

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION JOURNAL

Volume 21 Issue 1 June 2016



A publication of
NIGERIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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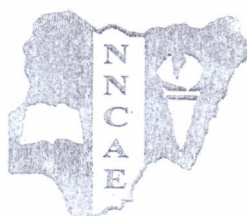
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Adult Education in Nigeria

Volume 21, Issue 1, June 2016

Theme:

Addressing the Challenges of Adult and Non-Formal Education
Practices in Contemporary Times.



JOURNAL OF NIGERIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
ADULT EDUCATION

Published For NNCAE by



University of Benin Press
Ekehuan Road Campus, P.M.B.1154,
Edo State, Nigeria

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ISSN: 2536 - 6696

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REBRANDING ADULT EDUCATION TO REFLECT INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: A SITUATIONAL APPROACH

Okebiorun, J. O. Ph.D.
Department of Adult Education
Faculty of Education
University of Lagos
Akoka – Yaba
Lagos

Abstract

This paper discusses the emerging research concerned with the issues of adult and non-formal education. Adult education has been recognized as an instrument par excellence for individual and national development. However, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the ability of adult education in building individual capacity and human capital development. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study population was all the undergraduate students in University of Lagos. Simple random sampling was used to select three faculties, three Departments and 360 respondents in the institution. A structured questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.77 was the instrument used for the data. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study found that adult education is mainly literacy education and there is an urgent need to rebrand adult education. The study concluded that adult education is holistic in nature for enhancing individual capacity building. It was therefore recommended that adult education needs rebranding:

Key Words: Rebranding, Individual Capacity Building, Human Capital Development, Adult Education and Nomenclature.

Introduction

A few people would challenge the proposition that individual capacity building and development is a fundamental function of formal education. Yet much evidence suggest that human capital development is not limited to formal education, it includes practical learning experiences that take place on the job, off the job and all adult education programmes that enhance skill development. Nigerians have placed undue emphasis on formal education to the detriment of adult and non-formal education. The National Policy on Education (2004) provides for adult and non-formal education as an instrument for capacity

building and human development. The policy outlines the goals of adult and non-formal education to include providing functional literacy and continuing education for adults and the youths, provide education for different categories of completers of formal education system to improve their basic knowledge and skills, provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and give adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetics, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

In the light of the above it is quite clear that the role of adult education in individual capacity building and human capital development is no longer questionable. Individual's capacity building as defined by Gariga (2013) is the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enable them to perform effectively. This definition suggests that individual capacity building encompasses skill upgrading, it is a continuing process that is more than training and it is a long term process of development.

Individual capacity building entails expanding the skills, potentials, talents, knowledge, opportunities and productive capacity of a person to function and be relevant to himself and the society which he belongs. The ability of this individual can only be enhanced through adult education and its programmes. On the other hand, development of a nation can be viewed in terms of human capital development. Schultz (1960) a reknown economist invented the term human capital development to reflect the value of human capacities. Schultz (1960) viewed human capital like any other factors of production (capital) that can be invested in through education, training and enhanced benefits that will lead to an improvement in the quality and level of production. Similarly, Youndt et al (2004) conceptualizes human capital development as knowledge, competency, attitude and behaviour embedded in an individual. Human Capital Development (HCD) is a process of improving and enhancing the quality of individuals by investing them through formal, informal and non-formal education. This definition shows a positive relationship between adult education, capacity building and human capital development provided by human resources.

The nature of the concept of adult education has been variously argued by different authors. Though many people including professional bodies have tried to define the term, it is still a controversial concept, thus, there is no universal definition of adult education. For clarity of purpose, few definitions which are relevant to this study are examined. Makulu (1981) defined adult education as the all-inclusive-pattern of adult development which has the needs of the adult not only as an individual but also as a member of his community and which helps him to live more effectively in his society.

A more comprehensive definition as provided by UNESCO (1976) described adult education as:

...the entire body of organised processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether they prolong or replace initial education in the schools, colleges or universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby person regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technological or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviours in two-fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

Oladapo (1999) examined the comprehensive definition of UNESCO (1976) and its ability to cater for formal, informal and non-formal adult education. She reiterated that the definition has a great influence on the way people should redirect their thinking about adult education and its concepts. This author view adult education to be synonymous with development education. Adult education and its programmes is all about "holistic development" of individuals be it literacy, vocational, continuing education, workers' education and environmental education are all concerned with capacity building and human capital development. Adult education is education for everyday living and for development that is why provision should be made for continuous learning.

