The Relationship Among Teacher Variables And Adult Learners’ Academic Performance

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Abstract

Mass illiteracy is a major problem in most third world countries; hence most governments encourage adult education. Nigeria is a third world country where a high proportion of the adult populations are illiterates. Teacher variables like qualification, age, experience and teacher-learners ratio affect the academic performance of the adult learners. Hence, this study investigated the extent to which these variables correlated with adult learners academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria between 1997/98 and 1999/2002 academic sessions. It is a descriptive survey research, which was conducted under the ex post facto research design. The simple random sampling technique was used to select one of the seven departments, which participated in the part-time sub-degree programmes within the period of the study. The four research hypotheses, which guided the study, were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings reveal that all the independent variables (i.e. teacher’s qualification, age, experience and teacher-learners ratio) had significant and positive relationship with adult learners’ academic performance. The implication of these findings is that the management of the part-time sub-degree programmes should take cognizance of these factors while allocating courses to lecturers. The paper advocates for team teaching of courses so that the less experienced lecturers can gain more teaching skills and knowledge from the more experienced ones.

Introduction

Adult education has gained global prominence. It is the adult population that can contribute meaningfully to the economic development of any nation. The Nigeria government is aware of the importance of adult education, hence it made provision for it in both ‘National Policy on Education’ and the Universal Basic Education programme. Adult education is a form of non-formal education which consists of functional literacy, remedial, continuing, vocational, aesthetic, cultural and civic education that is provided for adults outside the formal school system (NPE, 1981).

Roger (1992) observed that both the social change and the liberal traditional views of adults education agreed that the individual learner was the prime concern of the programme of Adult Education. Thus, the study of “andragogy”, i.e., “how adults can best be helped to learn while respecting their adulthood”, stressed the learner centeredness’ of adult education which is the development of the whole person, the individual’s motivation, freedom of choice and participation in the learning process, the achievement of goals set by the learners themselves. Adult learners, according to Mellory and Spencer (1988); Knowles (1975 and
should learn what they want to learn, when they want to learn it, as their own pace, in their own location and for their own purposes. Therefore, individuals have the right to choose their own provision for their own purposes, to exercise a real choice about the sort of learning experience they choose to undergo.

The concept of adult learner thus connotes freedom of choice to the type of learning instructions, materials and processes through which the individual wishes to acquire the rudiments or skills needed to function in his daily activities. It is against this background that adult education which is adult inclined, adult-directed and motivated is of the view that adult learners should come to the control of their own education. Since the overriding aim behind all educational provision for adults is to help the learners to become independent, so that the learners plan and carry out their own purposeful learning, the instructors is to encourage the learners to engage in the exercise of autonomy during the educational process. In this wise, the adult learner is characterized by the following:

(i) Acquired experience which has remained overtime and stable
(ii) Differences in background of socio-cultural and economic orientation
(iii) Independent of ideas, thoughts and values judgment, belief and interests.
(iv) Encouraged through motivation/learning by motivation
(v) Adult learners are of varied age background
(vi) Mature and capable of self-direction and self-initiatives
(vii) Hate or distaste discipline
(viii) Prefer participation in learning process
(ix) Freedom of choice as to when to enter a learning situation and when to opt out.
(x) Like to control their learning situation.

Among other things, instructors are always enjoined to take cognizance of the above feature of the adult learner in the process of helping them to acquire new skills, ideas and knowledge. The adult learner is not like a child whose brain in the latin word is a “tabularazar”. The brain is already filled with accumulated life experiences and thus needs encouragement to learn new details that will enhance his functional ability in the day-to-day productive activities.

The objectives of adult education in Nigeria are:
(a) to provide functional literacy education for adults who have never had the advantage of any formal education;
(b) to provide functional and remedial education for those young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system;
(c) to provide further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills;
(d) to provide in-service on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills;
(e) to give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment (NPE, 1981).

Teachers of the part-time sub-degree courses are very important. They introduce and revise the courses with the adult learners, who are also being examined by the teachers. Teachers are recognized all over the world, particularly for their role in educational development. Teachers are the most important out of all the educational personnel. Educational personnel consists of teaching and non-teaching staff. Bearing in mind the theories of system and functionalism, every segment of the school set up is very important for attainment of the organizational goals. But the teaching personnel, that is teachers are
the most important element in the school system. They are more important than the quality and quantity of equipment and materials and the degree of financing. All these are passive resources in the school system. It is only teachers that can use them as instructional aids for effective dissemination of knowledge and learning. According to Hallak (1990), the quality of education system depends on teachers quality. Recently, in order to boost the morale of teachers serving in the rural areas as well as encourage others to accept such posting, the Sokoto State Government planned to introduce allowances for teachers posted to rural areas in the state (Fabunmi, 1997).

