

LEARNERS' INVOLVEMENT AS A CORRELATE OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION CENTRES IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated learners' involvement as correlate of their academic achievement in Basic Literacy Education Centres in Ondo State. The study was guided by two research questions and one hypothesis which was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The correlation survey research design was adopted in line with the stated purpose of the study. The population of the study comprised of 1,346 adult learners and 90 literacy facilitators in the 90 government-owned Basic Literacy Education Centres in Ondo State, Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling procedure involving the stratified, simple random and cluster sampling techniques were used to select a total of 708 adult learners from 45 government-owned Basic Literacy Education Centres in Ondo State as a sample of the study. The research instruments used were the Adult Learners Involvement Questionnaire (ALIQ) and the Adult Learners Achievement Test (ALAT). Face validity of the instruments was assured by the supervisors and other experts in the areas of Literacy Education, Educational Management and Educational Evaluation. The ALAT was tested for reliability using the Split half reliability technique; a coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. The ALIQ was tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha reliability technique and a coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. The data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using frequency count, percentages and mean statistics while the hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression. The major finding of the study revealed that Learners' involvement correlates their academic achievement. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that learners' involvement is a correlate to adult learners' achievement in Basic Literacy Education in Ondo State. It was, therefore, recommended that Centre Based Management Committee should ensure that the facilitators use the appropriate methodologies that will boost the involvement of learners in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Learners' involvement, Academic Achievement, Basic Literacy Centres

Introduction

Over the years, adult learning as an integral part of the education system has been recognized as a tool for societal development. As a specialized education programme, it is targeted at the individual adult, who seeks knowledge either as a medium of furthering academic endeavour or starting afresh. However, the significance of citizens' ability to read and write has made literacy one of the necessities of contemporary civilization and a major component of the entire adult education programme in Nigeria. Though basic literacy alone cannot be said to be a sufficient guarantee for development, nevertheless, it is a major component required for the

development of any nation. Literacy is an integral aspect of the right to education in Nigeria, and it is a necessity for achieving personal, social, economic, and political empowerment. It is a critical means of enhancing people's abilities to deal with the ever-changing challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy, and society.

The recognition of the relevance of literacy to development over the years has led to the acknowledgment of basic literacy as the focus of adult education in Nigeria and many other less-developed countries. The high rate of illiteracy which is detrimental to societal development has been an issue of concern to the Nigerian government as well as international bodies. This has spurred the enunciation of numerous efforts by different government administrations aimed at reducing the scourge of illiteracy and its associated problems in a nation. Basic literacy was described by NMEC (2017: 10) in its policy guidelines for Mass literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education ‘‘as a learning process designed to provide reading, writing and numeracy for youth and adults hindered or not opportune for formal school’’. The policy further revealed that Basic Literacy is equivalent to primary 1-3 of the formal education system and usually runs for 6-15 months.

In Ondo State which is the area under study, the state government through the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education established basic literacy centres, spreading across the local government areas of the state in a bid to promote access to education for all. Preliminary investigation revealed that there are ninety (90) government-owned basic literacy centres in Ondo State, with five in each Local Government Area. Admittance to literacy was provided through the established basic literacy centres where illiterate adults and youths are encouraged to enlist within their respective local government areas and communities. Aside from the establishment of the centres, adult education officers in different categories are recruited and deployed to mobilize illiterate adults for registration for basic literacy programmes and organize the entire learning system.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2018) cited in Olawale (2023) asserted that while the quest for literacy is being stressed by different states government administrations, the functionalities and sustainability of established basic literacy centres are in doubt and are evident in the high drop-out rates in literacy education programmes and high regression rates into illiteracy which has become a recurrent decimal. In a survey by the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) (2019), it was found that 35 per cent of the nation’s adult population was illiterate. Considering the huge sum of money the nation has put into basic literacy education centres and various mass literacy programmes, it is reprehensible that Nigeria as a nation still has such a high number of illiterates in this 21st century. For instance, the 2021 budget appropriation for NMEC stood at two billion, one hundred and fifty-five million, two hundred and forty-two thousand, nine hundred and ninety-three naira (N2,155,242,993); which is considered huge in relation to the present economic realities of the nation.

