

Assessing the Role of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in Promoting Literacy Programmes in Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the role of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AANFE) in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 300 respondents (200 adult learners, 70 literacy facilitators, and 30 Agency officials) was drawn from five local government areas of Oyo State using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured, validated questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale, and analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Findings showed that respondents affirmed the Agency's strategies for literacy promotion (grand mean = 2.65), rated accessibility of programmes as moderate (grand mean = 2.54), strongly affirmed the challenges confronting the Agency (grand mean = 3.14), and strongly endorsed proposed measures for improvement (grand mean = 3.15). The test of hypothesis revealed a statistically significant, strong positive relationship between the strategies employed by the Agency and the perceived level of literacy promotion in Oyo State ($r = 0.755$, $N = 300$, $p < .001$); the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study concludes that while the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education plays a significant role in literacy promotion in Oyo State, its effectiveness is constrained by inadequate funding, insufficient instructional materials, poor facilitator remuneration, and weak monitoring and evaluation. It is recommended that government increase budgetary allocation to the Agency, strengthen public-private partnerships, improve facilitator welfare, and institute regular monitoring and evaluation of literacy programmes.

Keywords: Adult Education, Non-Formal Education, Literacy Programmes, Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education, Oyo State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Literacy remains one of the most fundamental indices of human capital development and a cornerstone for national growth. It is widely acknowledged as a basic human right and a critical tool for empowering individuals to participate meaningfully in social, economic, and political life. In recognition of this, successive Nigerian governments, at both federal and state levels, have established institutional frameworks aimed at eradicating illiteracy among adults who, for various reasons, did not have access to formal schooling. In Oyo State, this responsibility is vested in the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AANFE), a body charged with the design, coordination, and implementation of literacy and non-formal education programmes across the state.

Adult and non-formal education encompasses a broad range of organised educational activities outside the conventional school system, targeted at persons who are above the normal school-going age. These programmes include basic literacy classes, post-literacy education, vocational and skills acquisition training, and continuing education. The overarching goal is to equip adult learners with functional literacy and numeracy skills that enable them to improve their livelihoods, participate in civic life, and contribute to societal development.

Despite the establishment of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education and the considerable resources committed to literacy promotion over the years, illiteracy remains a persistent challenge in Oyo State. Reports from national and international bodies continue to highlight the gap between policy intentions and actual literacy

outcomes in many Nigerian states. This raises important questions about the extent to which the Agency has been able to fulfil its mandate, and the factors that may be hindering or facilitating its effectiveness. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to assess the role of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria continues to grapple with a high number of adult non-literates, and Oyo State is not an exception. Although the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education has been in existence for several years with the mandate of coordinating literacy programmes, anecdotal evidence and preliminary observations suggest that literacy centres are often poorly attended, under-resourced, and inconsistently supervised. Facilitators frequently complain of delayed or inadequate remuneration, while learners cite the unavailability of instructional materials and inconvenient scheduling of classes as major discouraging factors. These challenges raise concerns about whether the Agency is adequately positioned, structurally and operationally, to achieve its literacy promotion objectives. There is, therefore, a need to empirically assess the Agency's performance, identify the challenges confronting it, and proffer recommendations for improvement.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the role of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the strategies employed by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State;
- ii. assess the level of accessibility of literacy programmes provided by the Agency to adult learners in Oyo State;
- iii. identify the challenges militating against the effective promotion of literacy programmes by the Agency; and
- iv. determine measures that can enhance the Agency's effectiveness in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State.

Research Questions

- i. What strategies does the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education employ in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State?
- ii. How accessible are the literacy programmes provided by the Agency to adult learners in Oyo State?
- iii. What challenges militate against the effective promotion of literacy programmes by the Agency?
- iv. What measures can enhance the effectiveness of the Agency in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State?