Odebiyi (1967) and Ajayi (1989) viewed teachers to be highly essential for a successful operation of the education system, and as a key to educational development. Without teachers educational facilities can not be expanded. The 1981 National Policy on Education recognizes the importance of teachers in an educational system. Hence it says no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers and pledges that the government will continue to give major emphasis to teacher education in all the country’s educational planning. Manson (1981) supported the attribution of the success of an educational system to the teachers. He argued that teachers’ quality is an important input in effective learning, since high quality output requires input of high quality. According to Taiwo (1983) teachers are very essential in any educational system. They are the people who interpret the aims, goals, and plans of education and ensure that the children are educated in the direction of those aims and goals. He recommends that adequate number of teachers should be employed, so as to cope with the constant increase in school enrolment at different levels, and in addition sufficiently trained and selected for their duties.

Bajah (1979) argued that everywhere in the chemical world, emphasis was on the unique role of teachers. The view that the teachers are more important than the equipment of his laboratory for the understanding of the chemical concepts has always been evident. No matter how plenty the laboratory equipment may be, they remain mere teaching aids for improved performance. Adamu (1974) and Fabunmi (1997) recognized the importance of teachers, equipment and other servicing factors in any education system. The “Educational system is a rather complex mechanized production system. The basic raw materials are human beings. As the raw materials proceed through the educational system for specific lengths of period from one level to another, they are transformed by the action of teachers, equipment, and other servicing factors” (Adamu, 1974). In the secondary school system, the teachers, in the view of Adejumo (1984), perform the following functions: “The teacher is first and foremost required to give knowledge and train students in some basic skills as stipulated in the curriculum, and provide guidance for effective learning activities in the classroom. Secondly, he is to help in the administration of the school and relate with other teachers so as to implement the programme for secondary education. Thirdly, he is required to provide conducive emotional climate which may facilitate learning in the class and make students feel as part of the programme of the school.

The growth in number of teachers in Africa like other developing regions is not commensurate with that of students’ enrolment. This situation will be having adverse effect on schools academic performance. According to Williams (1973) classroom congestion and inadequate facilities characterize several schools in the less developed countries. The situation does not favor the development of student potential. In the view of Adaralegbe (1983), poor staffing has been a recurring feature in Nigerian educational system from the beginning. Kilby (1964) in his report of surveys on the teaching force in technical education argued that few of the teachers are knowledgeable in the method of teaching. Both voluntary and involuntary attrition rates of teachers are high in Nigeria. The report indicates
that good teachers are often absorbed into other government departments as the profession is not lucrative and often regarded by the public as a refuge for failures. Expatriates were at times employed to teach in an attempt to solve the manpower problem in schools.

The 1977 survey of manpower demand and supply by the National Manpower Secretariat (1978) revealed that many teachers were not competent to teach. Out of the 20,767 teachers in the 1,064 secondary schools who responded, 45 percent were university graduates, 23 percent were N.C.E. holders, while the remaining 32 percent were neither university nor college of education graduates. This implies that the 32 percent were deficient academically and professionally, hence they were not supposed to teach. The irony being that some of these teachers dropped out of secondary school system to attend a two-year course in Teacher Training College, only to return to teach in secondary school system, a programme they could not cope with as students initially (Ajayi, 1984). Amoo (1982) in his study of demand and supply of secondary school teachers in Osogbo Local Government Area of Oyo State, discovered that there was a wide gap between the demand and supply of qualified teachers in the state, and specifically in his area of study. His study revealed shortage of qualified teachers as indicated below: 44 percent in 1979/80 sessions, 56 percent in 1980/81, and 51 percent in 1981/82 session. The planning of the teacher supply by number and qualification for the commencement of Free Secondary Education was faulty and inadequate. He asserted that the situation would worsen if efforts were not made to train well qualified teachers.

Okunola (1985) in his study of resource utilization and projection in secondary education in Oyo State of Nigeria, discovered that more than 40 percent of the teachers in Oyo State were Grade 1. The State’s target was that graduates should be 60 percent, N.C.E. 30 percent and others 10 percent. He recommends adequate training programmes for secondary school teachers, since the National Policy on Education expects N.C.E. to be the minimal teaching qualification in a secondary school. More school services are concentrated in urban schools than rural ones. Better qualified teachers often seek for redeployment to Army Schools in urban towns (Mbaekwe, 1986). Sander (1972) also observed that: “The formal preparation of teachers goes significantly with the size of the city in which the schools are located. The teachers with the highest training are posted to largest cities, and even more noticeably to the capital”. This differential posting of teachers to urban and rural secondary schools culminates in differential performance of these schools. The favoured urban schools normally perform better than the disadvantaged rural ones.

