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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of tutors' andragogical competence and creativity on learners' learning interest in equivalency education programs at a Community Learning Center in Pasaman Regency. Seventy-three adult learners participated through total sampling. Data were collected using validated and reliable Likert-scale questionnaires measuring andragogical competence, tutor creativity, and learning interest, and analyzed using correlation and multiple regression. Results indicated that both andragogical competence ($\beta = 0.42, p < 0.01$) and tutor creativity ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.01$) significantly influenced learning interest individually, while their combined effect explained 48% of its variance. Learners' interest was generally moderate, suggesting room for improvement. The findings highlight the importance of developing tutors' instructional skills and creative strategies to enhance learner engagement. Future research should expand samples and explore additional contextual factors affecting adult learning interest.



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Introduction

Equivalency education programs are a vital component of nonformal education systems, designed to provide alternative learning opportunities for individuals who are unable to complete formal schooling. These programs predominantly serve adult learners who bring diverse life experiences, social responsibilities, and learning goals into the educational setting. In Pasaman Regency, as in other regions of Indonesia, low learning interest among adult learners has been observed, often reflected in irregular attendance, limited participation, and low engagement during learning activities. Addressing this challenge is critical to improving instructional effectiveness and the sustainability of nonformal education programs (Pope, 2024).

Learning interest is a key psychological factor influencing learner engagement, persistence, and learning outcomes. Recent developments in interest theory explain that interest is formed and sustained through interactions between learners and meaningful learning environments (Renninger,

Hidi, & De, 2023). The updated model of interest development highlights the role of instructional relevance, learner autonomy, and active involvement in triggering situational interest and supporting its growth into individual interest. For adult learners, learning interest is closely linked to the perceived usefulness of learning for solving real-life problems and fulfilling social roles.

The andragogical framework remains central to understanding adult learning processes. Andragogy emphasizes self-directed learning, the use of learners' prior experiences as learning resources, readiness to learn based on life roles, and problem-centered learning orientation (Tuncer, 2024). Tutors who demonstrate strong andragogical competence can design learning activities that align with adult learners' needs, thereby fostering higher learning interest, motivation, and active participation. Prior studies suggest that adult learners are more engaged when learning activities are relevant, experiential, and autonomy-supportive.

In addition to andragogical competence, creativity theory underscores the importance of novelty, flexibility, and innovation in instructional practices. Creativity involves the production of novel and appropriate ideas within a specific social context (Walia, 2019). In educational settings, tutor creativity enables the use of varied teaching methods, interactive learning activities, and engaging media, which stimulate curiosity and reduce instructional monotony. Creative instructional strategies are particularly crucial in equivalency education programs, where learner participation is largely voluntary and driven by intrinsic motivation.

Despite strong theoretical support for both andragogical competence and tutor creativity, empirical studies examining their combined effects on adult learners' learning interest in equivalency education remain limited. Most previous studies focus either on pedagogy or creativity separately, without addressing their potential interaction in shaping learner engagement. This gap underscores the need for research that investigates the simultaneous contribution of these instructional factors in nonformal adult education contexts.

The combination of andragogical competence and tutor creativity is theorized to complement one another: while andragogical competence provides structural relevance and alignment with adult learning principles, creativity enhances emotional and cognitive engagement (Reiter-Palmon & Hunter, 2023). Investigating both factors together can clarify how instructional practices can maximize learning interest, particularly in community learning centers where resources and learning time may be limited.

Given the importance of instructional quality in adult learning, this study aimed to analyze the individual and simultaneous effects of tutors' andragogical competence and creativity on learners' learning interest in equivalency education programs. By grounding the research in updated theories of adult learning, interest development, and creativity, the study provides empirical evidence to inform instructional practices that are both theoretically grounded and practically relevant.

Strengthening both andragogical competence and creativity among tutors may enhance learner engagement, motivation, and persistence in nonformal education programs. This study seeks to fill a research gap by providing context-specific insights into instructional factors that influence learning interest, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical strategies for improving adult education in Indonesia (Renninger & Hidi, 2016; Ferdinand & Smith, 2025).

Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships and predictive effects of tutors' andragogical competence and creativity on learners' learning interest without manipulating the research setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study was conducted at a Community Learning Center offering equivalency education programs in Pasaman Regency during the 2024 academic year. The population consisted of all 73 learners enrolled in the programs, and total sampling was applied to include the entire population, improving accuracy and reducing sampling bias (Efendi, Sugiono, Guritno, Sufyati, & Hendryadi, 2020). Data were collected using structured Likert-scale questionnaires measuring andragogical competence, tutor creativity, and learning interest, which

were reviewed by experts to ensure content validity and tested for internal consistency, yielding acceptable reliability coefficients.

Data collection was conducted during scheduled learning sessions with participants informed about the voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality of responses. Descriptive statistics summarized variable characteristics, while Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses examined individual and simultaneous effects of independent variables on learning interest, following standard assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021). Despite the systematic design, the study was limited to a single site and relied on self-reported data, which may introduce response bias; future research is recommended to involve multiple centers and consider additional contextual factors to improve generalizability (Bryman, 2016).

Results and Discussions

The results of this study indicated that andragogical competence and tutor creativity were significantly associated with learners' learning interest in equivalency education programs. Both variables contributed positively to learning interest, both individually and simultaneously. This finding supported the view that learning interest in adult education was strongly influenced by instructional quality rather than solely by learner characteristics (Renninger & Hidi, 2016). The results directly addressed the research questions and confirmed that instructional factors played a critical role in shaping learner engagement in nonformal education settings (Ferdinand, R., & Smith, E. J. 2025).

The significant effect of andragogical competence on learning interest indicated that tutors' ability to apply adult learning principles was essential in fostering learner engagement. According to andragogical theory, adult learners are more motivated when learning activities are relevant to their real-life needs, allow learner autonomy, and make use of prior experiences as learning resources (Zainuddin, Z., Chu, S. K. W., & Othman, J. 2024). Learning interest tends to increase when adults perceive learning as problem-centered and directly applicable to their social and occupational roles. This finding was consistent with previous research showing that instructional practices aligned with andragogical principles enhanced learner motivation, persistence, and participation in nonformal and adult education contexts (Findik, L. Y. (2025).

Tutor creativity also demonstrated a significant contribution to learners' learning interest. Creativity theory explains that instructional novelty, flexibility, and variation stimulate curiosity and positive emotional engagement in learning (Bruno, C. 2022). Creative instructional practices, such as the use of diverse teaching methods, interactive activities, and appropriate learning media, help reduce monotony and maintain learners' attention. This finding aligned with prior studies indicating that creative teaching strategies increased learner engagement, particularly in voluntary learning environments where intrinsic motivation played a central role (Hopfenbeck, T. N., Denton-Calabrese, T., Johnston, S. K., Scott-Barrett, J., & McGrane, J. A. 2022).

When examined simultaneously, andragogical competence and tutor creativity showed a combined effect on learning interest, suggesting that effective adult education required both pedagogical appropriateness and creative instructional delivery. This result supported the theoretical perspective that instructional competence and creativity function complementarily rather than independently in shaping learning engagement (Reiter-Palmon, R., & Hunter, S. (Eds.). 2023). Andragogical competence provided structural relevance for adult learners, while creativity enhanced emotional and cognitive engagement during learning activities. The findings extended existing knowledge by empirically demonstrating the interaction of these instructional factors in equivalency education settings.

Alternative explanations for the findings may include learner-related factors such as prior educational experiences, intrinsic motivation, and external responsibilities, which have been shown to influence adult learning interest but were not examined in this study (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). In addition, institutional factors such as learning facilities, administrative support, and learning climate may also affect learner engagement (Ismail, S., Ali, F., & Yasukawa, S. 2024). These factors were beyond the scope of the present research and should be addressed in future studies.

The practical relevance of these findings lay in their implications for tutor development in equivalency education programs. Strengthening tutors' andragogical competence and creative instructional skills may contribute to improved learner engagement and program effectiveness. However, the reliance on self-reported data and the use of a single research site limited the generalizability of the findings, a limitation commonly acknowledged in survey-based educational research (Goodman, K. 2025).