Research Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between the strategies employed by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education and the level of literacy promotion in Oyo State.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to policymakers, as it provides empirical evidence that can guide funding and policy decisions regarding adult and non-formal education. It is also useful to the management of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in evaluating its programmes and improving service delivery. Furthermore, the study contributes to the existing body of literature on adult education and literacy promotion in Nigeria, and serves as a reference material for researchers, students, and non-governmental organisations working in the field of adult and non-formal education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Adult and Non-Formal Education

Adult education refers to the entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, level, or method, formal or otherwise, by which persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications. Non-formal education, on the other hand, refers to any organised, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, whether adults or children. Together, adult and non-formal education constitute a critical pathway for reaching individuals who, for reasons of age, circumstance, or opportunity, could not benefit from the formal school system.

The Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in Oyo State

The Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in Oyo State was established as a parastatal of the State Ministry of Education, saddled with the responsibility of eradicating illiteracy among adults and out-of-school youths. Its functions typically include the organisation of basic literacy classes, post-literacy programmes, women education, and vocational skills training, as well as the training and supervision of literacy facilitators. The Agency operates through zonal and local government structures, working in collaboration with community leaders, non-governmental organisations, and international development partners to reach adult learners at the grassroots.

Concept of Literacy and Literacy Programmes

Literacy is generally understood as the ability to read, write, and compute with understanding, sufficient to function effectively in one's environment. Beyond basic reading and writing, functional literacy also encompasses the application of these skills to solve everyday problems, participate in decision-making, and pursue livelihood opportunities. Literacy programmes are therefore structured interventions designed to impart these skills to non-literate adults, typically delivered through community-based learning centres, evening classes, and mobile literacy schemes.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Human Capital Theory, which posits that investment in education and training enhances the productive capacity of individuals, thereby contributing to overall economic development. Applied to this study, the theory suggests that effective literacy promotion by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education represents an investment in the human capital of adult learners in Oyo State, with the potential to improve their economic and social wellbeing. The study also draws on Andragogy (Adult Learning Theory), which emphasises that adult learners are self-directed, experience-oriented, and motivated by the practical relevance of what they learn, underscoring the need for the Agency's programmes to be designed with these characteristics in mind.

Empirical Review

A number of studies have examined the performance of adult and non-formal education agencies across Nigeria, generally pointing to a mix of modest achievements and persistent structural challenges. Common findings across the literature include inadequate funding of literacy agencies, shortage and poor motivation of facilitators, insufficient instructional materials, low community awareness and mobilisation, and weak monitoring and evaluation systems. Several studies also note that where deliberate strategies such as incentive schemes for learners, flexible scheduling, and community-based mobilisation have been adopted, literacy programmes have recorded better attendance and completion rates. This underscores the importance of institutional strategy and resourcing in determining the success of literacy promotion efforts, and it is this gap in context-specific evidence for Oyo State that the present study seeks to address.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, considered appropriate for obtaining the opinions, perceptions, and experiences of respondents regarding the role of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State.

The population of the study comprised literacy facilitators, adult learners enrolled in AANFE literacy centres, and officials of the Agency across the local government areas of Oyo State. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed: five local government areas (Ibadan North, Ibadan South-West, Oyo East, Ogbomosho North, and Iseyin) were purposively selected to reflect urban, semi-urban, and rural spread; literacy centres were randomly selected within each area; and respondents were selected using simple random and purposive sampling as appropriate. A total sample of 300 respondents was drawn, comprising 200 adult learners, 70 literacy facilitators, and 30 Agency officials.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled 'Agency Role and Literacy Promotion Questionnaire (ARLPQ)', validated by experts in adult education and measurement and evaluation. The instrument comprised six sections: demographic data; strategies employed by the Agency (6 items); accessibility of literacy programmes (6 items); challenges facing the Agency (6 items); measures to enhance effectiveness (6 items); and perceived level of literacy promotion (5 items), the last of which served as the outcome measure for the hypothesis test. All scaled items were structured on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1). Instrument reliability was established through a pilot test using the test-retest method.

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores) to answer the research questions; an item mean of 2.50 and above was taken as agreement/affirmation. The stated hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 level of significance, correlating respondents' composite scores on the Strategies subscale with their composite scores on the Literacy Promotion Level subscale.