In Ondo State, the National Bureau of Statistics (2021) revealed that the level of literacy rate stands at 75.6% which is still far from the internationally recommended benchmark of 99.9%

literacy rate despite the existence of basic literacy education programmes in almost all communities in the State. The academic achievement of the adult client enrolled in the programme has not been satisfactory as many either relapse to illiteracy or do not complete the programme, and many failed to acquire the skills of literacy which they have come for in the programme.

The fundamental aim of teaching and learning process in basic literacy education centres is to acquire the desirable ability of reading and writing, communicate effectively and perform other simple tasks aided by the skills acquired. Basic literacy centres instituted by government and private bodies are aimed at reducing the level of illiteracy in the society through the provision of needed learning content. To this end, the extent to which this goal is achieved is a measure of the adult learners' academic achievement.

Aibuinuomo (2018) described academic achievement, which is often used interchangeably with learning performance is described as the extent to which the adult learners in basic literacy education programme has acquired the skills of reading, writing and numeracy. It can also be described as the outcome of the educational process which indicates the degree to which the adult learners, the facilitator, the curricular, and indeed the basic literacy programmes entirely have achieved the predetermined goals. Alkahli (2016) and Olawale et al. (2022) posited in their studies on predictors of learning performance of adult learners in basic literacy programmes in Sokoto State and Edo State revealed that learning performance of adult learners in an achievement test conducted in their studies were average and high respectively with several factors contributing to this outcome, one of which the involvement or participation of learners in the learning process is considered probable among these several factors.

The involvement of learners in the teaching and learning processes in basic literacy classes is also crucial to their academic achievement. No matter the effort of the facilitator, without the conscious involvement of adult learners in the teaching and learning process, academic achievement could be jeopardized. In this context, learner involvement is defined as an individual's ability to take care of his or her learning, which entails being responsible for various parts of learning; such as asking questions, completing a task, interacting with classmates and facilitators, goal-setting, self-monitoring, and taking actions to participate in the entire learning process. Phillips (2018) cited in Olawale (2023) defined it simply as the act of consciously participating in all teaching activities

Learners who are involved in all parts of teaching and learning learn more. Gibbs and Poskitt (2010) stated that adult learners are self-directed individuals and, thus ever willing to participate in the learning process in order to achieve the purpose for which they enrolled in the programme. Consequently, Ndiewo, Aloka, and Raburu (2016) revealed that a strong relationship exist between learner participation and achievement. Adelman (2006); Iam-On & Boongoen, (2015), further revealed that while this assertion above is valid, the ability of learners' involvement to predict outcomes depends on the individual adult learners and group. Involved learners usually devote their energy to studying, engage in learning activities, and

interact well with other members of the learning centre. Astin (2009) supported the notion that learners who participated actively in classroom discussion were more satisfied with the learning process. High academic achievement should occur on the part of the adult learners when both the facilitator and learner interact and actively participate in the learning activities. Learner's involvement should enhance learners' retention in the learning process and should have a positive impact on persistence and healthy competition (Azurdee, 2010). To investigate empirically the nexus among the variables as explained, this study seeks to examine adult learners' involvement as a correlate of their academic achievement in basic literacy centres in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine the learners' involvement as a correlate of their achievements in basic literacy education centres in Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To ascertain the level of involvement of learners in the learning process in basic literacy education centres in Ondo State.
2. To determine the level of adult learners' achievement in Basic Literacy Education Centres in Ondo State.
3. To determine if Learners' involvement does correlate with their academic achievement in basic literacy education centres in Ondo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the level of learners' involvement in Basic Literacy Education Centres in Ondo State?
2. What is the level of adult learners' achievement in Basic Literacy Education Centres in Ondo State?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

HO₁ Learners' involvement does not significantly correlate with their academic achievement in basic literacy education centres in Ondo State.

Methodology

The study employed the Correlation Survey Research Design in view of the nature of the variables under investigation and the objectives intended. The design shows the statistical association, prediction as well as the relationship among the variables; The population of this study comprised of one thousand three hundred and forty six (1346) adult learners in all the ninety (90) government-owned Basic Literacy Centres in Ondo State (Source: Ondo State ANFE, 2021). The sample size for this study consisted of a total of seven hundred and eight (708) adult learners selected from the forty-five (45) basic literacy centres across nine (9) selected local governments' areas in Ondo State. The multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting the sample as explained below.

