

Influence of Adult Education Programmes on the Political Development of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of adult education programmes on the political development of Rivers State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Two hundred and forty-three (243) adult learners were randomly drawn from a population of two thousand, four hundred and thirty (2,430) in the fifty-seven (57) adult learning centres using proportionate sampling together with a census of all the one hundred and twenty-four (124) adult educators from fifty-seven (57) adult learning centres in Rivers State were recruited for the study. An instrument titled 'Influence of Adult Education Programmes on Political Development of Rivers State Questionnaire' was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer research questions while z-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed among others that basic literacy education, functional literacy education, civic education as adult education programmes influenced political development to high extent in Rivers State. It was recommended among others that the Rivers State government should embark on the provision of adult basic literacy education programmes with a view to eradicating illiteracy and assisting the disadvantaged groups to acquire skills to help them perform their social and political roles in the society.

Keywords: Adult Education, Adult Education Programmes, Political Development, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Adult education is the process by which men and women (alone, in groups or institutional settings) seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skills, their knowledge, or their sensitiveness; any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help man and women improve in these ways (Houle, 1972). Barikor (2005) emphasized that adult education is an important element in the development of human resources. It serves as a means of public enlightenment to

the masses, as such, plays a vital role for the development of any society including the rural areas. Consequently, it helps to build and safeguard the philosophy upheld by the government of such society. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Kobani (2018, p.2) averred that adult education is:

The entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level or method, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their ability, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring changes in their attitude or behavior in the two fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

Fasokun (2006) asserted that adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping and assisting adults to live more successfully as useful acceptable members of their societies and contribute meaningfully to the development of those societies. Townsend-Coles in Kobani (2018) perceived adult education as all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and requirements of their differing levels of comprehension ability and in their changing roles and responsibilities throughout life. Furthermore, adult education usually refers to any form of learning undertaken by or provided for the chronologically mature men and women outside the formal school system. It is the education of persons regarded as adults in their societies (Ladan, 2019).

Adult education is often used interchangeably with words such as literacy, adult basic education, lifelong learning, continuing, adult basic, non-formal education, *et cetera*. According to Seya (2014), adult education is a transmission process of general, technical or vocational knowledge, as well as skills, values and attitudes, which take place out of formal education system with a view of remedying early education inadequacies of mature people or equipping them with knowledge and cultural elements required for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies. The scope of adult education is as broad as life. Nzeneri (2012) emphasized that adult education is an integral part of lifelong education which contributes to economic, cultural, educational and social development of any nation, community or rural area. Adult education is however perceived to be a response to the educational needs of men and women through lifelong educational process that includes functional, vocational, civic, social, cultural, professional and recreational education for adults. For instance, in Nigeria the national policy on education (FRN, 2014) section 7, outlined adult education programmes as follows: basic literacy education, functional literacy education, remedial education, further education, vocational and professional training, among others, which according to Ihejirika (2012) are intricately interwoven. But Ladan

(2019) expressly declared that adult and non-formal education enhances the democratic culture of a people.

This democratic culture suggests a synergy with political development. Kobani and Alozie (2015) highlighted that political development refers to an improvement in structures of government such as the arms of government, police, electoral commission, civil service etc., as well as in the quality of actual governance. They reiterated that political development could be viewed as increase in political awareness and participation of citizens in political activities and governance. This manifests in the form of increased awareness resulting to greater interest and popular involvement of the people in elections and the electoral process as well as interest on how those elected go about the business of governance to bring about improvements in Nigeria.

There are different types of adult education programmes which can enhance political development of societies. National Mass Education Commission (NMEC, 2017) presented policy guidelines for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal education in Nigeria to cover basic literacy, post literacy, functional literacy, vocational education skills, liberal education, extension education, and voter education which Ladan (2019) posited that if adhered to will enable youths and adults who are the active participants in the political movement acquire the requisite skills and knowledge about themselves and the political climate. Basic literacy education is traditionally associated with the teaching of reading, writing and numeracy skills at the most rudimentary level (Ihejirika, 2015). Most adult literacy teachings take place in the evenings as remedial measures for learners who never had any opportunity of attending formal education at all and learners who dropped out of formal education system before they could acquire enough literacy skills to enable them function in their daily duties. Adult basic literacy education is organized by government, religious bodies or individual proprietors of private schools to eradicate illiteracy and assist the disadvantaged groups to acquire skills to make them employable and help them perform their social and political roles effectively (Kobani & Alozie, 2016).

