



Management of Adult Literacy Programmes and Achievement of Mass Literacy Goals in Plateau State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the management of adult literacy programmes and the achievement of mass literacy goals in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives and three research questions. A cross-sectional survey research design and ex-post facto research design were adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 85 programme facilitators, 927 adult learners, and 94 State Agency for Mass Literacy Education officers, totalling 1,106 respondents across 45 adult literacy centres in Plateau State. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 185 adult learners, 17 facilitators, and 19 Area officers, giving a total of 221 respondents. One instrument, titled the Adult Literacy and Mass Literacy Goals Questionnaires (ALPAMLGQ), were validated by three experts. Reliability was established using the test-retest method over a two-week interval, and scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation method, yielding a reliability index of 0.70. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer all research questions. The study found that the Plateau State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education does not mobilise learners through mass media, and staff employed in adult literacy centres are not supervised by the Ministry of Education or the State Agency. It is therefore recommended that adult learners be mobilised through mass media such as radio, television, and newspaper advertisements to encourage participation. Supervisors should regularly monitor centres and provide vocational skills training to learners.

INTRODUCTION

Adult literacy education is a specialised form of education designed for adults who are illiterate, with the primary aim of addressing educational deficits incurred during childhood or youth. These deficits are often considered inadequate for later stages of life. The adult literacy programme emerges from the broader educational umbrella of adult and non-formal education, which encompasses various forms of adult learning and continuing education. According to Montoya (2018), adult literacy is a fundamental aspect of education for illiterate adults because it leads to the acquisition of reading, writing, and computational skills that were previously absent. When made functional, these skills become applicable to the socio-economic lives of adults.

The adult literacy programme is specifically designed to assist adults who could not acquire basic education during childhood to compensate for their loss and compete favourably in society. The programme also aims to help the nation achieve Education for All. However, despite these noble intentions, statistics indicate that most centres lack learners, and the few that have learners lack adequate centre facilities and management support.

Adult literacy programmes benefit various groups, including illiterate farmers, women frying bean cakes, tomato sellers, mechanics, and other artisans in the state. These programmes encompass basic literacy, post-literacy, skill acquisition, and functional literacy. It is believed that any adult learner who completes the three prescribed stages of adult literacy will have their illiteracy status liquidated, opening doors for participation in socio-

economic activities within their community and for further education through continuing education courses in the formal education sector. The programme aims to ensure the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative skills, communicative abilities, and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral, and civic values needed for laying the foundation for lifelong learning. Literacy is often likened to a tool that helps individuals improve themselves intellectually and economically while making them socially and politically relevant in society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

The Nigerian government's intervention in the management of adult literacy programmes is demonstrated through provisions in the National Policy on Education and the establishment of management bodies, including the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education at the federal level and the Plateau State Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education at the state level. The government has integrated adult literacy programmes into the Basic Education framework and developed an adult literacy curriculum. Additionally, the government has engaged appropriate bodies to dialogue with international donor agencies on cooperation in adult literacy to ensure education for all. Despite these interventions, many illiterate adults and youths continue to roam the streets (National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, NMEC, 2017).

Several challenges appear to hinder the effective management of adult literacy programmes, including poor supervision, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, poor provision and maintenance of resources, insufficient trained facilitators, lack of awareness, poor

planning, and lack of political interest. Okoro (2017) found that women seeking enrolment in adult literacy programmes face challenges such as lack of time, heavy domestic workloads, and long distances to centres. The present researcher also observed that many interested adult learners seem unaware of the existence of adult literacy centres and the programmes they are expected to enrol in, leading to problems of inaccessibility.

Nigeria bears the burden of the largest number of out-of-school children globally, estimated at over 13 million, representing 12% of the global total (Global Monitoring Report, 2019). This implies that these children will grow into adults without completing basic education, thereby increasing the illiteracy rate in society. The Global Monitoring Report (2019) further indicates that 69% of Nigerian adults are literate, while 150 million Nigerians, representing 31% of adults, remain illiterate. The National Population Commission (2021) reports that Plateau State has a total adult population of 2.6 million, of which 46.58% are literate and 53.42% are illiterate.

Despite frantic efforts through the establishment of the Nigeria National Council for Adult Education (1971), the Administration and Management Agencies of Adult Education (1980), and the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (1990) at the National level, as well as the Plateau State Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education at the state level, illiteracy persists. The desired goal of driving literacy programmes to their rightful place in educational development has not been achieved.