The Need for Rebranding Adult Education

At this juncture, the question comes to my mind "why rebranding"? Knowledge is increasing, the world of work is changing, new discoveries are emerging everyday, the labour market is faced with serious competitive challenges and to cap it all, Nigeria is a certificate oriented country. The world of education is similarly rife with examples of rebranding. Rebranding, according to Alabi (2009) means to change consumer's perception about a product or brand and attract positive affection or affinity to it for the benefit of all stakeholders, particularly, the promoters of the brand. Therefore, rebranding must connote only one thing to the man on the street – a change from negative to positive perception. Rebranding will provide a better framework to reach out to thousands of adult education consumers who are not aware of the prospects in adult education and to introduce and re-introduce various programmes run in adult education for capacity building and human development. Such programmes include: workers' education, continuing education, extension education, open and distance learning, environmental education and extra-mural education.

The level of change in life and the changes of recent years have brought about a situation where the understanding of the pace of change should reshape the thinking of government and individuals to meet the needs of the society at large. Nigerians are faced with multitude of daily challenges and they come in fresh and varied forms.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerians had varied understanding of what adult education entails. The nomenclature of adult education to many means adult literacy education, to some it is nomadic education. The negative societal attitude to the nomenclature seems to be a big challenge to the practice of adult education, low value is ascribed to the practice, hence it suffered setbacks in terms of funding. It is against this background that this study examined rebranding adult education to enhance individual's capacity building and human capital development.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine rebranding the nomenclature of adult education to reflect individual capacity building and human capital development. Specifically, the study focuses on the following:

1. Find out the perception of undergraduate students on adult education as a degree programme.
2. Find out if adult education serves the needs of its consumers.
3. Find out if there is need to rebrand adult education to reflect its purposes as specified in the National Policy of Education (2004).

Research Questions

1. How do undergraduate students perceive adult education and its programmes?
2. Does adult education serve the needs of its consumers?
3. Is there any need rebranding adult education as specified in the National Policy of Education 2004?

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey method. This design enables a researcher to obtain necessary information on the variables from a representative sample of the population in order to describe the situation as they exist. Akinkuolie (1989) explains that descriptive survey research employs questionnaire to determine the opinions, facts, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of persons of interest to the researcher. The population of this study consists of all the undergraduate students in the Faculty of

Education, University of Lagos. There are six Departments in the faculty, simple randomly sampling was used to select three Departments in the faculty, in selecting the respondents, simple random sampling was used to select 100 students each in a Department. 25 from each level i.e. 100-400 levels in the three selected Departments. In all, 300 respondents were randomly selected. The 300 respondents were further stratified on the basis of gender, thus consisting 157 females and 153 male students. The main instrument used for this study was a self-developed questionnaire tagged "Rebranding Adult Education to Reflect Individual Capacity Building and Human Capital Development "REACABAHUCAD" was used to elicit information from the sampled respondents. The instrument has two sections. Section "A" elicited the personal data of the respondents such as their Departments, levels and other personal relevant information. Section "B" was designed to elicit the needed data on perception, rebranding and needs of adult education. The questionnaire was pilot tested on a representative sample of 100 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. The content validity was established by lecturers in the Department of Adult Education, University of Lagos. Test re-test method was adopted to establish the reliability of the instrument. A correlation coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. The researcher with the help of two research assistants and the class representatives of each level administered the questionnaires to the students. With the help of the class representatives, all the questionnaires were filled and retrieved on the spot. Descriptive statistic was used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Perception of Respondents towards Adult Education Programmes

S/N	Item Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Adult Education and its programmes are mainly for old people	107 (35.7%)	102 (40.0%)	61 (20.3%)	12 (4.0%)
2	Adult Education are for the people who could not attend school before now	9 (3%)	164 (54.7%)	59 (19.7%)	68 (22.7%)
3	I am aware of some interesting courses I can study in adult Education	49 (16.3%)	107 (35.7%)	132 (44.0%)	12 (4%)
4	Adult Education services the educational needs of the people above 18 years	101 (33.7%)	132 (44.0%)	37 (12.3%)	30 (10.0%)
5	It is difficult to secure employment after studying adult education	121 (40.3%)	92 (30.7%)	69 (23%)	121 (40.3%)
6	Graduates of Adult Education are managers of older persons in the society	80 (26.7%)	146 (48.7%)	38 (12.7%)	36 (12.0%)
7	Adult Education programmes are concerned with reading and writing	102 (34%)	132 (44.0%)	22 (7.3%)	44 (14.7%)

