    |
| 2     | IAUE                       | 25           | 25             | 50    |
| 3     | College of Health Sciences | 25           | 25             | 50    |
| 4     | Elechi Amadi Polytechnic   | 25           | 25             | 50    |
| Total |                            | 100          | 100            | 200   |

## Research Design

The research design adopted in this study is the survey design because large number of participants are easily studied through the use of a representative sample and questionnaire.

## Population for the Study

The population of the study consists of students from tertiary institutions in Rivers state. The population for the study is two thousand (2000) students from two universities and one college of education and polytechnic in Rivers state. Two hundred (200) students were used to represent ten percent (10%) of the entire population.

## Sample and Sampling

The sample size for the study is two hundred (200) representing ten percent (10%) of the entire population. The sampling technique adopted were stratified sample technique which was used to determine the size of the study by grouping the population into difference strata.

## **Data Collection**

Structured questionnaire were used to get information on perceptions and opinion of students on lifelong and lifewide learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state with reference to University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of education, College of health science and Elechi Amandi Polytechnic. The questionnaire was divided into two section: section “A” contain personal information and section “B” for variable items base on modified likert scale format.

## **Validity**

The questionnaire were given to some research expert at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education for vetting and validation and the recommendation made were used in the final version of the instrument.

## **Reliability**

The reliability of the instrument were determined by the use of test and retest method to ensure the reliability of the research instrument.

## **Administration of instrument**

The researcher administered two hundred (200) copies of the instrument to sample respondents for the study.

## **Method of data analysis**

The data were analyzed qualitatively using tables. The research used parametric statistical tools. This is chosen because the parametric statistics is used to examined research question and hypotheses.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Origin of Lifelong and Lifewide Learning**

The concept of lifelong and lifewide learning is traceable to the work of John Dewey in 1920s and 1930s. John Dewey questioned the act of planning educational experience without understanding the nature of human experience. He maintained that learning is constructed on two principles, such as continuity and interaction. Continuity recognize that the previous experience a person has will influence their future life while interaction is the combinations of one’s past and present experiences. In other words, one’s present experience is a function of interaction between one's past experience and present situation.

### **Concept of lifelong learning**

Lifelong learning is base on the idea that, learning is a continues process and it occur in all stages in life. The lifelong learning is concern with the need for continuous development of people and

their continuous improvement from young to old age (Dave, 1976). The lifelong learning recognizes that what we learn from school is not enough to sustained us throughout lifetime, therefore, there is need for continuous learning to prepare the youths and adult for active participation in social life and helping them to develop skills and competences necessary for resolving challenges of everyday life. Since adult is expected to keep in touch with innovations and flexibility continuous learning and improvement of skills is essential to meet up the changes in the society.

### **The Three Elements of Lifelong Learning**

The three elements of lifelong learning are for economic progress, personal development and for Democratic understanding.

- Economic progress refers to the extent a country has succeeded in providing a source of living for the majority of her citizens. It takes account of the extent to which citizens of a given country has access to the basic necessity of life such as food, shelter, good health facilities, good education and other social amenities that makes life meaningful.
- Personal development is concern with the extent an individual has expanded his or her knowledge and improvement in once skills and development of competencies. In other word it measures the extent one is in contacts with his or her dreams and the plan adopted to actualize the targeted goals.
- Democratic understanding means given equal opportunity to members of the society or group to participate in decision making process or activities that concern them. This stage take account on the extent members of the society have equal right, responsibility and play active role in activities that concern them. It is based on respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

### **Concept of Lifewide Learning**

Life wide learning refers to all the education the individual acquires from birth to adult hood. It is voluntary and self-motivated aiming at improving ones knowledge, it can take the shape of informal, formal and non-formal learning.

- **Informal Learning.** Informal learning takes place outside schools and colleges, it arise from the learner's involvement in activities that are not undertaken with a learning purpose in mind (Nwaenyi, 2000). Informal learning is involuntary and an inescapable part of daily life; for that reason, it is sometimes called experiential learning. This type of learning does not have any formal school or ways of learning, but learning takes place on its own. It is the type of learning that takes place in family, town hall, community playground, and within the peer group (Ogbondah, 2002; Ololube, 2012). Parents and other caregivers may show children how to prepare family food, tie their shoes laces. Peers may ask each other to narrate about things that have happened in their lives and as they do so knowledge is pass from one person to another, the knowledge acquired through this process is applied in future. Informal learning is an experience that takes place incidentally. For instance, in the course of carrying out our day to day activities, we come in contacts with so many individuals, and we interact with them, in the process of

conversation with this individuals knowledge is transmitted and this knowledge we acquire through our interactions help us in our future endeavours.

