

Implementation of Adult Community Literacy Programme in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The main thrust of this study was to investigate the implementation of adult community literacy programme in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study one research question and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was eight hundred and four (804) comprising (93) adult facilitators and (711) adult learners in adult literacy centres within the study area. A sample of 804 respondents was used for the study. The study used census sampling technique. The questionnaire titled “Implementation of Adult Community Literacy Programme Questionnaire” (IACLPQ) was the main instrument used for data collection. Three experts validated the instruments, two from the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the College of Education University of Calabar. The reliability estimates of 0.82 was established as a measure of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was the statistical technique employed to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the research hypothesis under study. The result of the analysis revealed that, there is no significant mean difference in the implementation of adult basic community literacy programme, adult basic community literacy programme in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that adult basic community literacy programme should be tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of adult learners, considering their cultural, social, and economic contexts.

Keywords: Implementation, Adult, Community, Literacy, Programme.

Introduction

Literacy is widely recognized as a foundational tool for human empowerment, social inclusion, and economic participation. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization emphasizes that literacy is not merely the ability to read and write, but a means of enabling individuals to function effectively in their societies, improve their livelihoods, and participate actively in decision-making processes. Literacy refers to the ability to read, write and understand a given language. It also encompasses the skills to use these abilities to effectively communicate, process information and navigate various aspects of life (Itari et al., 2016). Literacy is essential not only for personal development but also for active participation in society, as it enables individuals to access education, employment and civic opportunities. In a broader sense, literacy can extend beyond just reading and writing, including “digital literacy” (critically evaluating media

messages), and financial literacy (understanding financial concepts and managing money) (Muhammad, 2021; Asor, & Bessong, 2022).

Globally, efforts to promote adult literacy have been reinforced through international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Within this context, adult basic literacy is viewed as a lifelong learning strategy that contributes to poverty reduction, improved health outcomes, gender equality, and sustainable community development. Despite these global commitments, many developing countries, including Nigeria, continue to face challenges in effectively implementing adult literacy programmes (Brown, 2020; Anipi et al., 2023). In Nigeria, adult education has long been recognized as a vital instrument for national development. Government initiatives such as the establishment of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education reflect policy efforts aimed at eradicating illiteracy and promoting functional education among adults. These programmes are intended to equip learners with basic literacy skills as well as practical knowledge relevant to their socio-economic environment, including health education, civic awareness, and vocational competencies. However, the implementation of these programmes has often been constrained by inadequate funding, shortage of qualified facilitators, poor infrastructure, and limited monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Erim et al., 2014; Ahmed, 2023).

Adult community literacy programme has become a critical component of global development efforts, particularly in developing countries where a significant proportion of the adult population lacks fundamental reading, writing, and numeracy skills. Adult community literacy programme, also known as community-based literacy or community learning and development, is an organized programme aimed at promoting learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods. A common defining feature of community literacy is that programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants. The purpose of community learning and development is to develop the capacity of individuals and groups of all ages through their actions (Oboqua, et al., 2017; Ede, 2018). Community literacy programme offers a structured, effective way to respond to the challenge to improve public education because it expands the school's traditional role and creates a mutually interdependent relationship among home, school, and community. Adiele (2016); Olofu, (2024) reported that adult basic literacy programme is designed to address the educational deficits of adults who missed formal schooling opportunities.

Cross River State, like many other states in Nigeria, has made efforts to expand adult education through various literacy centres and community-based initiatives. The Calabar Education Zone, which comprises both urban and semi-urban communities, presents a unique context for examining the implementation of adult basic literacy programme (Oboqua, et al., 2017). While urban areas may benefit from relatively better access to educational resources, many adults especially women, low-income earners, and rural migrants still face barriers such as poverty, time constraints, and socio-cultural limitations that hinder their participation in literacy programmes. Furthermore, Ede

(2018) and Oboqua, et al., (2018) reported that the effectiveness of adult basic literacy programmes in the Calabar Education Zone depends not only on their availability but also on how well they are implemented. Commings (2018) averred that implementation involves critical elements such as curriculum relevance, teaching methods, availability of instructional materials, learner motivation, and institutional support. In many cases, there is a disconnect between policy formulation and actual practice at the grassroots level, leading to suboptimal outcomes. This raises concerns about whether the intended objectives of adult literacy programmes such as improving literacy levels, enhancing socio-economic productivity, and fostering community development are being achieved.

Ayantunji (2023) investigated community literacy programme in Nigeria: issues, perspectives and challenges. The objective of the study was to examine the challenges and prospects of community literacy programme in Nigeria was anchored on participatory development theory. The researcher employed the descriptive survey research method. From a projected population of 162,324, the researchers used Australian sample size calculator to arrive at a sample size of 384. Questionnaire served as instrument of data collection. Simple percentage, frequency count and Bar chart was used to analyze data for the study. Findings of the study revealed that community literacy programme faces challenges such as poor perception by the public, marginalization and lack of funding by the government of the day.

