

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME AMONG WOMEN IN ABIA STATE

ODO, COLLENS I. (PHD)¹ & UGWU, CHINWE U.²

¹Science Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

²Adult and Continue Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

collens.ikechukwu@gmail.com; uzomaugwu1@gmail.com

Abstract

This study is evaluating the impact of Adult education programme among women in Abia State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised 766 women who participated in Abia State women empowerment programmes in Ikwuano Local Government Area, Abia state. 535 women were proportionately sampled and used for the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire titled “Evaluating Impact of Adult Education Programmes among Women Questionnaire (EIAEPAWQ). The instrument was validated by three lecturers; one from Measurement and Evaluation in Department of Science Education and two from Adult Education department all in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics and overall reliability index of 0.86 was obtained which was high enough for the study. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The finding showed that Adult education has impacted women with requisite knowledge to contribute to decision on types of LGA development projects, programmes and needs assessment exercise and so on, for community development. The findings also revealed that functional literacy programme has enhanced women economic life to participate in community development and Economic status of women has improved due to the benefits of Skill acquisition programmes they experienced. It was recommended that Subsequent functional literacy programmes should be inclusive to cover women socio-economic life and Skill acquisition programmes should be sustained through innovative measures that can attract international relation.

Keywords: Evaluating, Adult education, Programme, Women

Introduction

Education is the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. It is the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills, for a profession. Education efforts that are deliberately chosen to influence and assist children with the aim of improving knowledge, physical and morals that can gradually deliver the child to the highest goal in order for the child to live a happy, and be beneficial to himself and society (Okpoko, 2018).

Education is a vital tool for the achievement of any sustainable development of the economy. Adult education in Nigeria has a long history. As far back as the 14th century, itinerant Islamic scholars and traders in the Muslim north of the country taught Arabic literacy through the study of the Koran. Later, Christian missionaries brought Western education to parts of southern and central Nigeria. Adult education is the practice of teaching and educating adults. Adult education gives hope to individuals who feel that they've come of age to learn the zeal to believe in themselves Onyenemezu (2018). It prepares and equips an individual by giving such a person a lifelong knowledge that will assist the

person to keep pace with the changing times. Adult education in Nigeria is not all about adult's ability to read and write, rather through adult education, awareness on the social, political cultural and economic environment of the adult is created. It also contains vocational, general, enterprise, professional and social development of an adult based training essential for the individual (Dave, 2019).

Adult education differs from educating children in several ways. One of the most important differences is that adults have accumulated knowledge and experience that can add to or hinder the learning experience. Another difference is that most adult education is voluntary; therefore, the participants are generally better motivated. Adults frequently apply their knowledge in a practical fashion to learn effectively. They must have a reasonable expectation that the knowledge recently gained will help them further their goals. In Nigeria, a more general example is that of the secondary schools dropout who returns to school to complete general education requirements. Most upwardly-mobile positions require at the very least a University diploma or equivalent. A working adult is unlikely to have the freedom to simply quit his or her job and go "back to school" full time. Public school systems and community colleges usually offer evening or weekend classes for this reason. In Europe this is often referred to as "second-chance", and many schools offer tailor-made courses and learning programs for these returning learners.

Adult Education for Women

There are very few large-scale projects cataloguing evidence of the extent, and nature of women's participation in adult education. It is found that before the early 1970s, evidence of women's participation had to be searched for amongst the general material published on adult education developments. In both the developed, and developing countries there are a number of studies which plot the position of women in specific areas of adult education development., Empirical studies have shown that the main motives for women are social security, independence, a wish to be of help to others, to be generally better educated, and to further their personal development (Onyeozu, 2017).

The acquisition of skills and knowledge is essential to the development of autonomous and productive individual women. Therefore, adult education offers a second chance to women who could not benefit from the formal school system, the opportunity to get useful knowledge and skills to improve their lots in the society. The process of development and its socio-economic challenges have modified the roles of women in our society (Allahadadi, 2017). These changing roles call for adequate preparation of women through formal career education or through adult and non formal education. For instance, the establishment of women education units in the federal and state ministries of education and the establishment and equipment of eighty eight (88) women adult education centres in the country by the federal ministry of education attested to the belief that education of women is the corner stone of development (Adelora & Olumokoro, 2018).