Stage 1: The Stratified Sampling Technique was adopted to divide the population into Senatorial District of Ondo-North, Ondo South and Ondo Central.

Stage2: From each of the three strata (three (03) Senatorial Districts of the State) the simple random sampling technique using the balloting method was used to select three (03) local government areas totalling nine (09) local governments areas sampled for the study.

Stage 3: From the selected nine (09) local government areas, all the five (5) Government-owned Basic Literacy Centre in each Local Government Area totalling forty-five (45) Centres were adopted for the study. This means that fifty percent (50%) of the available basic literacy education centres in the state was used for the study. This was done using the cluster sampling technique.

Stage 4: Finally, from the forty-five (45) literacy centres in the sampled nine local government areas, seven hundred and eight (708) adult learners in the Basic Literacy Education Centres in the 2021/22 academic year were selected for the study through the cluster sampling technique.

Two research instruments, namely Adult Learners' Involvement Questionnaire (ALIQ and Adult Learner Achievement Test (ALAT)) were used to collect relevant data for the study. The Adult Learners' Involvement Questionnaire (ALIQ) was designed by the researcher. It was a close-ended questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert type scale (Very High, High, Moderate, Low and Very Low) which measured the extent to which learners participate in the learning activities of the basic literacy centre. The questionnaire was divided into two sections A and B. The section A sought for the demographic data of the corresponding adult learners while section B items were meant to determine the level of learners' involvement in classroom teaching and learning process. The ALAT was also adapted from the standardized basic Literacy and Numeracy Achievement (LaNA) Test designed by National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA, Ondo It was a multiple-choice test covering questions to test the basic reading, writing and numeracy abilities of the adult learners. Section A of the Instrument dealt with the respondents' demographic information while section B consisted of 20 items covering the basic reading, writing and numeracy ability of the adult learners. The items selected from the adapted instrument were done in line with the contents of Learning Reading, Writing and Mathematics: English Primer developed NMEC for Basic Literacy education programme. The instruments were face validated using experts' judgment approach. Experts in the area of Adult Education, Educational Management, and Measurement and Evaluation helped in vetting all the instruments to ensure validity. Suggestions made by the three experts were adhered to in producing the final draft for use in the study.

The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Technique was used to conduct the reliability test for ALIQ was conducted using Cronbach Alpha statistics procedure which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.83. The split half reliability technique was used to conduct the reliability test for ALAT and a coefficient of 0.86 was obtained as the reliability index. The instruments were administered by the researcher in conjunction with research assistants. All instruments upon

completion were retrieved for data processing. Out of the 708 prepared ALAT and ALIQ, 685 were completed.

The data collected were analysed using mean statistics, simple percentages, frequency, simple linear and multiple linear regression statistics using the SPSS Version 23. Research questions 1 was answered using mean statistics. To determine the mean decision point for these research questions, the range was calculated as five (highest rating point of instrument) minus 1 (lowest rating point of instrument) divided by five (highest rating point). This was numerically expressed as $5-1 = 4/5 = 0.80$. The least value of the scale which was one (1) was then added in order to identify the maximum of the lowest mean decision point. Hence, the mean decision points for these research questions were 1.00 – 1.80 (Very Low); 1.81 – 2.60 (Low); 2.61 – 3.40 (Moderate); 3.41 – 4.20 (High); and 4.21 to 5.00 (Very High).

For Research question 2, the administered test scores were translated to the five regular grading points of A, B, C, D, and E which were allotted 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively. Similar to research questions 1 and 2, the mean statistics was used for analysis and decision making for the research question. The mean decision points were 1.00 – 1.80 (Very Low); 1.81 – 2.60 (Low); 2.61 – 3.40 (Moderate); 3.41 – 4.20 (High); and 4.21 to 5.00 (Very High)

Results

Research Question One: What is the level of learners' involvement in basic literacy education centres in Ondo State?