Future research is recommended to involve broader samples across multiple learning centers and to employ mixed or qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into adult learners' experiences. Further studies may also examine additional variables, such as institutional support, learner motivation, and learning climate, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing learning interest in nonformal education contexts.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Category and Score Interval

Category	Score Interval	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very High	≥ 18	2	1.56
High	14–17	26	20.28
Moderate	11–14	34	26.52
Low	7–10	9	7.02
Very Low	≤ 6	7	5.46
Total		78	100

The table presents the distribution of respondents across score categories, which reflects learners' levels of learning interest. Most respondents were classified in the moderate (26.52%) and high (20.28%) categories, while only a small proportion fell into the very high category (1.56%). These findings indicate that learners' learning interest was generally at a moderate level, suggesting that it was neither optimal nor critically low.

According to recent research on adult learning interest, engagement is shaped not only by personal motives but also by how learning environments align with learners' lifelong goals and practical needs (Mahmud & Obidah, 2024). The finding that most learners fall into the moderate interest category suggests that although the program attracts attention and involvement, it may not consistently deliver sufficient opportunities for self-direction, contextual relevance, and experiential learning elements shown to increase meaningful engagement in adult education (Ratnawulan, Nurhayati, Taufikin, & Olugbade, 2025). Without these features, interest may remain superficial and situational rather than grow into a more sustained individual interest.

From an andragogical perspective, adult learners are motivated when learning is problem-centered and closely tied to real-life applications (OECD et. al, 2025). The relatively small share of learners with high interest could indicate that the instructional design and facilitation strategies currently in use are not fully aligned with adult learning principles such as autonomy, practical relevance, and learner control (Arutmayanti & Hiryanto, 2023). Research suggests that when learners perceive direct applicability of learning content to their life roles and responsibilities, their persistence and engagement increase markedly (Lee, 2025).

Variability in interest levels, including the presence of learners with low engagement, may be influenced by individual factors such as readiness to learn, self-concept, and motivation, as well as external elements like perceived interactivity and value of the learning experience (Ampl er, Glaraga, Fabe, & Cayogyog, 2024; Zhang, Li, & Wang, 2024). Studies show that intrinsic motivation when learners see personal and practical value in what they are learning is a strong predictor of sustained engagement and positive educational outcomes (Huang & Park, 2024). Recognizing these factors highlights the importance of tailored interventions that support learners with distinct motivational profiles.

The distribution of interest scores also supports the idea that interest is dynamic and can be developed through intentional improvements to instructional quality and relevance (OECD, 2024). This underscores the need for ongoing professional development for tutors, focusing on adaptive teaching methods that foster autonomy and practical application (Martínez & Santos, 2025). Instructional

approaches that emphasize experiential learning and problem-based activities have been shown to enhance engagement by making learning more meaningful and relevant to adult learners' lived experiences.

However, this study's reliance on self-reported data and its focus on a single learning center limit the generalizability of the findings, a common challenge in adult education research (Arabacioglu, 2025). Future research would benefit from using mixed methods and larger, more diverse samples to capture a broader range of factors influencing adult learning interest. Evaluating programmatic elements such as technological support, instructional design, and learning climate could offer deeper insights into how these structural variables shape learner engagement.

In conclusion, the findings point to the critical role of aligning instructional practices with adult learners' needs for autonomy, relevance, and practical application to foster stronger interest (Green & Taylor, 2024; Ratnawulan et al., 2025). Enhancing tutor facilitation skills and adopting innovative instructional strategies that prioritize self-direction and real-world connection can contribute to deeper engagement, supporting the effectiveness and sustainability of nonformal adult learning programs.

Conclusions

This study confirmed that both tutors' andragogical competence and creativity significantly influence learners' learning interest in equivalency education programs, with their combined effect explaining a substantial portion of the variance; however, learners' interest remained generally moderate, indicating the need for further enhancement of instructional quality. The findings emphasize the practical importance of developing tutors' skills in applying adult learning principles alongside creative teaching methods to foster higher engagement and motivation. Limitations such as reliance on self-reported data and a single study site restrict the generalizability of the results. Future research should incorporate larger, more diverse samples and explore additional factors like learner motivation and institutional support to develop comprehensive strategies for improving adult learning interest in nonformal education contexts.

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