NB: figures outside the parentheses are frequency distributions (ii) Figures in the parentheses are percentage distributions

Table 1 shows the perception of the respondents towards adult education programmes in Nigerian Universities. The data in the table above indicates that majority of the respondents 209(75.7%) reported that adult education and its programmes are mainly for old people while only 83(24.3%) of the respondents disagreed with this view. Similarly, majority of the respondents 174(55%) consented that adult education are for the people who could not attend school before now while 127(43.3%) of the respondents disagreed with this view. Also, a little above half of the 156(52%) respondents agreed that they are aware of some interesting courses they could study in adult education if they have any need for further education while 144(48%) of the respondents disagreed with this view. As regards to item 6, majority of the respondents 233(77.7%) agreed that adult education services the educational needs of the people above 18 years and more while the remaining respondents disagreed with this statement. 213(71%) of the respondents agreed that it is difficult to secure employment after studying adult education most times than other choice courses in other Departments while 170(30%) of the respondents disagreed with this view. As regards what people think about the graduate of adult education, 226(75.4%) of the respondents believed that the graduate of Adult Education are merely managers of older persons in the society while 74(24.7%) of the respondents disagreed with this statement. Most of the respondents however think that adult education is mainly concern with how to read and write rather than a profession with many opportunities.

The responses from the table indicates a negative perception of respondents on adult education and its programmes. Therefore, the obtained information is significant.

Table 2: Adult Education and capacity building needs of its clientele

S/N	Item questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Adult Education programmes do have the capacity to improve the quality of life of the recipient	47 (16.2%)	71 (24.4%)	135 (46.4%)	38 (13.0%)
2	Adult Education helps in improving the economy of the recipient	48 (16.5)	128 (44.0%)	88 (30.2%)	27 (9.3%)
3	Adult education ensures that its recipient develop love for learning and take full advantage of it	44 (15.2%)	65 (22.3%)	146 (50.1%)	36 (12.4%)
4	Graduates of Adult Education programmes make the recipients active participants in community and societal issues	65 (22.3%)	172 (59.1%)	37 (12.7%)	17 (5.8%)
5	Adult Education support and respect people with different cultural believe	36 (12.4%)	179 (61.5%)	67 (23.0%)	9 (3.1%)
6	Adult Education creates respect and protect the environment for future generations	55 (18.9%)	61 (20.3%)	131 (45.0%)	44 (15.8%)
7	The programmes of adult Education has helped to nurture creativity and imagination	87 (29.0%)	67 (22.3%)	103 (34.4%)	43 (14.3%)
9	Adult Education programme has helped to increase the national Literacy rate	88 (29.3%)	92 (30.7%)	67 (22.3%)	53 (17.7%)
10.	Adult Education creates opportunity for lifelong learning	91 (31.3%)	60 (20.6%)	74 (25.5%)	66 (22.6%)

NB: figures outside the parentheses are frequency distributions (ii) Figures in the parentheses are percentage distributions

Table 2 shows the role of adult education in satisfying clientele needs of the respondents towards adult education programmes in Nigerian Universities. The result from the table indicates that only 118(40.6%) of the respondents agreed that adult education programmes do not have the capacity to improve the quality of life of the recipients while the majority 143(49.4%) of the respondents disagreed with this view. Similarly, 176(60.5%) of the respondents believe adult education has helped in improving the economy of its recipients while 115(39.5%) of the respondents disagreed. Only 109(37.5%) of the respondents agreed that Adult education ensures that its recipient develop love for learning and take full advantage of it while majority 182(52.5%) of the respondents oppose this statement. As regards the graduates of adult Education programmes, a high proportion of the respondents agreed that graduates of adult education programmes actively participate in community and societal issues while only 54(18.2%) of the respondents disagreed with this statement. 215(73.9%) of the respondents reported that adult education supports and respect people from diverse areas while only 76(26.1%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. 116(39.2%) of the respondents agreed that current adult education programmes address the issues of respect and protection of the environment for future generation while majority disagreed with the view.