The Problem

The use of deficient teachers in terms of qualification and experience is a common occurrence in most adult learning centres in Nigeria. High teacher-learners ratio is also another feature of such learning centres. Hence, this study investigated the relationship between teacher variables like qualification, age, experience and teacher-learners ratio and adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

1. Teacher’s qualification is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.
2. Teacher’s age is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.
3. Teacher’s experience is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

4. The teacher-learners ratio is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

Research Design

This study was conducted ’ex post facto’ under a survey research design. This research design was preferred because the researcher had no direct control of both the independent and dependent variables as they had already occurred.

Study Population

The study population consists of the 2,124 part-time sub-degree students of the four participating departments in the University of Ibadan in Nigeria as at the time of this study.

Sampling Technique

The deliberate sampling technique was used to select the 463 sub-degree students who completed the programme in 1999/2000 academic session. This category of students constitute the 1997/1998 – 1999/2000 cohort.

Instrumentation

The Teacher-Adult Learners Academic Performance Questionnaire (TALAPQ) is the only instrument constructed and used for the study. It consists of three sections. Section A sought for background information, Section B collected information on teacher variables like qualification, age, experience and teacher-learners ratio while section C gathered data on the adult learners performance in the sub-degree examinations.

Method of Analysis

The data which were gathered were arranged in five columns that is, average teacher-qualification, average age of teachers, average teaching experience, average teacher-adult learners ratio and average score of sub-degree students. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to test the relationship between each of the first four columns and the fifth column, using 0.05 level of significance as the decision point for acceptance and rejection of hypotheses.

Result

The result of this study is presented under the four research hypotheses which guided the study and they are as follows:

Hypothesis One

Teacher’s qualification is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.
Table 1 – Test of relationship between teacher’s qualification and learners’ performance in the sub-degree examinations

From Table 2, the correlation co-efficient of 0.4603 is positive and significant at 0.05 level. This implies that there is a significant relationship between teacher’s qualification and adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan. Hence, hypothesis one is rejected. The adult learners performed better in the courses taught and examined by the highly qualified lecturers than in those of the less qualified ones.

Hypothesis Two
Teacher’s age is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

Table 2 – Test of relationship between teacher’s age and adult learners’ performance in the sub-degree examinations

Table 2 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.5602 which is positive and also significant at 0.05 level. Hypothesis two was therefore rejected. The adult learners performed better in the courses taught and examined by older lecturers than in those of the younger lecturers.

Hypothesis Three
Teacher’s experience is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

Table 3 – Test of relationship between teacher’s experience and adult learners’ performance in the sub-degree examinations
Table 3 contains correlation coefficient of 0.6407 which is positive and highly significant at 0.05 level. Hypothesis three was therefore rejected. The adult learners performed better in the courses taught and examined by the more experienced lecturers than in those of the less experienced lecturers.

**Hypothesis Four**
The teacher-learners ratio is not significantly related to adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

<table>
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<td>461</td>
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</table>

*Significant at \( P \geq 0.05 \)

**Table 4 – Test of relationship between teacher-learners ratio (TLR) and adult learners’ performance in the sub-degree examinations**

Table 4 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.4603 which is positive and very significant at 0.05 level. Hypothesis four is therefore rejected. The adult learners in departments with lower teacher-learners ratios performed better than those with higher ratios.

**Discussion**
This study indicated that there is a high positive relationship between each of the teacher variables and adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. The respective correlation coefficients of 0.2802 and 0.2904 are both significant at 0.05 alpha level. This study agrees with Odebiyi (1977), Bajah (1979), Manson (1981), NPE (1981, 1989), Taiwo (1983), Adaralegbe (1983) Ajayi (1989) and Fabunmi (1997) who asserted the importance of the teachers in enhancing students academic achievement. This implies that students of adult education programmes with high quality teachers and adequate quantity of teachers often turn out graduates with good degree results.

**Conclusion**
This study established significant relations hips between each of the teacher variables and adult learners’ academic performance in the part-time sub-degree programme of the University.

**Recommendations**
Based on the findings of this study, education authorities should take cognizance of these variables while they allocate courses to lecturers, because of the effect on the performance of the adult learners. Team teaching of courses is recommended. This will enable the less experienced lecturers to gain more skills and knowledge from the more experienced ones.

**REFERENCES**