Implementation of adult community literacy programme in Egor local government area of Edo state was investigated by Abate (2022). The study was meant to study the problems of implementation of adult basic community literacy programmes in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Five adult literacy centres were used for the study. The population used for the study is the programme coordinator, teachers, participants, non-participants of the programme and the sample is one hundred respondents. The ages range between 20 and 70. Questionnaires were the instrument used for data collection. The data collected were and used with the use of frequency and percentage tables, and descriptive methods. The findings of the study revealed that participants were between the ages of 20 and 70 years and their occupations included farming, trading and artisans. The literacy centres were grossly inadequate. The attitude of some adults towards the programme is not encouraging. The materials supplied by the government were inadequate and untimely. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that the local government to solve the problems of mobility and distance to the participants. The organizers should embark on effective method of publicity of the programme using media and public lectures on the usefulness of community literacy programme. The government should supply adequate fund and materials regularly for the participants.

Factors affecting adult' enrollment in community literacy programme in Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria was carried out by Ededeh & Homevor (2019). The study focused on adults' enrolment in community literacy programme in Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to: examine the economic, social and psychological factors affecting adults' enrollment in community literacy programme. Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for the study.

Sample comprised of 150 respondents made up of 30 adult facilitators and 120 adult learners in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education in FCE(T), Omoku. A 22-item questionnaire was used as the study instrument titled "Factors Affecting Students Enrolment in community literacy programme. It had a Cronbach Alpha reliability Coefficient value of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions and z-test statistical tool was used to test the three hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. The result of the study showed that high rate of unemployment, school fees charges, inability to afford learning materials, inability of parents to sponsor due to gender disparity, inability to access community scholarship due to gender inequality, sexual harassment, cult activities in schools, lack of role models, problem of seclusion, amongst others are factors affecting adults' enrolment in community literacy programme.

Literacy remains a powerful tool for personal, social, and economic transformation. In Southern Education zone of Cross River State, despite decades of adult education initiatives, illiteracy continues to be a significant challenge, particularly among rural and marginalized populations. According to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), over 38% of Nigeria's adult population remains non-literate (NMEC, 2021). This situation severely undermines efforts to reduce poverty, promote civic participation, and achieve sustainable development, especially in areas where access to formal education remains limited. In response to the widespread illiteracy, the Federal Government of Nigeria and its development partners have implemented several adult basic literacy programmes across the country. These programmes are intended to equip adult learners with foundational literacy and numeracy skills, enhance their functional knowledge, and improve their livelihoods. However, the success of these initiatives is heavily dependent on effective implementation, which requires adequate planning, funding, trained personnel, learner motivation, community participation, and sustained political will.

Many communities in Southern Education Zone face infrastructural deficits, poverty, low school enrolment rates, and gender disparities conditions that are typically associated with high adult illiteracy levels. In addition, preliminary observations and reports suggest that adult literacy centres in the study area are often under-resourced, poorly coordinated, and lack consistent monitoring. This issue has led to an increase in Illiteracy which directly hinders economic progress. Individuals who are illiterate often struggle to find well-paying jobs or advance in their careers, limiting their earning potential. This leads to a cycle of poverty that can persist across generations. On a broader scale, high illiteracy rates result to slower economic growth, as a large portion of the population cannot contribute effectively to skilled industries or adapt to technological changes. Despite government policy frameworks such as the National Policy on Education (NPE) and strategic goals aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education for All), there appears to be a disconnect between policy intentions and ground-level realities in the study area also NGOs and community initiatives have supported reading and literacy promotion projects (such as volunteer training and reading activities in select communities). Despite this effort the problem still persists. Observation shows that funding for

adult literacy programme (and literacy materials) is severely inadequate. Government allocations (state, local, and federal), NGO funding, and community contributions fall short of what's needed for effective implementation.

Furthermore, monitoring of literacy programmes (especially adult basic literacy) is inadequate, with few regular checks, lack of expert oversight, and insufficient logistics for follow-up. This weakens programme delivery and outcomes. The poor implementation of adult literacy programme has led to low productivity among the rural farmers, environmental health hazard, inability to access loan from government to boost their business activities, lack of health information, high maternal mortality rate and high poverty level. Also, high rates of social problems such as insecurity, inequalities, economic instability, teenage pregnancy and hunger are still paramount in the study area. It is therefore based on the above that this study sought to assess the extent of the implementation of adult basic literacy programme in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to assess the implementation of adult community literacy programme in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study specifically seeks to assess the extent of implementation of:

1. Adult basic community literacy programme in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research question

1. What is the extent of implementation of adult basic community literacy programme in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Research hypothesis

1. There is no significant mean difference in the implementation of adult basic community literacy programme as perceived by facilitators and adult learners in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The descriptive survey design is an approach that is adopted when a study is concerned with obtaining data on, and determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of investigation. The area of the study is Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The area comprises of seven local government areas Viz; Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South and Odukpani. It lies between longitudes $7^{\circ}5^{\circ}E$ and $9^{\circ}28^{\circ}E$ of the equator and latitudes $4^{\circ}27^{\circ}N$ and $5^{\circ}32^{\circ}N$ of the equator along the Greenwich meridian. The area is bounded to the West by Abia and Akwa Ibom States, to the North by Abi, Yakurr, Obubra, Ikom and Etung LGAs in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, to the South by Atlantic Ocean and the Republic of Cameroun to the East.

