

## **FEMALE LEARNER TENACITY IN OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING SUCCESS: Life History of Sharan, Fuziah and Aleena as Open Distance Learnersa**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Despite the provision for better access, flexibility, and convenience, Open Distance Learning still remain a challenge to some students. This article presents the life history of 3 female ODL learners in the state of Perlis, Malaysia in their pursuit to complete their ODL programs. Specifically, the study explored the phenomenon of female learners' tenacity in ODL among female adult learners.

The qualitative research focused on questions pertaining to learners' tenacity and perseverance in ODL and investigated the factors supporting or hindering perseverance that have influenced the learners. Longitudinal interviews with the three participants conducted over 72 months (six years) commencing 2005 revealed the complexity of variables affecting the learners' study completion. Findings suggested that multiple responsibilities, insufficient interaction with course tutors, technology, and coursework ranked highest as barriers to female learners' tenacity to ODL success. Strong motivation to complete degrees, engagement in the learning community, and appreciation for the improved accessibility and flexibility of an ODL completion option facilitated the learners' tenacity.

**Keywords:** Open Distance Learning; adult learners; female learners; persistence; perseverance; life history methodology; perseverance; barriers to tenacity