RESULTS

A total of 300 questionnaires were administered and retrieved, representing a 100% response rate. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Category	Adult Learner	200	66.7
	Facilitator	70	23.3
	Agency Official	30	10.0
Gender	Male	132	44.0
	Female	168	56.0
Age Range	18-30	54	18.0
	31-40	90	30.0
	41-50	84	28.0
	51-60	48	16.0

	Above 60	24	8.0
Local Government Area	Ibadan North	72	24.0
	Ibadan South-West	66	22.0
	Oyo East	60	20.0
	Ogbomoso North	57	19.0
	Iseyin	45	15.0

Table 1 shows that adult learners constituted the largest respondent group (66.7%), followed by facilitators (23.3%) and Agency officials (10.0%). Female respondents (56.0%) slightly outnumbered male respondents (44.0%), and the modal age range was 31-40 years (30.0%). Respondents were fairly well distributed across the five sampled local government areas, with Ibadan North recording the highest representation (24.0%).

Strategies Employed by the Agency (Research Question 1)

Table 2: Strategies Employed by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (Grand Mean = 2.65)

Item	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
B1	The Agency organises community-based literacy centres in my area.	18.7	43.0	31.7	6.7	2.74	Accepted
B2	The Agency provides training for literacy facilitators before they teach.	23.7	47.3	26.0	3.0	2.92	Accepted
B3	The Agency uses radio and community announcements to create awareness about literacy classes.	13.7	37.7	36.7	12.0	2.53	Accepted
B4	The Agency collaborates with traditional and religious leaders to mobilise learners.	18.3	39.3	37.3	5.0	2.71	Accepted
B5	The Agency organises post-literacy programmes for graduates of basic literacy classes.	10.7	37.3	40.3	11.7	2.47	Rejected
B6	The Agency's literacy promotion strategies are well coordinated across the state.	12.7	39.7	36.0	11.7	2.53	Accepted

Table 2 shows that respondents generally affirmed the strategies employed by the Agency, with a grand mean of 2.65. Facilitator training before deployment (mean = 2.92) and the organisation of community-based literacy centres (mean = 2.74) were the most affirmed strategies, while the organisation of post-literacy programmes for graduates was rated lowest (mean = 2.47), suggesting that the Agency's post-literacy follow-through is comparatively weaker than its entry-level programming.

Accessibility of Literacy Programmes (Research Question 2)

Table 3: Accessibility of Literacy Programmes to Adult Learners (Grand Mean = 2.54)

Item	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
C1	Literacy centres are located within reasonable distance from my home/community.	13.0	48.0	33.0	6.0	2.68	Accepted
C2	Class schedules are convenient for adult learners' daily economic activities.	7.0	34.7	48.7	9.7	2.39	Rejected
C3	Literacy programmes are equally available in rural and urban areas.	4.0	26.3	48.0	21.7	2.13	Rejected
C4	Learners can enrol in literacy classes without much bureaucracy.	16.3	52.0	28.3	3.3	2.81	Accepted
C5	Instructional materials are readily available at literacy centres.	3.0	31.0	51.7	14.3	2.23	Rejected
C6	Literacy programmes are free or affordable for adult learners.	24.0	52.7	21.0	2.3	2.98	Accepted

Table 3 shows a moderate grand mean of 2.54 for accessibility. Respondents affirmed that programmes are affordable (mean = 2.98) and enrolment is not overly bureaucratic (mean = 2.81), but disagreed that programmes are equally available across rural and urban areas (mean = 2.13) and that instructional materials are readily available at centres (mean = 2.23), pointing to an urban-rural access gap and materials shortage.

