



Relevance Of Physical Facilities In Enhancing Adult Learning In Continuing Education Programmes In Tertiary Institutions In Rivers State, Nigeria

¹Mbadiwe-Woko, E. F., ²Ogwo Precious, N. & ³Daerego Taylor, I.

¹Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education
Federal Technical College Omoku, Rivers State
08033097750

²Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Ogwo4real@yahoo.com, 08065215490

³Department of Adult and Community Education
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Daerego.taylor@ust.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study examined the relevance of physical facilities in enhancing adult learning in continuing education programmes in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Three research questions guided the study. The research adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 1,198 adult learners in continuing education programmes in their final years from five (5) tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State. The sample size of 839 representing 70% of the population was determined using the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection in this study was a self-designed questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on the Relevance of Physical Facilities in Enhancing Adult Learning in Tertiary Institutions” (QRPFEALTI). The questionnaire was validated by one expert in field of Adult Education and two experts from Measurement and Evaluation. The results of the analyzed data revealed there is a strong relationship between physical facilities and enhancement of adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state. The findings of the study also indicated that some of the factors militating against the availability of physical facilities in tertiary institution include poor funding, intrusion by non-professionals who are not aware of appropriate methods and facilities relevant for adult learning. Other factors include Poor maintenance culture, poor policy development and poor implementation of adult education as an attachment of the regular education system. The study recommended that The Rivers State government should ensure that funds are adequately provided to enhance the availability of relevant physical facilities to aid adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Keywords: Physical Facilities, Adult Learning, Adult Education Programmes, Tertiary Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

A growing body of research has found that school facilities can have a profound impact on adult learning. With respect to adult learners, Dumbiri (2015) posits that school facilities can affect their behavior, engagement, learning, and growth in achievement. Thus, researchers generally conclude that without adequate facilities and resources, it is extremely difficult to serve large numbers of adults learners with their multiple needs. Hence, facility quality is an important aspect of adult learning. In a

related view, Cunny School of Professional Studies (2018) suggests that the physical and emotional health of adult's learners depends on the quality of the physical location. Therefore, the importance of establishing adequate and relevant physical facilities for effective adult learning cannot be overemphasized.

In Nigeria, adult education has often been treated as the less important aspect of education. As a result, most physical facilities used for adult learning are usually formed out of dependency and contingency. In most cases adult learning only takes place where and when all other activities in the conventional settings are over. Ngau in Kabochi (2015) asserted that adult education programmes run by government mainly operate in facilities some of which are inappropriate for the adult use. Most adult learners use public facilities such as churches, social halls, primary school and nursery classrooms. Some of these classes are tight, noisy, poorly lit and ventilated. The implementation of adult education as an attachment of the regular education system demands that adults must learn using the facilities that are otherwise meant for children. Bunya (2006) observed that in some settings, adults use small and uncomfortable desks especially in classes held in nursery school buildings, low level improvised benches with no back support and flat form for writing on. Lughalo (2016) condemns this mode of operation when he asserts that to achieve desirable outcomes; it is important to have a distinctive atmosphere of adulthood in the facilities used for adult learning. Adults are often physically uncomfortable in child size furniture, and they are psychologically uncomfortable in traditional classroom settings which emphasize the distance and inequality between teacher and students. The location of learning centers near residential areas is important to many adult learners. Availability of learning center near the learner's homes enhances attendance and enrolment (White, 2004). From the forgoing, it is obvious that Physical facilities in schools are fundamental factors for better learning. Research shows that availability of the physical facilities such as school buildings, teaching and learning materials, classroom, laboratories, libraries, offices, and toilet facilities, and other material and infrastructures would likely motivate adult learners to effective learning outcome. Kallah (2009), identified school physical facilities as the main factor contributing to effective learning in the school system. He claimed that the quality, appropriateness and adequacy of school buildings, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and recreational equipment among others, contribute to learning processes. Ayodele (2000) emphasized that the availability of these resources are quite important to achieving effectiveness in instructional delivery and supervision in the school system. Thus, without suitable facilities, effective learning cannot take place (Amanullah and Adeeb, 2014). According to Demba (2007) there is need to provide accessible, adequate and appropriate infrastructure that are conducive for adult learning in order to deliver effective programmes. Improving the quality of school facilities to suit adult learners is an expensive undertaking. However, when the positive impacts of facility improvement on teachers and students are translated monetary figures, the rewards of such investments far outweigh the cost of the investments. Pennsylvania State University (2018) identifies five primary facets of school facilities relevant for adult learning to include: acoustics/noise, air quality, lighting, temperature, and space.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relevance of physical facilities in enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify physical facilities relevant for enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State
2. Examine how physical facilities enhance adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state?
3. Identify factors affecting the availability of physical facilities in the implementation of adult education in tertiary institutions in Rivers state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the physical facilities relevant for enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. How do physical facilities enhance adult learning in tertiary Institutions Rivers State?
3. What are the factors affecting the availability of physical facilities in the implementation of adult education programmes in tertiary institutions Rivers State?