Bacchus (2019) sees adult literacy as one of the academic endeavor that is saddled with the responsibility of solving socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental problems. This is positive association between adult literacy programmes and increased levels of self-esteem and high levels of knowledge and skills thereby encouraging positive and active engagement of people in their own development. This noble academic effort would not achieve mass literacy if regular supervision of adult literacy programme is not carried out. Ozoemena (2018) observed that the challenges facing the programme is creating awareness to adult literacy programme because large percentage of the people are not mobilized for the programme in some communities. This hinders the achievement of Mass Literacy, Adult and non-Formal Education goals in the State.

MANAGEMENT OF ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME

The goals of adult literacy programmes is to facilitate the successful achievement of the Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education objectives. The guidelines as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) include; public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement, data collection and analysis of human and material resources, planning, monitoring and evaluation, facilitator recruitment, education, training, re-training, motivation,

provision of infrastructure, provision of enriched curricula, provision of textbooks and instructional materials, improved funding, and management of the entire process of the Adult Literacy programme. Of these nine guidelines, stakeholders have expressed concerns over lack of serious attention to the implementation of the adult literacy programme, especially in four of the guidelines namely: public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement, teacher recruitment, education, training, retraining and motivation, infrastructure as well as monitoring/supervision and evaluation (Oguche, 2016). For any programme to succeed, the community where it is implemented must be fully involved, especially where awareness is created. There is the need for public enlightenment and social mobilization to create awareness of the privileges and rights which would ensure that stakeholders view adult literacy programme as the people's programme.

The Adult literacy programme management issue that is of concern to stakeholders is the provision of infrastructure. Infrastructural facilities are the hardware facilities in the school design to facilitate and stimulate educational programmes (Richard, 2016). They are the school buildings, library, laboratory, workshop, sport/games equipment and transport facilities among others. The author further noted that classrooms, furniture, equipment and other instructional materials are inadequate and are not in good shape due to neglect. The success of a programme such as the Adult literacy depends largely on adequate mobilization and sensitization of members of the society within the rural and urban locations. If properly carried out, mobilization and sensitization would attract grassroots' participation in terms of mobilizing for funds, development, and the maintenance of needed equipment, facilities and infrastructures, all of which are necessary for the successful implementation of the Adult literacy programme.

FME, (2019) mentioned some resources that supposed to be provided in the adult learning centers to include the following; photocopier machine, word processing and type-setting, library services, telephone, television. Video, radio, and scanning machines, human resources such as facilitators inclusive. Others are: textbooks, whiteboard, school buildings, water and computers.

VOCATIONAL SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF MASS LITERACY GOALS

Vocational skill training plays an essential role in improving the well-being of adult learners because it increases productivity, it empowers individuals to become self-reliant and it stimulates entrepreneurial spirit in them. It awakens the hitherto lying potentialities of the adult learners while at the same time building strong human resources. Vocational skill training is tied

to strengthening social links of a community through provision of local employment, creativity and sustainable existence (Adedokun, Agboola & Adeyemo, 2020). Vocational skill training is sometimes referred to as career and technical education, prepares people to work as technician or as a tradesman or artisan. The World Bank (2019), World Development Report on the future work emphasized the fact that vocational education is important to enable workers compete in a changing labour market where technology plays an important role.

Ariagada and Ziderman, (2022) found that adult from vocational stream employed in occupations related to their field of study had significantly higher earnings than regular academic graduates in Brazil. This implies that adults who are not academically sound should be encouraged to enroll in adult education and training be it in form of apprenticeship or through non-formal vocational adult education. This will put them on a sound footing of being self-reliant and thereby being able to contribute immensely to the rural community development.

Research on the importance of vocational skills and training was carried out in Thailand by Moenjok and Warswick (2022). The study revealed that a much higher return was found over and above general education at the same level. This points out that developing skill of people whether in rural or urban communities is germane to development. This is also being done in Nigeria through various programmes where government funds various skills development programmes such as National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Youth Enterprise with Innovations in Nigeria (Vasudeva, 2021). This that means skills of rural population should be upgraded to generate productivity. Through education rural population will be able to access important information needed to bring about upliftment in their living standards leading to an overall transformation of rural communities. The implication is that of making occupational (vocational education) an essential part of rural development.

Ameh (2015) found that planning and recruitment of grassroots personnel were done to a great extent, and available resources were utilized to a great extent. However, the study recommended that management should provide more instructional materials and infrastructural facilities. The present study compares its findings with those of Ameh (2015) to understand the situation in Plateau State.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to evaluate the management of adult literacy programmes and the achievement of mass literacy, adult, and non-formal education goals in Plateau State, Nigeria, specifically to:

1. examine the extent of supervision of adult literacy programmes in Plateau State;

2. determine the extent of vocational skills acquired in adult literacy programme centres in Plateau State;
3. identify the extent to which resources are available in adult literacy centres in Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of adult literacy programme supervision in Plateau State?
2. What vocational skills are acquired in adult literacy centres in Plateau State?
3. To what extent are resources available in adult literacy centres in Plateau State?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted cross-sectional survey research design specifically the ex-post facto research design. The cross-sectional survey design ensured that data were gathered from a sample and the findings generalised to the entire population (Ugodulunwa 2020). This design was deemed effective and relevant for gathering data on the Management of Adult Literacy Programmes and the Achievement of Mass Literacy Goals in Plateau State, Nigeria.