Gray in Onyeozu (2007) listed among others, values inherent in literacy, that literacy helps in meeting civic obligations through knowing and observing regulations, participating in discussions and voting without outside help. Gives access to and enjoying literacy heritage, and in satisfying religious or political aspirations through reading relevant literature and participating in those activities. Functional literacy came into use in the 1960s. It is a type of literacy that is tied to work of the learner. It restricts itself at the beginning to the selected vocabulary that is relevant to vocation of the learner; hence, it is also called relevancy literacy or work-oriented literacy (Onyeozu, 2007). Paiko (2012) posited that functional literacy by UNESCO standard is that which transmits not only the ability to read and write, but those skills, attitudes and knowledge needed for development. Paiko further stated that a person is functionally literate when he/she has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him/her to engage effectively in all these activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his/her culture or group. It is the kind of literacy linked to one's job, skills and attitudes. According to Akko in Paiko (2012), the main distinctive feature

in functional literacy is that learner is taught how to read and write using familiar words of his or her trade or occupation. Onyeozu (2007) asserted that the advantage of this form of literacy is that it links the development of the individual with the development of his community and reconciles the interest of the individual with those of society. Functional literacy programme is usually selective and is primarily designed for a group of people with same socio-economic activity. It is an intensive programme usually of a short duration for the selected group. Ihejirika (2015) opined that functional literacy programmes are usually directed towards people who cannot read, write and compute but need those skills for effective performance of their socio-political and economic roles. According to ihejirika (2015), functional literacy may be organized for a group of community leaders, a group of rice growers, cocoa farmers, market women, roadside mechanics, furniture makers, panel beaters, etc. What is paramount is that the selected group must have the same social or economic activity. UNESCO in Dokubo (2013) revealed that there is a direct relationship between development and the rate of growth of adult literacy. This means that the higher the level of functional literacy, the higher the level of social, political, economic and cultural development of a nation. The quest for political independence is one good example of the impact of literacy on political consciousness of the people.

Political awareness arising from civic education, exposes words as marginalization, minority, resource control, zoning and a host of others. As more adults became aware of the level of injustice and marginalization to the extent that many advocates emerge, with some laying their lives for the course of liberation of their regions and ethnic groups, and insistence for total reversal to justice and equity. When interpreted in clear terms, the above scenarios indicate that adult literacy is good for the political development of any nation and, must therefore be encouraged for the development of Rivers State. To give the adult citizens of Nigeria civic education is one of the objectives of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014). To say that someone is civil is to say that, that person conforms to the rules and regulations of the society. Civic education equips the recipients with necessary information for conforming to all norms of society (Kobani, 2016). Ihejirika (2015) posited that civic education involves programmes that are directed towards the improvement of the socio-cultural and political conditions of the people. Political education is therefore a component of civic education.

From records available in the Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non-formal Education, 57 adult learning centres are ongoing at present with teaching-learning activities over five years now. But the researchers could not locate any study focused on influence of adult learning centres on political development of Rivers State to either validate or contradict. This study was therefore planned to fill that gap by investigating the influence of adult education programmes on the political development of Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of adult education programmes on political development of Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Find out the extent to which basic literacy education has influenced political development of Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent to which functional literacy education has influenced political development of Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which civic education has influenced political development in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered in the study:

1. To what extent has basic literacy education influenced the political development in Rivers State?
2. To what extent has functional literacy education influenced the political development in Rivers State?
3. To what extent has civic education influenced the political development in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which basic literacy education has influenced political development in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which functional literacy education has influenced political development in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which civic education has influenced political development in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all 2430 adult learners and 124 adult educators from 57 adult education centres in Rivers State. A total of 243 adult learners randomly drawn from the population using a proportionate 10% from each centre and a census of all the 124 adult educators constituted the sample for the study. A validated 24-item instrument titled “Influence of Adult Education Programmes on Political Development Questionnaire (IAEPPDQ)” was used for collecting data. The questionnaire was structured using 4-point summated rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE). The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest technique. The responses were collated and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient that yielded a reliability index of 0.80. Three hundred and sixty-seven (367) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents but only 305 copies (194 adult learners, 111 adult educators) were correctly filled and retrieved, representing 83% retrieval rate. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of

significance. Decisions were taken based on the mean of boundary limits of the four responses pattern. Any value from 3.50 – 4.00 was regarded as VHE, 2.50 – 3.49 HE, 1.50 – 2.49 LE, and 0.50 – 1.49 as VLE.

RESULTS

Research question 1: To what extent has basic literacy education influenced political development in Rivers State?

