



THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN COMBATING UNEMPLOYMENT IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the role of Adult Education Programme in combating unemployment in Ekiti State. Specifically, the study examined the available skills opportunities that can be acquired through Adult Education programme in Ekiti State and also ascertain the influence of Adult Education programme on unemployment in Ekiti State. A total of 200 respondents were selected randomly who are participant of Adult Education Programme in Ekiti State. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and accepting a mean score of above 2.50. The findings of the study revealed that skills such as Technical, Domestic, Agricultural, Business and Computer skills can be acquired through Adult Education Programme in Ekiti State. The study also revealed that provision of Adult Education programme can lead to rural employment promotion through the establishment of small scale enterprise thereby reducing unemployment in the State. The study recommended that to achieve success in this direction, the government, NGO's, organized private sector and religious bodies should join forces to encourage the Adult Education as project. Indigent individuals can also be sponsored and encouraged to enroll in the programme.

Key words: Adult Education, Unemployment, Adult Education Programme, Skills

Introduction

The origin of unemployment in Nigeria can be traced back to the oil boom era of 1970s. During this period, the Nigerian government and individuals abandoned skills acquisition and utilization which could be acquired through diversified entrepreneurship practices that have the capability to boost both individual and the country's economic ego. Emphasis shifted from entrepreneurial practices to paper qualification which has resulted in increased unemployment in the country. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2011), the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2011 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000; 13.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 13.7% in 2006; 14.6% in 2007; 14.9% in 2008; 19.7% in 2009; 21.1% in 2010 and 23.9% in 2011. In 2012, unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 24%.

The increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming rapid growth of labour, which is outstripping the supply of jobs. Over population can lead to high rate of unemployment, most especially in countries where their youth depend largely on white collar jobs. According to the National Population Commission (2007), Ekiti State has over three million residents and the civil servants of the state are the major factor that determines the economy of the state as there are no clear-cut industries or factories that can serve as a means for job creation in boosting the state's economy. The researcher is of the opinion that adult education could play a major role in reducing the scourge of unemployment.

Adult education has been recognised as the right vehicle for up skilling those who would otherwise be unskilled and ensuring a transition into the labour market. Adult education can play a central role in preparing young people for work, developing the skills of adults and responding to the labour-market



needs of the economy. Despite this role, it appears that it has been neglected and marginalised in policy discussions, often overshadowed by the increasing emphasis on general academic education and the role of schools in preparing students for university education.

Many of the unskilled jobs for adults existing a generation ago are disappearing fast because they have been replaced by technology. The researcher is of the opinion that there is need for adult education programme to reflect fast-changing employer needs. This implies building a foundation of basic and transferable skills into adult education qualifications, to reflect a world of career flow and development rather than one job for life. It equally implies an effective partnership between government, employers and unions to ensure that the learning is connected at all levels with the world of work. Strong adult educational programmes increase competitiveness in order to meet labour market needs.

Adult education is a collective name for all forms of learning programs in which adults participate in order to develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical or professional qualifications to enable them meet their needs and those of their societies. It is a transmission process of general technical or vocational knowledge, as well as acquisition of skills, values and attitudes, which takes place in and out of the formal education system with the view to catering for early education deficiencies of mature people and enhancing their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of the society.

Adult education programmes vary in organization from casual incidental learning to formal credit courses (Seya, 2005). Nzeneri (2008) perceives adult education as an indispensable tool for adjustment, for individuals, groups, national and international bodies, for development, for need identification, need meeting and for problem solving. Thus, adult education is development-oriented; a process that is geared towards making an adult to be more useful to himself and his society. Without mincing words, Imhabekhai (2009) described adult education as a process of removing obstacles and impediments that reduce the full realization of each adult's potentialities.

Statement of Problem

Recent media reports and personal observations indicate cases of armed conflicts, killings, wanton destruction of lives and properties kidnappings, lootings, pipeline destructions among others in most Nigerian States. One wonders who the perpetrators of these evil acts are. Security reports show that most of those involved in these acts are youths and unemployed graduates. The rate of unemployment among all the categories of school leavers in Nigeria has attracted the attention of both the government and the society in general.

