

FACTORS AFFECTING ACTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LITERACY AND NON FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN AN AMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The design was descriptive involving 475 respondents selected from participants in the UNICEF assisted adult literacy and non formal education programme through disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a 27 item questionnaire. Mean scores were used in answering the research questions, while t-test was used in testing the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The findings indicated among others that lack of adequate funds. Lack of financial support and lack of facilities are the key factors affecting active participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programme. It was recommended among others that Anambra State government through the Anambra State Agency for Mass Literacy and Non formal Education should provide micro-credit, equipment, facilities and instructional materials for participants in adult and non-formal education programme.

Introduction

Literacy is a necessity to human development hence the saying, without literacy, there is no development. Literacy is the key to health, wealth and happiness. International agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNO have always spoken of eradicating illiteracy as if it were a disease, of waging war on illiteracy as if it were an enemy. This is to show that illiteracy hinders development and poses great problem to any nation that has greater percentage of the population as illiterates.

In Nigeria, almost half of the adult population cannot read and write. According to Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (2003), 45 percent of the population aged 15 years and older cannot read and write. More women (56%) than men (33%) are illiterates and the illiteracy rate is higher in rural areas 53% than in urban areas (29%).

United Nations Report (2006) showed that Nigeria ranks first in drop out rate in the world. In addition, seven million primary children were out of school due to poor family background. Furthermore, 54.4 percent of the Nigerian population earn less than N135 per day. An educated nation does not have to worry about poverty and underdevelopment since education is a tool towards enhancing development. (Oyedeji, Omolewa and Asidu 1982). Development of any nation depends not only on the number of infrastructural facilities available in that nation or natural resources she possesses but by quality of human resources (Ani 2002). As stated by Fadeji and Folaranmi (2002) education for development implies education on part-time basis given to adults of all education backgrounds who are already working, but seek intellectual development. Such education for development which is emphasized by United Nations (2006) Oyedeji, Omolewa and Asiedu (1982), Ani 2002, Fadeyi and Folaranmi 2002 can be seen in no other type of education than adult and non-formal education.

The objectives of adult and non-formal education and the importance accorded to it in section 6 of the National Policy on Education (2004) are summarized as follows: To provide functional and continuing education for adults and youths, to provide functional and remedial education for young people. To provide formal education in order to improve basic knowledge, skills and competencies of people who were not opportuned to do so in the past. To provide vocational in-service and on the job, training for professionals in order to improve their skills and to provide necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment. Adult education is a means of sharing the latest and most pertinent knowledge with people. Through adult education, human resources can be developed to match technological improvement. To Harbison (1971) adult and

non-formal education is a nation-wide learning system which has become internationally accepted and experimented with, not only as an alternative to schooling but also an appropriate educational response to the learning needs of people.

Adult education advocates life-long education process from 'cradle to grave'¹ which enables people to face challenges of their time, update their knowledge, skills and competencies and maintain right attitude to work (Obi 1987)

Problem of the Study

In pursuance of the objectives of adult and non-formal education. The federal, state and local government has embarked on so many programmes in order to provide opportunities for organized learning for adults throughout the nation. Series of apprenticeship educational programmes are mounted by the National Directorate of Employment for youths and adults in order to enable them develop occupational skills for employment according to their talents, aptitudes and interest.

In Anambra State, in 1997, UNICEF tried to address the problem of dropout of school by making provision for out of school youths and women to get enrolled in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes. Opportunities were made for them to attend classes at time and places that were convenient for them. This was done in order to make it possible for them to attend their private endeavours. Despite all efforts by the government and UNICEF, studies (Esenjor, 1992; Ani, 2002; UNICEF, 2003; Onwudiwe, 2007) still show evidence of problems encountered by participants and low participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes. This study therefore intends to find out. Factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programme in Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non formal education in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are the identified factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education in Anambra State?
2. To what extent could the identified strategies adopted for active participation in adult and non-formal education programmes in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the factors affecting their active participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of urban and rural respondents on the factors affecting their active participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes.

Methodology

The population of the study consisted of 3,918 participants in the UNICEF-assisted adult literacy and non-formal education programme. It included 143 instructors, 3,551 learners, 32 head instructors and 192 village education committee members.