Surely, the inclusion of adult education in the National Policy on Education (1981) has ushered in an outlook to the concept of skill training with the introduction of pre-adult subjects such as wood work, metal work, electronics machines, local crafts, home economics and business studies which are skill acquisition oriented.

Under the policy, the training for occupations at the junior and senior secondary schools is basically pre-adult in preparation for entry into adult skills programmes in future by both men and women based on interest, aptitudes etc. also, women could acquire adult education at the Technical Colleges, Post Secondary Institute and through adult and non formal training and retraining programmes organized by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) at designated Adult Training Centres. In fact, government

programmes such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) has amplified the demand by women for adult skills development which in turn has necessitated the expansion of existing adult training centres and the creation of new ones by public and National Directorate of Employment (NDE). Such courses may be full time or part time, optional or compulsory on the job or off the job. Women trained can find employment with little capital as artisans, painters, printers, plumbers, etc. Adult education is a panacea against unemployment which is currently playing the nations. According to Oyitosu, (2017) the major occupation areas of adult education are agricultural, distributive education, home economics, health occupations, trade and industrial education, business and office education and technical education.

Women adult education programmes are important to all societies because they are mothers who are the first educators to children, who will grow up to be future leaders of any country. Okpoko (2018) supported this view by contending that education of women is critical to development, and make them invaluable assets to their families, communities, nation and the entire world. Implicitly, adult education spurs critical thinking among women towards proper decision making. Also, through this programme, women are equipped with skills for economic, political and social development. In support of this, (Laoye & Olomukor 2018) affirm that without literacy, the society cannot acquire the useful information required for stability and pleasure in their environment. It is based on this notion that literacy is said to be a human right in UNESCO (2017). Thus, it is a right to womanhood as well, and every woman no matter her status in the society is entitled to right to be literate. Literacy is expected to cultivate in people, the attitudes, skills, behaviours and abilities needed for their effectiveness in the society.

According to Asaolu (2019), when we want to empower women through Adult education, vocational education must be part of the content of such education designed for women. Vocational education as rightly observed by Asaolu (2019), will set women on the part of self-reliance and also on a platform in which they will be able to partake in decision making. In accordance with this assertion, Egbo (2016) contend that women, who are important members of families of the world, should be given literacy and not to be allowed to waste their endowed potentials. However, literacy education will play a crucial role in:

1. Promoting the development of instrumental knowledge (reading, writing and arithmetic) and skills for women to participate in needs identification in their community.
2. Changing of attitude of women toward issues that concern the development of their community.
3. Developing in the women, the capability to participate in decision making in development and maintenance of simplified accounts management of income meant for any community development project; and raising awareness of their roles towards the development of their community and the need for them to be involved fully in the process.

Through adult education, women are trained to become active in political, economic and social life and they are able to increase their levels of awareness for enhanced ability to lay claim on their rights. Skill acquisition programmes are programmes designed for improving women economic status by equipping them with relevant developmental skills. These programmes include, tailoring, bead making, hat weaving, fashion and design and catering (Laoye & Olomukor, 2018).

Women have advanced from mere producers of food at subsistence level to key players in the development of their community due to the benefits they derived from different government adult education programmes for the empowerment of women such as basic literacy programme, functional literacy programme, skill acquisition programme, cultural education programme, and so on. Women

in Abia State have been playing critical roles which include organizing themselves and taking responsibilities on how to manage their community needs/problems but their efforts are hampered mostly by their unempowered status which includes cultural barriers, illiteracy and limited access to political network. successive governments in Abia State and some Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) made concerted efforts towards provision of different education empowerment programmes such as women literacy, civic literacy, functional literacy programmes, and so on to bridge the gap that have been impeding women from participating in community development. Specifically, these programmes were meant to improve women status and empower them to actively participate in the community development programmes in their communities.

Since the introduction of the adult education programmes, women have benefited from these adult programmes and this prompted the researchers in evaluating the impact of the adult education programmes among women in Abia State. Therefore, this study is being carried out to evaluate the impact of adult education programme among women in Abia State. Evaluation is systematic and methodical, it assist an organization, program, design, project or any other intervention or initiative to access the aim or to ascertain the degree of value or achievement in regard to the aim or objectives (Staff, 2018).