Also, 154(51.3%) of the respondents consented that some adult education programmes helped to nurture creativity and imagination among its recipients while the remaining respondents disagreed with the position. Most of the respondents 180(60%), agreed that adult education programmes has helped in improving and increasing the national literacy rate over the years while 120(40%) of the respondents differ in their views. Finally, 141(51.9%) of the respondents believed that adult education programmes creates lifetime opportunities for lifelong learning for its clientele while the remaining 140(48.1%) of the respondents disagree with this view.

Based on the results, it is indicative that adult education programmes relatively satisfies the demands of its clientele. It should be stated however that there is need to improve. This view was supported by Oladapo (2002).

Table 3: Changes required for a better Adult Education programmes

S/N	Item questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The Curriculum has become outdated	85 (23.2%)	125 (34.6%)	52 (15%)	98 (27.2%)
2	There are many irrelevant courses in the programme	80 (23.1%)	172 (49.7%)	54 (15.6%)	40 (11.6%)
3	The Department name does not capture what the programme is all about	137 (38.0%)	129 (35.7%)	59 (16.3%)	36 (10.0%)
4	The certificates issued in the Department reflects the programmes offered	95 (26.8%)	141 (39.8%)	50 (14.1%)	68 (19.2%)
5	It may be difficult to get a good job with the current structure of our programme	152 (44.1%)	113 (32.8%)	39 (11.2%)	41 (11.9%)
6	I do not really feel proud of the Department because people see us as the teachers of adults	86 (24.4%)	109 (31.0%)	57 (16.2%)	100 (28.4%)

NB: figures outside the parentheses are frequency distributions (ii) Figures in the parentheses are percentage distributions

The result indicates that majority of the respondents 211(57.8%) believe that their current school was outdated and hence are not in tune with current realities, while the remaining 150(42.2%) respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, majority 252(72.8%) of the respondent admitted that there are many irrelevant courses in their current adult education programmes while only about 94(27.2%) of the respondents disagreed with this view. 266(73.7%) of the respondents also consented that the Departmental name does not capture what its

programme are all about while only 95(26.3%) of the respondents differ in their view. Furthermore, a large proportion 236(66.6%) of the respondents consented that certificates issued in the Department do not reflect the programmes offered and requires amendment while only 118(23.4%) of the respondents hold a contrary view. In a similar reaction, 265(76.9%) of the respondents admitted that It may be difficult to get a good job with the current structure of our programmes in the Department while 80(23.1%) disagreed with this view. Finally, majority 195(55.8%) of the respondents admitted of not being proud of their programmes in the Department because people only see them as teachers of adults while 157(44.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the view. From the results it can be deduced that majority of the respondents agreed that there is an urgent need to have some restructuring in adult education programmes in the University.

These results corroborates Ugwuegbu (2003), that adult education in Nigeria is not just about literacy or remedial education to fill the gap. The implications of the result shows that the name 'adult education' fulfill the necessary conditions but not the sufficient conditions for developing individual capacity building and human development. Hence the urgent need for rebranding.

Conclusion

Rebranding adult education is not only about changing the nomenclature of adult education, but it is about getting individuals to see the prospects in adult education and see it as a solution to capacity building and human capital development in Nigeria. Adult education is neither literacy nor nomadic education. It is a holistic education to develop and improve the performance of individuals, institutions, organizations and society as a whole. Therefore, a positive shift in the nomenclature is necessary in order to sustain both the present and future needs of adult education consumers. Any society whose educational system is careless about the needs of individual and its society is doomed to fail in all ramification.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made in relation to rebranding adult education:

1. Adult education needs rebranding so as to satisfy its consumers and make its commodities (graduates) marketable in the competitive labour market.
2. Adult education curriculum and programmes should be reviewed to enhance individual capacity building and human capital development.
3. Any form of adult education must provide a better framework that

- will meet the needs of individuals, organizations and groups in society.
4. The provider of adult education should take into consideration that Nigeria is a certificate-oriented country, hence, rebranding will make adult education to be more functional, relevant, need-oriented and market driven.
 5. The name "adult education" should be changed to "Human Resources and Lifelong education."

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