The population of the study comprised 85 facilitators, 927 adult learners, and 94 State Agency for Mass Literacy Education officers in Plateau State, Nigeria, totalling 1,106 respondents across 45 adult literacy centres. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. The state has three senatorial zones, each containing Local Government Areas. Two local government areas were randomly selected from each senatorial district using the hat and draw method. The final sample consisted of 17 facilitators, 185 adult learners, and 19 area officers, giving a total of 221 respondents across 15 centres in Plateau State.

One instrument, titled the Adult Literacy and Mass Literacy Goals Questionnaire (ALPAMLGQ), was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts: one in Educational Management, one from the Adult Education Unit, and one from the Research, Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the University of Jos, Faculty of Education, and Department of Education Foundations. The checklist was also given to two experts alongside the objectives and research questions to assess adequacy, clarity, and the extent to which the checklist measured what it was designed to measure.

Reliability of the ALPAMLGQ was established using the test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered to 50 respondents consisting of adult learners, facilitators, and area officers and re-administered to the same respondents after a two-week interval. Both scores were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation method to determine consistency over time. A reliability index of 0.70 was

obtained and considered reliable (Ugodulunwa, 2020). The instrument was a researcher-designed questionnaire modified on a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1), Undecided (0).

Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, simple percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used to analyze the data and answer the research questions. The criterion mean for decision-making was

set at 3.00. Any item with a mean score of 3.00 or above was considered "agreed" or "available," while any item with a mean score below 3.00 was considered "disagreed" or "not available."

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the extent of adult literacy programme supervision in Plateau State?

Table 1: Extent of Supervision of Adult Literacy Programmes in Plateau State

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	Supervisors supervised adult literacy centres regularly in Plateau State	22	2.95	1.253	disagree
2	The resources are supervised regularly by the management in adult literacy centres	22	2.95	1.29	disagree
3	Resources such as desks, chairs, and tables are promptly repaired in adult literacy centres when spoilt	22	2.95	1.253	disagree
4	Plateau State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education mobilises learners through mass media resources	22	2.41	1.008	disagree
5	The Ministry of Education supervises the staff employed in adult literacy centres	22	2.09	0.684	disagree
6	Government provides funds to run adult literacy programmes in Plateau State	22	2.09	0.811	disagree
7	The management provides certificates to learners in adult literacy programmes	22	4.18	0,907	agreed
8	The supervisors control the behaviour of students and teachers in adult literacy centres	22	4.14	0.468	disagree
9	The management directs the activities in adult literacy centres	22	2.44	1.280	Disagree
10	The supervisors supervised the adult literacy programmes	22	2.95	1.999	disagree

Grand Mean | 3.20

Table 1 shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10 had mean scores below the criterion mean of 3.00, ranging from 2.09 to 2.95, indicating disagreement. This implies that adult literacy centres and resources are not regularly supervised, provided, or utilised properly by management. Resources such as desks, chairs, and tables are not promptly repaired. The Plateau State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education does not

mobilise learners through mass media, and staff employed in adult literacy centres are not supervised by the Ministry of Education. Only items 7 and 8 (provision of certificates and control of student/teacher behaviour) received mean scores above 3.00.

Research Question Two: What vocational skills are acquired in adult literacy centres in Plateau State?

Table 2: Vocational Skills Acquired in Adult Literacy Programmes in Plateau State

S/N	Skill	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Bead making	2.73	1.352	Disagree
2	Hair dressing	2.18	0.913	Disagree
3	Tailoring	2.50	0.913	Disagree
4	Soap making	2.55	1.057	Disagree
5	Pomade making	2.09	0.684	Disagree
6	Carpentry	2.36	1.049	Disagree

Grand Mean | 2.40 | Disagree

Table 2 presents the vocational skills acquired in adult literacy programmes in Plateau State. The mean scores for all items ranged from 2.09 to 2.73, all below the 3.00 criterion mean. This indicates that bead making, hair dressing, tailoring, soap making, pomade making, and

carpentry are not mostly offered in the adult literacy centres surveyed.

Research Question Three: To what extent are resources available in adult literacy centres in Plateau State?