RESEARCH METHODS

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 1198 adult learners in their final year from five (5) tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State. These include Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt Polytechnic and Federal Technical College, Omoku. The stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting 839 adult learners representing 70 per cent of the entire population. The instrument for data collection in this study was an 18 item structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the Relevance of Physical Facilities in Enhancing Adult Learning in Tertiary Institutions" (QRPFEALTI). The response option was a 4-point modified Likert scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The number of responses obtained was multiplied by the number of weights. The number of responses were added together to obtain the total weight agreement which is divided by the number of respondents to get the mean scores. The decision to accept or reject any item in the questionnaire was based on a criterion mean of 2.5 and above. While any item in the research instrument with less than 2.5 mean score was rejected. For data analysis, mean statistics was used to analyze data on the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: *What are the physical facilities relevant for enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean Response on physical facilities relevant for enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

| S/N | Statements: the following facilities are relevant for enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State | \bar{X} | Remarks |
|-----|---|-----------|---------|
| 1 | Public address systems | 3.67 | Agree |
| 2 | Adequate lighting | 3.99 | Agree |
| 3 | Large classroom space | 3.78 | Agree |
| 4 | Classrooms that prevents external noise | 3.52 | Agree |
| 5 | Classroom with good air quality | 3.76 | Agree |
| 6 | Classrooms with proper temperature | 3.58 | Agree |
| 7 | Furniture designed to suit adults | 3.77 | Agree |
| | Grand Mean | 4.25 | Agree |

The overall analysis based on the responses on research question one indicates that all the items were accepted. The grand mean of 4.25 shows that facilities such as; public address systems, furniture designed to suit adults, adequate lighting, large classroom size, classrooms that prevent external noise, good air quality and proper room temperature are relevant for enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This finding is well in line with Kabochi (2015) who asserts that in designing an adult learning environment, effort must be made to consider the adults special needs. In her view such environment must be noise free, well lighted, spacious and with good room temperature. According to Pennsylvania State University (2018), the basic facets of school facilities that must be considered in design and development of adult learning includes; acoustics/noise, air quality, lighting, temperature, and space.

Research Question Two: *How do physical facilities enhance adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state?*

Table 2: Mean Response on ways physical facilities enhance adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state

| S/N | Statements: physical facilities enhance adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State in the following ways? | \bar{X} | Remarks |
|-----|--|-----------|---------|
| 8 | Reduces stress for adult learners | 3.24 | Agree |
| 9 | Enhance learners concentration level | 3.11 | Agree |
| 10 | Encourage class attendance | 2.98 | Agree |
| 11 | Enhance students overall performance | 3.44 | Agree |
| 12 | Protects the learners health | 3.28 | Agree |
| 13 | Enhances learners Comprehension and involvement | 3.79 | Agree |
| | GRAND MEAN | 3.31 | Agree |