The data obtained were analysed and the result is presented in the Table 1:

Table 1: Mean distribution of Learners' Involvement

SN	Items	N	Weighted Mean	Mean	Decision
1	Adult learners ask questions during class lessons	685	2532	3.70	High
2	Adult learners contribute to class discussion	685	2522	3.68	High
3	Adult learners are involved class presentation when required	685	2538	3.69	High
4	Adult learners complete their given task	685	2568	3.75	High
5	Adult learners work with one another on task during class lessons	685	2580	3.77	High
6	Adult learners work with one another outside of class to prepare for class activities	685	2598	3.79	High

7	They talk about lessons difficulties with facilitators	685	2532	3.70	High
8	They discuss lessons and other tasks with co-learners	685	2552	3.73	High
9	Adult learners tutor one another on class topics	685	2552	3.73	High
10	Adult learners give attention to learning activities	685	2631	3.84	High
11	Adult learners raise circular issues for discussion in class	685	2642	3.86	High
Grand Mean				3.75	High

Mean Benchmark: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.41-4.20 High, 4.21–5.00 Very High

The data in Table 1 above showed that all the items raised in respect of this research question on the level of learners' involvement in Basic Literacy Centres have a mean score between 3.60 and 3.86 indicating that respondents were rated high in their learning involvement in the learning centre. This means that adult learners contribute highly to class activities, raise issues for discussion in class, discuss lesson with facilitators and co-leaners, gives maximum attention during lesson. They also, performed highly in completion of task given, working with one another outside class situation and get involved in presentation during class lessons. With a grand mean of 3.75 therefore, it was concluded that the level of learners' involvement in learning process in basic literacy centres is high in line with the set decision rule.

Research Question Two: What is the level of adult learners' achievement in basic literacy education centres in Ondo State?

The data obtained were analysed and the result is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Distribution of Adult Learners Achievement in Basic Literacy Centres

Grades	Frequency	%	Mean	Decision
Poor (E)	09	1.3	3.65	High
Fair (D)	47	6.9		
Good (C)	229	33.4		
Very Good (B)	288	42.2		
Excellent (A)	112	16.2		
Total (N)	685	100		

Mean Benchmark: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.41-4.20 High, 4.21–5.00 Very High

The data on Table 2 showed that 1.3% of sampled respondents' achievement test scores were graded as Poor, 6.9% as Fair, 33.4% scores were graded as Good, 42.2% as Very Good while

16.2% of adult learners' achievement scores were Excellent. With a mean point of 3.64, it was concluded that the level of adult learner achievement is high

HO₁: Learners' involvement does not significantly correlate with their academic achievement in Basic Literacy Education Centres in Ondo State.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression analysis of Learners' involvement and academic achievement

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	207.939	1	207.939	444.696	.000 ^b
	Residual	319.369	683	.468		
	Total	527.308	684			

R=0.628^a; R²=0.394

a. Dependent Variable: Learners' Achievement

b. Predictor: (Constant), Learners' Involvement

Table 3 showed the simple linear regression statistics on learners' involvement as a correlate of adult learners' achievement in basic literacy centres in Ondo State. The data summarized in the Table showed that $F=444.696$ and $p\text{-value}=.000^b$. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the $p\text{-value}$ (.000) is less than the alpha level (0.05). Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that learners' involvement does not significantly correlate learners' achievement'' was rejected. Hence, Learners' involvement did correlate learners' achievement relatively in basic literacy education centres. Also, the R² value of 0.394 means that 39.4% of the total variance in adult learners' achievement can be relatively accounted for by learners' involvement in the learning process. It was thus concluded that learners' involvement relatively correlate their academic achievement in basic literacy education centres in the area under investigation.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined learners' involvement as correlate of their academic achievement in Basic Literacy Centres in Ondo State. The findings from research question one of the study revealed that the level of learners' involvement in basic literacy education centre under investigation was high. All issues raised in connection with this research question were classified as high. The finding is buttressed by the assertions of Gibbs and Poskitt (2010) who noted that adult learners are self-directed individuals who enroll on a programme out of their own volition and, thus always willing to participate in the learning process in order to achieve the purpose for which they enrolled in the programme. This finding and the corroborating assertions are real facts because the adult learners, unlike children, are mature individuals who are self-directed and motivated toward achieving their set goals. Also, the adult learners enroll in a literacy programmes out of their own freewill either for self fulfilment and need to compete for a particular task; hence the need to participate actively in the process while utilizing the experiences they have acquired outside the learning environment.