Table 3: Extent of Availability of Resources in Adult Literacy Centres

S/N	Resource	Availability (A)	%	Not available (NA)	%
1	Textbook	3	42	2	29
2	Whiteboard	5	71	2	29
3	Reference book	2	29	4	57
4	Lesson plan	2	29	3	42
5	Charts	1	14	4	57
6	flashcards	0	0	6	86
7	Workbooks	2	29	5	71
8	Sewing machines	2	29	3	42
9	Hair driers	0	0	6	86
10	School building	0	0	5	71
11	Facilitators	6	86	0	0
12	Water	4	57	1	14
13	Rest room	3	43	0	0
14	Electricity	4	57	2	29
15	Desk	3	42	2	29
16	Tables	3	42.9	3	42.9
17	Computer	3	42.9	3	42.9
18	Library	3	42.9	4	57
19	Sport facilities	3	42.9	4	57.1

Table 3 shows that whiteboards, facilitators, water, and electricity were adequately available. Rest rooms were inadequately available. The following resources were not available: reference books, charts, flashcards, workbooks, hair driers, school buildings, libraries, and sport facilities.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings from Research Question One revealed that adult literacy centres and resources in Plateau State are not regularly supervised, provided, or utilised properly by management. Specifically, the Plateau State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education does not mobilise learners through mass media, and staff employed in adult literacy centres are not supervised by the Ministry of Education or the State Agency. This finding aligns with Ozoemena (2018), who observed that a large percentage of people in some communities are not mobilised for adult literacy programmes, hindering the achievement of mass literacy goals. The finding also corroborates Okoro (2017), who identified lack of awareness as a major challenge. However, the present finding contrasts with Ameh (2015), who reported that planning and recruitment of grassroots personnel for mass literacy programmes in Kogi State were carried out to a great extent. This suggests that Plateau State lags behind other Nigerian states in this regard.

Regarding Research Question Two, the study found that vocational skills such as bead making, hair dressing, tailoring, soap making, pomade making, and carpentry are not offered in most adult literacy centres in Plateau State. This finding is concerning given the established importance of vocational skills. Adedokun, Agboola, and Adeyemo (2020) emphasised that vocational skill training increases productivity, empowers individuals to become self-reliant, and stimulates entrepreneurial spirit. The World Bank (2019) also highlighted the importance of vocational education in enabling workers to compete in changing labour markets. The absence of these skills in Plateau State's adult literacy centres represents a missed opportunity for adult learners to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

With respect to Research Question Three, the study revealed significant resource deficiencies in adult literacy centres. While whiteboards, facilitators, water, and electricity were available, critical resources such as reference books, charts, flashcards, workbooks, hair driers, school buildings, libraries, and sport facilities were lacking. This finding supports Rechar (2016), who noted that classrooms, furniture, equipment, and instructional materials are often inadequate and in poor condition due to neglect. The finding also aligns with Donnell (2018), who identified the effective utilisation of available resources as a major challenge in managing adult literacy programmes. The absence of proper school buildings is particularly troubling, as it suggests that

many adult literacy centres operate in unsuitable environments.

The overall pattern of findings indicates systemic management failures in Plateau State's adult literacy programmes. The lack of supervision, absence of vocational skills training, and deficiency of essential resources collectively undermine the achievement of mass literacy goals. These findings have significant implications for policy and practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Plateau State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education should ensure that officers supervise adult literacy centres regularly. Regular supervision will help ensure that resources invested in adult literacy programmes are not wasted and that programme quality is maintained.
2. The management of adult literacy programmes should provide vocational skills training in areas such as hair dressing, tailoring, bead making, pomade making, carpentry and soap making. These skills will enable adult learners to become self-reliant and contribute meaningfully to their communities' economic development.
3. Government and relevant agencies should provide essential resources for adult literacy centres, including school buildings, computers, textbooks, desks, libraries, and other instructional materials that can improve teaching and learning outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made, the supervision of adult literacy programmes in Plateau State is inadequate. Centres are not regularly supervised, resources are not properly utilised, and learners are not mobilised through mass media. The absence of effective supervision undermines programme quality and accountability. Vocational skills are largely absent from adult literacy curricula in Plateau State. Learners are not being equipped with practical skills that could enhance their economic self-sufficiency and contribute to rural development. This represents a significant gap between programme intentions and outcomes.

Resource availability in adult literacy centres is grossly inadequate. Essential instructional materials, proper school buildings, libraries, and sport facilities are missing from most centres. While some basic resources such as whiteboards and water are available, the overall resource environment is not conducive to effective teaching and learning. The cumulative effect of these deficiencies is that the mass literacy goals set by national

and state policies remain largely unachieved in Plateau State. Without significant improvements in supervision, vocational skills provision, and resource availability, adult literacy programmes will continue to fall short of their potential to transform the lives of illiterate adults and contribute to societal development. The state and local governments must work collaboratively and urgently to address these management challenges if the goal of mass literacy is to be realised.

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