Data on table 2 shows that respondents agreed with all the items. The grand mean of 3.31 show that availability of physical facilities can help to reduce stress for adult learners, enhance their concentration level, encourage attendance, enhance their overall performance, protect the learners health and enhance the learners comprehension and involvement in learning activities. According to the department of Education and planning university of Nairobi (2014) physical facilities in schools are the key base for effective teaching and learning. In its view, school facilities help to increase class attendance, enhance staff motivation, and improve academic achievement for students. The study also showed that improved academic achievement is associated with more adequate and well-spaced classrooms etc. Johnson (2009) further supports this finding when he suggests that the availability of appropriate facilities ignites in the adult learner a positive feeling about learning. This attitude provides the right motivation for the achievement of adult learning outcomes. This finding is further supported by Dumbiri (2015) who posits that school facilities can affect the health, behavior, engagement, learning, and growth in achievement of the adult learner.

Research Question Three: *What are the factors affecting the availability of physical facilities in enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state?*

Table 3: Mean Response on factors affecting the availability of physical facilities in enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state

| S/N | Statements: the following are factors affecting the availability of physical facilities in enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state | \bar{X} | Remarks |
|-----|--|-----------|---------|
| 14 | Poor funding | 3.54 | Agree |
| 15 | Designing and implementation of adult education by non-professionals | 2.99 | Agree |
| 16 | poor policy development and implementation on adult education | 3.22 | Agree |
| 17 | Poor maintenance culture | 3.87 | Agree |
| 18 | Operation of adult education as an attachment of regular education system | 2.86 | Agree |
| | GRAND MEAN | 3.31 | Agree |

The overall analysis based on the responses on research question three indicates that all the items were accepted. The grand mean of 3.31 shows that some of the factors militating against the availability of physical facilities in tertiary institution include poor funding, intrusion by non-professionals who are not away of appropriate methods and facilities relevant for adult learning. Other factors include Poor maintenance culture, poor policy development and implementation of adult education as an attachment of the regular education system. Hussain and Alhassan (2013) identified some of the challenges affecting adult education to include;

1. Failures of universal basic education (UBE) act to give adequate recognition to adult education as a key sector of basic education. This neglect is clearly seen in the inadequacy of appropriate facilities for adult learning
2. Funding: the budgetary allocation to adult education at all levels of government is grossly inadequate, especially when compared with the formal sector. The implication is that facilities for adult learning will be greatly affected
3. Inadequate and irregular monitoring of adult education programmes: Regular monitoring and evaluation of adult education programmes will clearly expose the lapses associated with lack of appropriate facilities in the implementation of adult education programmes aimed at enhancing adult learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a strong relationship between physical facilities and enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers state. To achieve desired results, physical facilities for adult learning in tertiary institutions should have an aura of adulthood. This implies that the learning environment must be conducive; it should be spacious, well lighted, noise free, with air conditioning and public address systems. A number of factors are responsible for the non-availability of relevant facilities for enhancing adult learning in higher institutions in Rivers state. Poor funding, lack of regular monitoring and evaluation and the implementation of adult education as an attachment of the formal education system are factors linked to the non-availability of physical facilities relevant for enhancing adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This implies that the adult's peculiar features must be considered in the design and implementation of adult education in tertiary institutions, if desired results are to be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

1. The Rivers State government should ensure that funds are adequately provided to enhance the availability of relevant physical facilities to aid adult learning in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. Efforts should be made by multinational oil companies to support government effort in the provision of facilities dedicated to adult education.
3. The Rivers State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education and the Nigeria National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE) should carry out regular accreditation of adult education programmes in tertiary institution to ensure compliance with best practices especially as it relates to facilities used for teaching adults in tertiary institutions in Rivers state
4. The Rivers state government should as a matter of urgency employ qualified professional to manage the implementation of Adult education programmes in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

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