Nigerian citizens before the oil boom believed in what one can do in order to ensure self-sustenance. For instance, an increase in the economic status of the country was as a result of diversified activities bordering on agricultural products such as cocoa, groundnut, palm kernel, palm oil, cassava, in addition to other craft practices. The educational system in Nigeria then encouraged craft practices even at the primary school level. Adult Education has been seen over the years as veritable tool to reduce unemployment rate in Nigeria and in particularly in Ekiti State due to the varying opportunities that it provided.

Many studies have been conducted in Nigeria on the role of adult education and national development in Nigeria. For example John (2012) conducted a research on Utilization of Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes in Combating Rural Poverty in Nigeria. However none of the studies has empirically examined the role of adult education programme in reducing unemployment in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This study therefore intends to fill such gap in the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the role of Adult Education Programme in combating unemployment in Ekiti State. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. examine the available skills opportunities that can be acquired through adult education programme in Ekiti State; and
2. ascertain the influence of Adult Education programme on unemployment in Ekiti State.



Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised in the study.

1. What are the available skills opportunities that can be acquired through Adult Education programme in Ekiti State?
2. What is the influence of Adult Education programme on unemployment in Ekiti State?

Research Design

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. Descriptive research is considered appropriate because it focuses on the observation and perception of the existing situation, describes and interprets what is concerned with issues, conditions, practice or relationship that exist; views, belief and attitude that are held, processes that are going on and trends that are developing. A survey research studies a small sample from a large population from where inferences would be drawn about the characteristics of the defined population.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of all adults who are participants in Adult Education programme in Ekiti state. The sample for this study consisted of 200 adults who are participants in Adult Education programme in Ekiti state. The sample was selected using purposive sampling techniques. The sample (respondents) were purposively selected from adults undergoing training at National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Ado – Ekiti, Ekiti State

Research Instrument

The study made use of structured questionnaire titled “Adult Education and Unemployment Questionnaire” (AEUQ) which was divided into two sections. Section A of the questionnaire captured the demographic characteristics of respondents, while

section B consisted of 10 items which sought information on available skills opportunities that can be acquired through Adult Education programme and the influence of Adult Education programme on unemployment. A four point rating scale response options provided for the respondents to choose from are: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD).

Validation of the Instrument

The face and content validity was ascertained by giving the designed questionnaire to experts of Adult Education and Tests and Measurement for vetting before administering it on the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method. A trial test was carried out outside the sampled area. The instrument was administered on fifteen respondents while the data collected on the two tests were correlated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation statistics which yielded a co-efficient of 0.80.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher personally administered the instrument in each of the study centre sampled in the study. The researcher was responsible for the administration and collection of the instrument from the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. For decision making, a mean score of 2.50 was used as the criterion mean. Any item that attained a response mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted, otherwise it was not accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the available skills opportunities that can be acquired through Adult Education programme in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Available skills opportunities through Adult education

S/N	Questionnaire item	N	Responses				Total Score	mean	Decision
			SA	A	D	SD			
1.	Technical skills can be gotten through adult education	200	320	240	76	2	638	3.19	Accepted
2.	Domestic skills can be gotten through adult education	200	368	210	70	3	651	3.26	accepted
3.	Agricultural skills can be gotten through adult education	200	280	240	90	5	615	3.08	Accepted
4.	Business skills can be gotten	200	200	300	90	1	591	2.96	Accepted



	through adult education								
5.	Computer skills can be gotten through adult education	200	248	300	70	3	621	3.11	Accepted

From table 1, the mean score of the 5 items were greater than cut-off point of 2.5. Hence, the decision to accept all. This implies that the skills that could be gotten through adult education are technical skills, domestic skills, agricultural skills, business skills and computer skills.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of Adult Education programme on unemployment in Ekiti State?