Table 1: Responses on the Extent to which Basic Literacy Education has Influenced Political Development in Rivers State.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Adult Learner N=194		Remarks	Adult Educators N=111		Remarks
		\bar{X}_L	SD _L		\bar{X}_E	SD _E	
1	Adult learning has improved my competency in performing any political role.	2.93	1.03	High Extent	2.86	1.02	High Extent
2	Basic literacy has enabled me read what is written on ballot papers.	2.70	1.05	High Extent	2.79	1.05	High Extent
3	I can now communicate with people now than ever before in political meetings.	2.57	1.08	High Extent	2.71	1.10	High Extent
4	I am fluent in English language which is the communication medium during elections.	2.54	1.08	High Extent	2.89	1.01	High Extent
5	Basic literacy has enabled me to compute number of votes during elections.	2.56	1.08	High Extent	2.87	1.10	High Extent
6	I can vote during elections without outside help as a result of my training.	2.64	1.12	High Extent	3.14	0.89	High Extent
7	Basic literacy has enabled me write my name during voters' registration.	2.59	1.05	High Extent	2.81	1.03	High Extent
8	Basic education has enabled me identify various party logos.	2.59	1.07	High Extent	2.76	1.04	High Extent
Grand Mean		2.64			2.85		

The data in Table 1 revealed that items 1-8 have mean values that fell within the range of High Extent. Therefore, with a grand mean of 2.64 for adult learners and 2.85 for adult educators, it was evident that adult learners and adult educators

agreed that basic literacy education to a high extent has influenced political development in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: To what extent has functional literacy education influenced political development in Rivers State?

Table 2: Responses on the extent to which Functional Literacy Education has influenced Political Development in Rivers State.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Adult Learners N=194		Remarks	Adult Educators N=111		Remarks
		\bar{X}_L	SD _L		\bar{X}_E	SD _E	
9	Functional literacy has enabled me achieve my immediate needs to contest in elections.	2.61	1.08	High Extent	2.93	0.98	High Extent
10	Functional literacy has equipped me with partial skills to vote the party of my choice.	2.87	0.98	High Extent	2.92	0.96	High Extent
11	Functional literacy has enabled me gain wage employment to sponsor a candidate of my choice.	2.71	1.13	High Extent	2.84	1.08	High Extent
12	Functional literacy has created political awareness of voting the Candidate of my choice.	2.65	1.12	High Extent	2.77	1.04	High Extent
13	Functional literacy has enabled me become conscious of the right to participate in elections.	2.59	1.11	High Extent	2.95	1.06	High Extent
14	I can now perform my political duties through functional literacy.	2.64	1.19	High Extent	3.04	1.05	High Extent
15	Functional literacy has improved my communication in political discussions.	2.65	1.09	High Extent	3.04	1.03	High Extent
16	Functional literacy has enabled me be an advocate of political injustice.	2.57	1.03	High Extent	3.01	0.98	High Extent
Grand Mean		2.66			2.94		

The data in Table 2 revealed that items 9-16 have mean values that fell within the range of High Extent. Therefore, with a grant of 2.66 for adult learners and 2.94 for adult educators, it was evident that adult learners and adult educators agreed that functional literacy education to a high extent has influenced political development in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: To what extent has civic education influenced political development in Rivers State?

Table 3: Responses on the Extent to which Civic Education has influenced Political Development in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Adult Learners N=194		Remarks	Adult Educators N=111		Remarks
		\bar{X}_L	SD _L		\bar{X}_E	SD _E	
17	Civic education has enabled me believe in political accountability.	2.95	1.00	High Extent	2.78	0.99	High Extent
18	I am not afraid to voice out my thoughts on political issues because of civic education.	2.72	1.11	High Extent	2.75	1.03	High Extent
19	Civic education has enabled me seek information about political candidates.	2.97	1.00	High Extent	2.77	1.06	High Extent
20	I participate in political rallies and meetings because of civic education.	3.05	0.95	High Extent	2.95	1.03	High Extent
21	I am always interested in the quality of information provided by party in power because of civic education.	2.92	0.92	High Extent	2.92	1.05	High Extent
22	Civic education has enabled me know the minimum voting age.	2.91	1.03	High Extent	2.93	0.99	High Extent
23	I am interested in becoming a political representative in the future because of civic education.	2.93	1.06	High Extent	2.97	1.02	High Extent
24	I am exposed to my civic duties than ever before.	2.76	1.00	High Extent	2.85	0.99	High Extent
Grand Mean		2.90			2.87		

The data in Table 3 revealed that items 17-24 have mean values that fell within the range of high extent. Therefore, with a grand mean of 2.90 for adult learners and 2.87 for adult educators, it was evident that adult learners and adult educators agreed that civic education to a high extent influenced political development of Rivers State.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which basic literacy education has influenced political development in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test Analysis of the Difference in Responses between adult learners and adult educators on Influence of Basic Literacy Education.