- **Formal Education:** Formal learning refers to the learning that takes place within the school system. This type of learning is organized with a planned curriculum of instruction. It is an institutional arrangement through which schools and colleges are used as a medium of instructional delivery, learning is consciously planned and it is classroom based with rigid compliance to rules and regulations, group of trained teachers, lesson plans, examination and certification.
- **Non Formal Learning:** Non-formal learning takes place outside formal learning environments but within some kind of organized framework. It arises from the learner's conscious decision to master a particular activity, skill or area of knowledge and is thus the result of intentional effort. But it need not follow a formal syllabus or be governed by external accreditation and assessment. Non-formal learning typically takes place in community settings: skill acquisition classes, adult literacy and continues education, sports clubs of various kinds for all ages, reading groups, extra moral classes, debating societies, and so on. Non-formal learning does not necessarily follow a ladder system of accomplishment and may have different durations. Most time it may or may not confer certification of learning achievement (UNESCO, 2006).

The ideas of life wide learning draw attention to the fact that, learning is a combination process throughout life time and it does not have any single way of learning in the society rather learning is a broad field that occur throughout life time. Life wide learning is a continue process of acquiring knowledge and skills that people experience after formal education and throughout their lives” (Encarta, 2008). Learning is based on expansion of knowledge and skills. It is the process through which individuals or groups acquire, interpret, reorganize, change or assimilate information, skills, and feelings).

The life wide learning centered on the idea that the knowledge the learner acquire in school, college, or university is not a enough for general wellbeing. Hence, the people will continually need to enhance their knowledge and skills, in order to address immediate problems and to participate in a process of continuous vocational and professional development.

### **Examples of Educational response in a lifelong and life wide situation of an individual**

- **Single parents:** Parents are the first point of contact of children. When both parents are present, it implies that the child would derive most care (Ortese, 1998). However, when one of the parent is absent in a child's life, a gap is created as the child would lose the support that would have emanated from that parent. Most time children from single parental home manifest one form of deviance or the other, ranging from aggression, depression, anxiety, stealing, lying, truancy, and delinquency and these anti-social behaviours affect the child academic achievement in school, and most time these behaviours threatened the existing peace and development in human society.

Nevertheless, the educational response for children from single parental homes is counseling education, moral education and literacy education. It is important for students from single parental home to meet with school counselor, because, through good counseling the child can see

the situation as being normal, and by so doing aggression, depression and anxiety can be erase out totally from the child and he or she will now live a normal life.

- **Marriage:** Marriage is an agreement between man and woman to come together to live as husband and wife. It involve two Persons from different socio economic background, culture and life style now living under one roof as husband and wife, yes marriage is a good thing and is sweet, but the fact remains that not everything that glitters is gold. In every marriage life, there are numerous challenges that follow it. This ranges from the desire to bear children, finance, economic needs, health issues, and extended family problems.

The educational response to overcome marriage problems are counseling and leadership. The counseling education will help the couples to understand that since their faces are different so did their characters differs, but for the fact that they have come together to live as man and woman they should see themselves as one person while the leadership education will teach the couples skills like humility, tolerance and forgiveness.

- **Prisoner.** Prisoners are individuals that are guilty of one crime or the other and they are reminded in prison. The prison is an institution put in place to rehabilitate criminals. These criminals are individuals in the society who committed one crime or the other. They are human beings with fresh and blood; they have right to life, but because of the crime they committed in the society, they are now reminded in prison where they are treated as if these humans are now animals. In fact, the ill treatment and frustration given to prisoners in Nigeria prison cannot be over emphasize.

Educational response for prisoners is counseling, skill acquisition and moral education. The counseling education will help them to live normal life again after their prison custodies; it will give them more hope about life, despite the number of years they have wasted in prison. The skill acquisition education will equip them with skills and knowledge that will help them become self-independent in the society; it will equally give them opportunity to meet up their financial and economic need in society when they are out of prison. On the other hand, the moral education will inculcate the spirit of choosing the good instead of the bad, and this will enable them rewrite their names and then create a new image of themselves in the society.

- ***Teenage pregnancy:*** Teenage pregnancy is a situation where a girl child under the adolescent or below adolescent age gets pregnant. These pregnancies are unintended and it result from sexual violence and low level of education. In fact, in rural area in Nigeria out of twenty (20) girls in a group seven or more have experienced this type of pregnancy and most time when they gives birth it result to complications leading to the death of the girl or her baby.

Educational response in this case is counseling education, sex education, literacy education, skill acquisition education and moral education. The knowledge girls acquire from sex education will help them know the consequences of engaging in early sex as well as the dangers associated with it. It is believe that girls who have received a high amount of sex education are five times less

likely to become pregnant and educated girls enter into child marriages less often and are more likely to have healthy future pregnancies.

- **Unemployment:** Unemployment refers to a situation where an individual who has attained the age of workforce and who is willing to work, but do not see any work to do. It is a common fact to see graduate who spent years in school roaming in the street of Port Harcourt searching for work but no work. Unemployment is one of the social problems that resulted to youth restiveness, it is obvious that an idle man is the devil's work shop.

The educational responses for unemployed youth are skill acquisition, moral education, entrepreneur education and leadership education.