Evaluation is based on empirical evidences and typically on social research methods, thus on the process of collecting and synthesizing evidence. It is the systematic implementation of the design, implementation or results of an initiative for the purpose of learning or decision making (Rosey, Lipsey & Freeman, 2017). According to Pawson and Tilley (2018), evaluation considers merit, worth, significance, value or quality. It may aim to identify what works, in what respect, to what extent, in what context and how. It may also focus on a wide range of topics including relevance, accessibility, comprehensiveness, integration, and fulfilment of objectives, effectiveness, impact, cost, efficacy, and sustainability (Yoabrough, 2018).

Evaluation can be conducted for the purpose of decision making, judgement, conclusion, findings, new knowledge, organizational development and capacity building in response to the needs leading to improvement, decision about future programme and contributing to organizational and social value (Yoabrough, 2018). It is on this bases that the research aimed at evaluating the impact of adult education programme among woman in Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of adult education programmes among women in Abia State. Based on this purpose, the specific objectives of the study were to:

1. determine the extent to which Adult education programme has empowered women with requisite knowledge to participate in decision making for the development of Abia State.
2. evaluate the extent to which functional adult educational programme has enhanced women economic life to participate in community LGA development in Abia State.
3. determine the extent to which skills acquired in women skill acquisition programmes has improved the economic status of women in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent has adult education programme empowered women with requisite knowledge to participate in decision making for the development of Abia State?
2. To what extent has functional adult education programme enhanced women economic life to participate in community and LGA development in Abia State?

3. To what extent has skills acquired in women skill acquisition programmes improved the economic status of women in Abia State?

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. The study area was Ikwuano Local Government Area of Abia State. The population of this study comprised 766 women who participated in Abia State women empowerment programmes in Ikwuano Local Government Area, Abia state. Out of which, 581 women were proportionately sampled. The instrument used for this study was a validated 20 items structured questionnaire titled ‘Impact of Adult Education Programmes among Women in Abia State. Questionnaire’ (IAEPAWAS), designed by the researcher, with a reliability index of 0.86. The instrument was validated by two Adult Education lecturers and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation all in Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

The administration of the instrument was done by the researcher with the help of two trained research Assistants. Out of 581 copies of questionnaire distributed, 535 were retrieved as dully filled and used for the analysis. The data obtained from the field work was analysed with mean and standard deviation. Decision on the acceptance of items were based on the real limit number of 0-1.9 very low extent (VLE), 2.0-2.49 low extent (LE), 2.50-3.49 high extent (HE) and 3.50-4.00 very high extent (VHE).

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent has adult education empowered women with requisite knowledge to participate in decision for the development of Abia State?

Table 1: Extent to which Adult Education has empowered women with requisite knowledge to participate in decision making for development of Abia State.

S/No.	ITEMS	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	I can now contribute to decision on needs identification for LGA development project in my State	2.73	0.69	HE
2.	I can now participate in needs assessment for LGA development in my State.	3.06	0.94	HE
3.	Woman are more empowered to partake in decision concerning type of LGA Development programme in my state	2.97	0.81	HE
4.	I can read and write properly and this has empowered me to be secretary in meetings of my LGA	2.85	0.72	HE
5.	I can now contribute to decision on types of LGA development project in my State,	2.77	0.70	HE
Pooled Mean		2.87	0.77	HE

Where \bar{X} = Mean, SD= Standard deviation, A= Agree, HE= High Extent

The result from table 1 shows that mean values of respondents on items 1-5 ranges from 2.73 to 3.06 which indicated high extent with pooled mean of 2.87 and standard deviation of 0.77, this implies that adult education have empowered women with requisite knowledge to participate in decision making

for development in Abia State to a high extent.

Research Question Two: To what extent has adult education programme enhanced women economic life to participate in community and LGA development in Abia State?