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	Level of Significance	z-cal.	z-crit	Decision
Adult learners	194	2.64	1.07	303	0.05	1.69	1.96	Accepted
Adult Educators	111	2.85	1.03					

The data in Table 4 above showed z-calculated value of 1.69 and z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 303. Since the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which basic literacy education has influenced political development of Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which functional literacy education has influenced political development in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test Analysis of the Difference in Responses between Adult Learners and Adult Educators on influence of Functional Literacy Education

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Level of Significance	z-Cal.	z-Crit	Decision
Adult learners	194	2.66	1.09	303	0.05	2.25	1.96	Rejected
Adult Educators	111	2.94	1.02					

The data in Table 5 above showed z-calculated value of 2.25 and z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 303. Since the calculated z-value is greater than the critical z-value, the hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that the difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which functional literacy education has

influenced political development in Rivers State is statistically significant, with the adult educators slightly higher than that for the adult learners.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent civic education has influenced political development of Rivers State.

Table 6: Z-test Analysis of the Difference in Responses between Adult Learners and Adult Educators on Influence of Civic Education

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Level of Significance	z-Cal.	z-Crit	Decision
Adult Learners	194	2.90	1.01	303	0.05	0.25	1.96	Accepted
Adult Educators	111	2.87	1.02					

The data in Table 6 above showed z-calculated value of 0.25 and z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 303. Since the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value, the hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on the extent to which civic education has influenced political development of Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results from the study as presented in Table 1 and Table 4 revealed that basic literacy education has influenced political development in Rivers State and that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses between adult learners and adult educators on influence of basic literacy education on political development of Rivers State. These findings are in agreement with Ihejirika (2015) who averred that basic literacy is traditionally associated with the teaching of reading and writing and numeracy skills at the most rudimentary level. The findings are also consistent with that reported by Kobani and Alozie (2016), who opined that adult literacy education eradicates illiteracy and assists the disadvantaged groups to acquire skills to help them perform their social and political roles. Similarly, Gray in Onyeozu (2007) highlighted that basic literacy helps in meeting civic obligations through knowing and observing regulations, participating in discussions and voting without outside help; and helps in giving access to and enjoying literacy heritage, and in satisfying religious and political aspirations through reading relevant literature and participating in these activities.

Results from Table 2 revealed that functional literacy education has enabled adults achieve immediate needs to contest in elections; equipped adults with practical skills to vote the party of their choice; enabled adults gain wage employment to sponsor candidate of their choice, created political awareness in adults to enable them choose candidates of their choice; enabled adults become conscious of the right to participate in elections; enabled adults perform their political duties; improved their communication in political discussions; and enabled

adults to be advocates of political injustice. These findings are in agreement with Ihejirika (2015) who opined that functional literacy programmes are usually directed towards people who cannot read, write and compute but need those skills for effective performance of their socio-political and economic roles. The findings are also in line with the position of UNESCO in Dokubo (2013) that there is a direct relationship between development and the rate of growth of adult literacy. This means that the higher the level of functional literacy, the higher the level of social, political, economic and cultural development of the nation. Therefore, a direct aspect of contribution of functional literacy to individuals and nations in general is political awareness.

Result from Table 3 revealed that civic education has enabled adults seek information about political candidates; adults participate in political rallies and meetings; adults are interested in information about quality of services provided by party in power; it has enabled adults know the minimum voting age; adults are interested in becoming political representatives in the future; and adults are exposed to their civic duties than ever before. The z-test analysis shows that both groups agree to a high extent that civic education influences political development and that no significant difference exist in the mean responses of adult learners and adult educators on influence of civic education on political development of Rivers State. These findings are in agreement with Kobani and Alozie (2016) who asserted that civic education equips the recipients with necessary information for conforming to the norms of the society. Similarly, Ihejirika (2015) asserted that civic education involves programmes that are directed towards the improvement of the socio-cultural and political conditions of the people. Basel in Ihejirika (2015) affirmed that civic (political) education provides the required awareness creation to cure the evil of political apathy, ignorance and fear which will nurture and develop true democracy.

CONCLUSION

Basic literacy education, functional literacy education, civic education as adult education programmes influenced political development to a high extent. Basic literacy education has improved the competence of adults in performing any political role; functional literacy education has enabled adults achieve immediate need to contest elections; and civic education has enabled adults with necessary information for conforming to all norms of society and also, believe in political accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the researchers therefore recommended the following:

1. The Rivers State Government should embark on the provision of adult basic literacy education programmes with a view to eradicating illiteracy and assisting the disadvantaged groups to acquire skills to help them perform their social and political roles.
2. The Rivers State Ministry of Education should ensure that functional literacy education is directed towards people who cannot read, write and compute but

- needs those skills for effective performance of their social-political and economic roles.
3. The political stakeholders in Rivers State should conduct civic education programmes that would provide the required awareness to mitigate political apathy, ignorance and fear which will nurture and develop true democracy in Rivers State.

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