### Data Analyses/Discussion

The results of the study are presented in relevant table followed by its interpretation.

Table 1: What are the extent lifelong learning affect students choice of work in Rivers State (Questionnaire items 1-7)

| Source of variation                              | N   | X   | SD   |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| IAUE & Uniport                                   | 100 | 2.8 | 1.24 |
| College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amandi Poly. | 100 | 3.0 | 1.30 |

Standard deviation reference mean = 2.50

The table above indicates that the mean value from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education & University of Port Harcourt and college of health science & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic is greater than the reference mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed that lifelong learning influence the choice of work after graduation from formal education

Table 2: What are the extent students enhance their knowledge and skills after the formal education in Rivers State (Questionnaire items 8-12)

| Source of variation                              | N   | X    | SD  |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----|
| IAUE & Uniport                                   | 100 | 3.5  | 1.0 |
| College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amandi Poly. | 100 | 3.17 | 1.5 |

Standard deviation reference mean = 2.50

The table revealed that IAUE and Uniport had a mean score of 3.5 and College of health science & Elechi Amandi Polytechnic 3.17 respectively. This implies that the students enhance their knowledge and skills continuously after formal education in order to address immediate problems and to fit in the trend of change in the society.

Table 3: What are the extent students combine the knowledge acquire from lifelong and lifewide learning to resolve social issue in Rivers State (Questionnaire items 12-17)

| Source of variation                              | N   | X    | SD   |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| IAUE & Uniport                                   | 100 | 3.40 | 1.25 |
| College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amandi Poly. | 100 | 3.39 | 1.24 |

Standard deviation reference mean = 2.50

The table shows that both IAUE, Uniport, College of health science and ElechiAmandi Polytechnic had mean score of 3.40 and 3.39. In essence, there is no significant difference on the extent on which students from university of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, College of health science and Elechi Amandi polytechnic combined the knowledge acquired from lifelong and lifewide learning to resolve educational problems in Rivers state.

### Hypotheses testing

The purpose of this study and its hypotheses guided the data analysis. The hypotheses were formulated with the questionnaire and it provided answer to specific items on questionnaire. The result of the hypotheses is presented in table followed by its interpretation.

Table 5: Z-test of differences in view of IAUE & Uniport and College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic on the extent lifelong learning affect the students choice of work in Rivers state.

| Subject                                          | N   | X    | SD   | DF  | Z-cal | Z-tab |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|-------|
| IAUE & Uniport                                   | 100 | 3.29 | 1.40 | 198 | 1.13  | 1.96  |
| College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amandi Poly. | 100 | 3.07 | 1.44 |     |       |       |

Level of significance = 5% =0.05

The table indicates that the value of Z-cal is 1.13 and the value of Z-tab is 1.96 with 198degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance.

The result obviously shows that Z-cal (1.13) is less than the Z-tab (1.96). This means that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference on the extent lifelong learning affect the student's choice of work in Rivers state.

Table 6: Z-test of differences in view of IAUE & Uniport and College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic on the extent students enhance their knowledge and skills after the formal education settings in Rivers state

| Subject                                          | N   | X    | SD   | DF  | Z-cal | Z-tab |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|-------|
| IAUE & Uniport                                   | 100 | 2.97 | 1.33 |     |       |       |
| College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amandi Poly. | 100 | 3.08 | 1.28 | 198 | 1.62  | 1.96  |

Level of significance = 5% =0.05

The table revealed that the value of Z-cal are 1.62 and 1.96 respectively, tested at 198 and 5% level of significance. From all indications, it is obvious that the value of Z-cal (1.62) is less than the value of Z-tab (1.96). Meaning no significant differenceon the extent students enhance their knowledge and skills after the formal education settings in Rivers state

Table 7: Z-test of differences in view of IAUE & Uniport and College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic on the extent students combine the knowledge acquired from lifelong and lifewide education to resolve educational problems in Rivers state

| <b>Subject</b>                                  | <b>N</b> | <b>X</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>DF</b> | <b>Z-cal</b> | <b>Z-tab</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| IAUE & Uniport                                  | 100      | 2.56     | 1.25      |           |              |              |
| College of Health Sciences & Elechi Amadi Poly. | 100      | 2.73     | 1.37      | 198       | 0.96         | 1.96         |

Level of significance = 5% =0.05

Table 7 revealed that the value of Z-cal and Z-tab are 0.96 and 1.96 respectively, the result indicate that the Z-cal value is less than the z-tab value. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant difference between IAUE, Uniport College of health science and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic students on the extent students combine the knowledge acquired from lifelong and lifewide education to resolve educational problems in Rivers state

## CONCLUSION

Lifelong and lifewide learning is a continues process that started from birth to the grave and this type of learning do not have a particular means of acquiring knowledge rather it take the form of informal, formal and non -formal learning.

## Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that knowledge most be enhanced from time to time in other to keep the individual on track and the same time positioning the individual at the right place in the society.

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