The samples of the study are 475 participants drawn from the population. It comprised of 50 instructors, 300 learners, 25 head instructors and 100 village education committee members selected using disproportionate stratified random sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire on the factors affecting active community participation in adult and non-formal education in Anambra state (FACPANE). It was constructed by the researcher from literature and with the aid of some experts in the Department of Adult Education and Education Psychology in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The FACPANE

has 27 items organized under three sections. Section 'A' addressed demographic data of the respondents, section 'B' sought information on the factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education while section 'C' sought information on strategies that could be adopted for active participation in adult literacy and non-formal education. In section 'B' and 'C' the response format adopted for the study was the five point likert type rating scale as follows:

Very Much Extent (VME)			5 points
Much Extent (ME)			4 points
Undecided (UD)	-		3 points
Little Extent (LE)			2 points
No Extent (NE)	-		1 point

The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Adult Education and Education Psychology in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The internal consistency of the FACPANE determined using Cronbach Co-efficient Alpha formula was found to be high - 0.89.

Data Collection and Analysis

Copies of the questionnaire for the study were administered by the researcher and two research assistants to 475 respondents and all were collected and used for the analysis of the study. Items with values of 3.50 and above were interpreted positively. Items with values below 3.50 were interpreted negatively. The following boundary limits of numbers were used for analyzing the research questions.

4.50-5.00	-	Very Much Extent
3.50-4.49	=	Much Extent
2.50-3.49	=	Undecided
1.50-2.49	=	Little Extent
0.50-1.49	=	No Extent

In taking decisions a null hypothesis was rejected if a calculated t-ratio was greater than or equal to the critical t-ratio at .05 level of significance. Otherwise it will be accepted.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question 1

To what extent are the identified factors affecting community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes in Anambra state/

Table 1

Mean Scores on the Possible Factors Affecting Active Community Participation in Adult Literacy and Non Formal Education Programmes

Item No	Factors	Mean	Remark
1	Lack of Financial Support from the Government	4.52	VHE
2	Lack of adequate fund to support activities of the programme	4.58	VHE
3	Bad leadership	3.21	UD
4	Health Problems	3.10	UD
5	Family Problems	1.55	L_LE_
6	Not interested in learning new skills	2.11	L_LE_
7	Satisfied with acquired skill	1.65	LE
8	Lack of facilities for learning	4.51	VHE
9	Difficulty in Mobilizing learners to enroll in the programme	2.57	UD
10	Lack of qualified personnels that handles the programme	3.61	ME
11	Lack of awareness by the communities	3.00	UD
12	Inability to cope with new skills .	3.02	UD
13	Satisfied with acquired skill	2.81	UD

14	Great percentage of illiterates in your community	3.87	ME
15	Belief that there is no gain in learning a skill	3.03	UD
16	Belief that there is more gain in buying and selling business	3.50	ME
17	Belief that learning a new skill takes long time	3.51	ME
18	Fear of failure	2.87	UD

Table 1 shows results of data collected in respect of possible factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes. It shows that lack of adequate fund, lack of financial support from the government, lack of facilities for learning, great number of illiterates in communities, lack of qualified personnels that handles the programme, belief that it takes long time to learn a skill and choice of buying and selling as better business are factors affecting communities in Anambra State, while participating in adult and non-formal education. They have mean-points of 4.58, 4.52, 4.51, 3.87, 3.67, 3.51 and 3.50 respectively. The respondents identified family problems, no interest in learning new skills, satisfied with acquired skills as factors affecting them to a little extent. The items have mean-point of 1.55, 2.11, 1.65 respectively. They were however undecided on the following factors; Bad leadership, health problems, difficulty in mobilizing learners, lack of awareness by the community, inability to cope with new skills, satisfied with acquired skills, belief that there is no gain in 1 earning a skill and fear of failure. The items have mean points of 3.21, 3.10, 2.57, 3.00, 3.02, 2.81, 3.03 and 2.87 respectively.

Research Question 2

To what extent could the identified strategies be adopted for active participation in adult and non-formal education programmes in Anambra Slate?