The result from the research question two on the level of adult learners' achievement in basic literacy education centres in Ondo State revealed that a majority of the learners scored above average in the adult learners' achievement test administered, indicating that their learning performance is high. This result negates the finding of Alkahli (2016) in his study on facilitators' professional qualities and learning outcomes of adult learners in basic literacy programmes in Sokoto State; the study revealed that learning outcomes of adult learners were average as against high academic achievement obtained in this present study in Ondo State. The justification for this difference could be attributed to the differences in the level of facilitators, the environment in terms of learning culture. In southern part of the country where this present study was conducted, education delivery in general is high when compared with the Northern part of the country where Alkahli conducted his study in 2016. Furthermore, the years' difference in the conduct of the researches may also be attributed to the difference in the findings. Nevertheless, this finding justifies the earlier assertions of this study that adults are people who enter into a programme voluntarily hence, they tend to put their mind in it and achieve the success they desire. The desire to acquire literacy skills on the part of the adult learners, coupled with other external factors and facilitators influence could be adduced as the reason for the direction of this finding.

The finding from the study in the tested hypothesis showed that learner's involvement significantly correlates their academic achievement in basic literacy education centres in the area under investigation. This finding is in line with the assertions of Adelman (2006); Iam-On and Boongoen, (2015) who noted that the link between learner participation and achievement has been established in studies by academics; however, the ability of learners' involvement to predict outcomes varies by individual client and group. Ndiewo, Aloba, and Raburu (2016) in a similar study revealed that a statistical relationship exists between learner involvement and their academic performance. Azurdee (2010) also asserted that when learners get involved in the learning process, they feel better and are more likely to complete it. The author went on to say that learners' involvement in their learning has a favourable impact on their persistence and learning outcomes or achievements.

Lastly, Astin (2009) supported the notion that learners who participated actively in classroom discussion were more satisfied with the learning process. Therefore, it is safe to adduce that learners' active engagement in classroom discussions is crucial for effective learning; it has a significant influence on the future success of education and the personal development of learners. The concurrency of this finding and the corroborating views presented could be attributed to the natural belief that self-involvement in any activity plays a significant role in goal attainment. Irrespective of the location or setting, when an individual is committed to a course of action particularly a learning oriented action and gets involved, goal attainment becomes guaranteed. Nevertheless, the view of Iam-On & Boongoen, (2015) that ability of learners' involvement to predict academic achievement may differ by individual client and group remain valid. This is because every learner is a person with his own qualities and individual differences thus impacting learning as well.

Conclusions

The findings illuminate a compelling relationship between the two variables. The study revealed that the level of learners' involvement in the learning process was notably high, paralleled by a commendable level of academic achievement among adult learners in the investigated centers. The observed correlation between learners' involvement and academic achievement serves as a crucial insight into the dynamics of adult education in Basic Literacy Education Centres. The significance of this correlation emphasizes the pivotal role that active participation and engagement play in the learning journeys of adult learners. As evidenced by the positive correlation, it becomes evident that when adult learners are actively involved in their learning process, their academic achievements are notably enhanced.

These findings bear valuable implications for educational practitioners, policymakers, and instructors involved in adult literacy education. Recognizing and fostering an environment that encourages and supports learners' active engagement can potentially lead to enhanced educational outcomes. Moreover, the outcomes of this research underscore the need for continued efforts in tailoring instructional strategies to align with the unique characteristics and needs of adult learners. By acknowledging the correlation between learners' involvement and academic achievement, educators can design and implement interventions that foster a learner-centric approach, ultimately contributing to the overall success and empowerment of adult learners in Basic Literacy Education Centres.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

1. Learners' involvement should be emphasized by Centre based management committee to Facilitators in the course of carrying out their responsibilities.
2. Centre based management committee should ensure facilitators use the right methodology that will generate the involvement of learners in the teaching and learning process

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