Table 2: Influence of Adult education on Unemployment

S/N	Questionnaire item	N	Responses				Total Score	Decision	
			SA	A	D	SD			
1.	Adult education can lead to establishment of small scale enterprises	200	300	243	80	4	627	3.14	Accepted
2.	Provision of adult education can lead to rural employment promotion	200	300	240	80	5	625	3.12	Accepted
3.	Vocational skill acquisition is possible through adult education	200	248	264	90	5	607	3.04	Accepted
4.	Provision of adult education has help in reducing unemployment in the society	200	260	234	100	7	601	3.01	Accepted
5.	Through the knowledge gained from participation in adult education, issues of unemployment can be reduced in the society leading to increased income of the citizens	200	320	222	88	2	632	3.16	Accepted

From table 2, the mean score of the 5 items were greater than cut-off point of 2.5. Hence, the decision to accept all. It could therefore be noted that adult education can lead to establishment of small scale enterprises, rural employment promotion and vocational skill acquisition in reducing unemployment in the society. In addition, through the knowledge gained from participation in adult education, issues of unemployment can be reduced in the society leading to increased income of the citizens.

Discussion of Findings

To ascertain the skills that can be acquired through adult education, the findings revealed that skills such as technical (welding, plumbing and electrical installation), domestic (Fashion design, soap making and catering), agricultural (crop production, Fisheries and poultry), business (Basic Business Training (BBT), Start Your Own Business (SYOB) and Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP)) and computer skills (computer operation, repair and programming) can all be acquired through adult education programme in Ekiti state. This supports the findings of Ekong and Ekong (2016) who ascertained that unemployment problem can be reduced by the

acquiring of basic skills through education intervention programme.

Kolawole and Adepoju (2006) concluded that skill acquisition is the manifestation of idea and knowledge through training which is geared towards instilling in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship

needed for meaningful development and combatting unemployment. Arikpo (2014) confirmed that adult education assists Nigerians to acquire the necessary skills and competence for occupation, thereby reducing unemployment. Omoruyi and Osunde (2004) remarked that, adult education is capable of ensuring gainful employment through provision of necessary skills. Kolawole and Adepoju (2006) posited that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is very high, agreeing with the corroborating remark that it can be reduce if adult education is prioritize.

It was also revealed in the study that provision of adult education can lead to rural employment promotion. This can be achieved by transferring the knowledge gained from the Adult education programme to set up small scale businesses which will increase the income of the citizens. This finding also supports that of Ekong and Ekong (2016). It was



revealed by the study that vocational skill acquisition is possible through Adult education programme which will subsequently lead to reduction of unemployment in the State. It was also revealed by the study that adult education programme is important for the reduction of unemployment rate in Ekiti State.

Adult education is generally practice-oriented both in principles and practice as could be deduced from the description of such programmes. From the foregoing description of adult education programmes, it could easily be deduced that every adult education programme, especially those that focus on skills acquisition, should have the objective of making people more self-reliant and skillful, whether as self-employed or employed by someone else.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that technical skills, domestic skills, agricultural skills, business skills and computer skills could be acquired through adult education. In addition, adult education programme is of immense benefits to the citizens of Ekiti State.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. To achieve success in using adult education to combat unemployment, the government, NGO's, organized private sector and religious bodies should join forces to encourage Adult education programme. Indigent individuals can also be sponsored and encouraged to enroll in the programme.
2. The government should provide better teaching materials as well as improve the working conditions of adult educators.
3. Nigeria should expand adult educational centers and provide relevant learning resources that are unique to specific areas of their placement.
4. Government at all level should put in place a law whereby Adult education technocrats will be in charge of directing and coordinating the affairs of adult education programmes for effective implementation of

adult education programmes in the curriculum in Nigeria.

5. Sensitization programmes should be organized at all sectors to create awareness on the need for adult education in Nigeria. There is need for training programmes for persons of all working ages to help meet demands for new skills and adaptation to changes in industrial structure.

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