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Extent to which Adult Education Programme has enhanced women economic life to participate in community and LGA Development

S/No.	ITEMS	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6.	Through the financial empowerment I got from the financial adult education programme, I now know better how to accumulate wealth to be able to participate in resource mobilization for community development in my LGA.	2.93	0.89	HE
7.	Women are no longer dependent on their husband for money to pursue community development issues.	3.23	0.95	HE
8.	I earn more money now due to empowerment from the functional adult education.	2.97	0.81	HE
9.	Women in my community are doing well in their Vocation due to empowerment they got from the Functional literacy programme they enrolled in.	2.85	0.78	HE
10.	I can now differentiate between priority community Needs for community development driven	3.06	0.92	HE
Pooled Mean		3.00	0.87	HE

Where \bar{X} = Mean, SD= Standard deviation, A= Agree, HE= High Extent

Table 2 revealed that the mean values of respondent responses for items 6-10 ranges from 2.85-3.23 and a pooled mean values of 3.00 with standard deviation of 0.87. The mean responses are within the number range of 2.50-3.49. This imply that functional adult education programme to a high extent have enhanced women economic life to participate in community development in Abia State.

Research Question Three: To what extent has skills acquired in women skill acquisition programmes improved the economic status of women in Abia State?

Table 3: Mean Analysis of Extent Skills Acquired in Women Skill Acquisition Programmes has improved the Economic Status of Women.

S/No.	ITEMS	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
11.	I am now an employer of labour due to the	3.28	1.05	HE

	skill and empowerment I got from the skill acquisition programme.			
12	Women in my community pay their monetary contributions to community development regularly due to economic empowerment from the skills acquisition programme.	2.97	0.85	HE
13	I contribute to resources mobilisation for community development regularly due to my level of financial empowerment	3.19	0.98	HE
14	I now have the ability to contribute to provision of fund for buying equipment for community development.	3.31	1.11	HE
15	Women in my community are now participation in the provision of LGA development projects.	2.96	0.87	HE
	Pooled Mean	3.14	0.97	HE

Where \bar{X} = Mean, SD= Standard deviation, A= Agree, HE= High Extent

Table 3 revealed that the mean values of respondent responses for item 11-15 ranges from 2.96 - 3.31. From respondents of woman in the Abia state. The grand mean values of respondent responses on question three gave a pooled mean value of 23.14 and 0.97 standard deviation. The mean responses are within the number range of 2.50-3.49 this implies that respondents were of the opinion that skill acquisition programmes have improved the economic status of women and enable them to participate in community development in Abia State to a high extent.

Discussion of the Findings;

The finding showed that Adult education has impacted women with requisite knowledge to contribute to decision on types of LGA development projects, programmes and needs assessment exercise and so on, for community development. This finding is in accordance with Asaolu (2019) finding which established that women education (literacy and vocational) have positive effects on participation of women in need identification, planning, resource mobilization for community development, implementation and utilization of community development projects. Adelere and Olomukoro (2017) also affirmed that literacy empowers and it is the most essential of all educational skills.

The findings also revealed that functional literacy programme has enhanced women economic life to participate in community development. Education, formal or non-formal, is the basis for the full promotion and improvement of women status. This is in support of Dave (2019) observation that education of women had made ineffective the traditional belief that the place of the woman is the home. We have also seen that in this jet age, women have been a force to reckon with in the political and socio economic life of the nation. The role of women has gone beyond the four walls of their home and extends to all spheres of human endeavours in the development of the nation.

Economic status of women has improved due to the benefits of Skill acquisition programmes they experienced. According to Oyitosu (2018), empowerment, is a training process through which participants acquire skills in some vocational activities, decision-making, literacy, and effective participation in governance. Empowering women will equip them with the much-needed skills and provide them access to information and services to build capacity. In view of this Adelora and Olomukoro (2018) established that women education centres where women acquire skills in different vocational activities, such as dressmaking, knitting, embroidery, soap making, and catering, empowered them to meet their domestic and public obligations. In addition, Egbo (2016) reported that

literate women in Nigeria for example, reported confident enough to participate in community meetings, unlike illiterate women. Literate women have been known to contribute to the political stability and peace of a country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from every indication, adult educational programmes helped to enhance women through provision of knowledge and skills for improved social and economic status.

Recommendations

The researcher recommended that:

1. Subsequent functional literacy programmes should be inclusive to cover women socio-economic life.
2. Skill acquisition programmes should be sustained through innovative measures that can attract international relation.

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