The population of the study was eight hundred and four (804) comprising (93) adult facilitators and (711) adult learners in adult literacy learning centres within the study area. The adult facilitators and adult learners were considered appropriate for the study because of their maturity in the implementation of adult literacy programmes in their different communities. Therefore, they are in the best position to give authentic and useful responses on the implementation of adult literacy programme in their communities. In view of the representative and manageable population size for the study, census approach was adopted for the study. Census approach involves collecting data from every member of the population under study, rather than selecting a subset or sample. The sample of the study consisted of eight hundred and four (804) adult facilitators and adult learners drawn from adult literacy centers in the study area. The entire population of adult facilitators and adult learners was used due to their manageable size for the study.

A questionnaire tagged “Implementation of Adult Literacy Programme Questionnaire (IALPQ)” served as the study instrument for data collection. The instrument is a structured data collection tool developed to assess various dimensions related to the planning, delivery, monitoring, and effectiveness of adult literacy programmes. It is designed to gather quantitative data from stakeholders involved in adult education, including programme facilitators, and participants (learners). A scoring key of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), using the modified Likert’s scale was adopted to assess the implementation of adult literacy programmes in the study area. The instruments were validated by three experts, two from the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies and one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation all from the College of Education, University of Calabar. This was to ensure that the items in the instrument met the expectation of this study’s purpose. The reliability coefficient of 0.82 was established as a of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The coefficient was considered high enough for the instruments to be considered reliable for data collection. Independent t-test analysis was used to analyze data for the study.

Results

Hypothesis one: There is no significant mean difference in the implementation of adult community literacy programme as perceived by facilitators and adult learners in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State. The independent variable is age, while the dependent variable is implementation. Independent t-test analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 1.

The result in Table 1 revealed that the calculated t-values of -.958 is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with 802 of degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference in the implementation of adult community literacy programme as perceived by facilitators and adult learners in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State was retained. This implies that there is no significant mean difference in the implementation of adult community literacy programme as perceived by facilitators and adult learners in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State.

TABLE 1: Independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the implementation of adult community literacy programme as perceived by facilitators and adult learners (N=804)

Adult community literacy programme	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	p-value
Facilitators	93	20.9462	1.56292	-.958	.338
Adult learners	711	21.1772	2.25353		

* Significant at .05 level, p-value = .338, df = 802.

Discussion

Implementation of adult community literacy programme as perceived by facilitators and adult learners. The result of this hypothesis indicated that, there is no significant mean difference in the implementation of adult community literacy programmes as perceived by facilitators and adult learners in Southern Education Zone of Cross River Stat. The finding of this study is in line with that of Ayantunji (2023) who investigated community literacy programme in Nigeria: issues, perspectives and challenges. The objective of the study was to examine the challenges and prospects of community literacy programme in Nigeria. The study employed the descriptive survey research method. From a projected population of 162,324, the researchers used Australian sample size calculator to arrive at a sample size of 384. Questionnaire served as instrument of data collection. Simple percentage, frequency count and Bar chart was used to analyze data for the study. Findings of the study revealed that community literacy programme faces challenges such as poor perception by the public, marginalization and lack of funding by the government of the day. The study concluded that community literacy programme should be re-positioned to meet the ever increase demand of the present time in order to contribute meaningfully to national development.

The findings of the study also align with that of Abid, Ali and Ali (2021) who carried out a study on the factors affecting the performance of participants in adult community literacy programme. The main purpose of the study was to identify the factors affecting the performance of participant in adult community literacy programme in Udu local government area of Delta state, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey method of research, which entailed the use of the questionnaire instrument to collect data from the population of the study. The population of the adult learners was estimated at 380 adult learners spread across the study area. A sample size of 100 respondents was selected for this study. The sample size was drawn 38 each from the respective adult learning centers. The Taro Yemane (1960:240) statistical formula was used in determining the sample size. The study adopted three sampling techniques. The stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Descriptive statistics was used to analyzed data for the study. Findings of the study revealed that poor funding and non-availability of qualified adult instructors were the most serious factors affecting the good performance of participants in community literacy programme in the study area. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that adult learning

centers in the study area should be adequately funded and also, the various learning centers should be well staffed with qualified manpower.

Conclusion

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the implementation of adult basic literacy programs in Southern Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study's findings suggest that the implementation of adult basic literacy programs has been effective in providing adults with the foundational skills needed to read, write, and communicate effectively. This is a critical step in empowering adults to participate fully in their communities and improve their socio-economic status. The study's findings have implications for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders, highlighting the need for continued support and investment in adult literacy programs to promote sustainable development and improve the lives of adults in the study area and beyond.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion reached in this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and stakeholders should continue to provide support and resources for adult community literacy programs to ensure that adults have access to quality education.
2. Adult community literacy programs should be tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of adult learners, considering their cultural, social, and economic contexts.

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