Table 2

Mean scores on the strategies that could be adopted for Active Participation in Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes

Item No	Factors	Mean	Remark
19	Advocacy visits to community leaders	3.51	ME
20	Honour to good leaders	3.58	ME'
21	Training of community members on leadership, management, monitoring and evaluation	3.67	ME
22	Embarking on health campaigns by the government	•2.16	LE
23	Embarking on literacy awareness campaigns by the government	3.50	UD
24	Provision of fund and necessary facilities by the and international agencies	4.60	VHE[
25	Sensitizing and mobilizing of community members on importance of functional literacy and non-formal education	3.55	ME
26	Special training for instructors and village education committee members that manages the programmes	3.67	ME
27	Providing micro-credit for participantds in the programme	4.61	VHE
28	Helping community members to learn skills related to their needs	3.54	ME

Table 2 shows that the respondents accepted all but one enlisted strategies as suitable for active participation of community members in adult literacy and non-formal education. The strategies include the following: provision of micro credits for adult learners, provision of fund and necessary facilities by the government and international agencies, training of community members on leadership and management skills, honouring good leaders, sensitizing and mobilizing community members on the importance of functional literacy and non-formal education. Others include helping community members to learn skills related to their needs, special training for instructors and village education committee members, advocacy visits to community leaders and embarking on literacy awareness campaign.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on factors affecting their active participation in adult literacy and Non-formal Education Programmes.

Table 3

T-test on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Respondents on the Factors Affecting their Participation in Adult literacy and Non Formal Education Programmes.

Source of Variation	N	X	sd	df	t-cal	t-crit	P>05
Male	210	4.47	2.21	473	0.25	1.96	N.S
Female	265	4.42	1.16				

The data in Table 3 indicate that at .05 level of significance and 473 degree of freedom, the calculated t- 0.25 is less than the critical t- 1.96. Therefore the first null hypothesis is accepted. The researcher then concludes that male and female respondents do not differ significantly in their views on the factors affecting their participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of urban and rural respondents on the factors affecting their participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes.

Table 4

T-test on the Mean Ratings of Urban And Rural Respondents on the Factors Affecting their Participation in Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education Programmes

Source of Variation	N	X	sd	Df	t-cal	t-crit	P>.05
Urban	311	3.34	1.87	4.73	1.51	1.96	N.S
Rural	164	3.15	1.16				

The data in Table 4 indicates that at .05 level of significance and 473 degree of freedom, the calculated t-1.51 is less than the critical t, 1.96. The second null hypothesis is therefore accepted. The researcher then concludes that the mean scores of the respondents from urban and rural locations do not differ significantly on factors affecting their participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programme.

Discussion of Findings

The results of analysis in Table 1, identified lack of adequate fund, lack of financial support and lack of facilities as the three major factors affecting activities of adult literacy and non-formal education programme. This is in-line with the report of Ani (2002) Egenti (2005) Development goals report (2005) and Onwudiwe (2007) which found lack of adequate funds and facilities as major factors against active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programme. It was further revealed in the study that high illiteracy level in communities and lack of qualified personnels that handles the programme militate against participation in the programme. These findings are similar with the findings of Egenti (2005) but contrary with Onwudiwe (2007). However, the findings that it takes long to learn a skill and preference for buying and selling may be associated with the mad rush for money and wrong value system associated with the, youths of Anambra State.

The result of analysis in Table 2, agreed that eight out of the nine enlisted strategies could be adopted for active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programme. These findings corroborates with the findings of Fafunwa (1992) and Omoniyi (2001). From the result of test of hypotheses presented in Table 2 and 3, it was found that the factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes did not differ significantly as a result of gender and location of learning centres. This implies that the same factors affect both male and female and urban and rural respondents in the programme and so any strategy

adopted for active participation should be applicable to all, regardless of their gender and location.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there are many factors affecting active community participation in adult literacy and non formal education programmes among which lack of funds and facilities are prominent.

Recommendations

- Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:
- The Anambra State government should adequately fund the state Agency for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education for improved mass literacy delivery in the state.
 - The Anambra State government through the Anambra State Agency for mass literacy, adult and non-formal education should provide micro-credit, equipment, facilities and instructional materials for participants in adult and non-formal education programme.
 - Anambra State government should intensify re-orientation and building of capacities through training and retraining of personnels who handle adult and non-formal education programmes.
 - Re-orientation is also required in the lives of youths to enable them shun the get rich quick syndrome and embrace life skills which will enable them face challenges of the present era..
 - Literacy campaigns should be mounted and efforts should be made to resuscitate the dwindling number of basic literacy centres in communities in order to increase the level of literacy in the state.

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