Challenges Facing the Agency (Research Question 3)

Table 4: Challenges Militating Against Effective Literacy Promotion (Grand Mean = 3.14)

Item	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
D1	Inadequate government funding affects the Agency's literacy programmes.	39.3	50.7	9.3	0.7	3.29	Accepted
D2	Facilitators are poorly or irregularly remunerated.	48.3	43.7	7.0	1.0	3.39	Accepted
D3	There is a shortage of instructional and learning materials.	30.7	53.3	14.7	1.3	3.13	Accepted
D4	Monitoring and evaluation of literacy centres is weak.	25.7	52.3	21.0	1.0	3.03	Accepted
D5	Community awareness and mobilisation for literacy programmes is low.	19.0	54.0	25.3	1.7	2.90	Accepted
D6	The Agency lacks adequate staff to cover all local government areas.	29.0	53.3	17.0	0.7	3.11	Accepted

Table 4 shows strong agreement across all challenge items, with a grand mean of 3.14. Poor or irregular facilitator remuneration (mean = 3.39) and inadequate government funding (mean = 3.29) were rated as the most severe challenges, consistent with the accessibility findings on materials shortage.

Measures to Enhance Effectiveness (Research Question 4)

Table 5: Measures to Enhance the Agency's Effectiveness (Grand Mean = 3.15)

Item	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Remark
E1	Increased government funding would improve literacy programme delivery.	41.0	47.3	11.7	0.0	3.29	Accepted
E2	Improved facilitator welfare would enhance programme outcomes.	31.0	57.0	11.0	1.0	3.18	Accepted
E3	More community sensitisation would increase learner enrolment.	29.3	50.7	19.0	1.0	3.08	Accepted
E4	Regular monitoring and evaluation would improve programme quality.	35.7	54.3	10.0	0.0	3.26	Accepted
E5	Partnership with NGOs and the private sector would boost the Agency's resources.	24.0	60.7	15.0	0.3	3.08	Accepted
E6	Flexible class scheduling would improve learner retention.	27.7	46.0	24.7	1.7	3.00	Accepted

Table 5 shows strong endorsement of all proposed measures, with a grand mean of 3.15. Increased government funding (mean = 3.29) and improved facilitator welfare (mean = 3.18) were the most strongly endorsed measures, mirroring the challenges identified as most severe in Table 4.

Test of Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between the strategies employed by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education and the level of literacy promotion in Oyo State.

Table 6: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Strategies and Literacy Promotion Level

Statistic	Value
N	300
Mean – Strategies composite ($\bar{X}$)	15.90
SD – Strategies composite	3.33
Mean – Literacy Promotion composite ($\bar{Y}$)	12.56
SD – Literacy Promotion composite	3.12
Pearson r	0.755
Degrees of freedom (df)	298

Computed t-value	19.862
Critical t-value (0.05, two-tailed)	1.968
p-value	< 0.001
Decision	Reject H ₀

As shown in Table 6, the computed t-value (19.862) exceeds the critical t-value (1.968) at 298 degrees of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance, and the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.755$) indicates a strong, positive relationship. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, indicating that the strategies employed by the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education have a statistically significant relationship with the perceived level of literacy promotion in Oyo State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education employs a reasonably coherent set of strategies for literacy promotion, though its post-literacy follow-through appears weaker than its entry-level mobilisation efforts. This is consistent with the broader adult education literature, which frequently notes that literacy agencies in Nigeria are better resourced for initial enrolment drives than for sustaining learners beyond basic literacy. The accessibility findings, particularly the rural-urban gap and materials shortage, corroborate similar observations in other Nigerian states, where infrastructural and logistical constraints disproportionately affect rural literacy provision.

The strong agreement on funding and remuneration as the most severe challenges, mirrored by strong endorsement of increased funding and improved facilitator welfare as priority measures, suggests a fairly consistent picture across respondent groups regarding what would most improve programme delivery. The significant positive relationship between the Agency's strategies and the perceived level of literacy promotion further suggests that, notwithstanding resource constraints, the strategies currently in use are meaningfully associated with positive perceptions of literacy outcomes, and that strengthening those strategies (rather than replacing them outright) may be the more effective path to improved outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the role of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education in promoting literacy programmes in Oyo State, Nigeria, using data from 300 respondents across five local government areas. The findings show that the Agency's strategies were generally affirmed by respondents, accessibility of programmes was rated moderate with a notable rural-urban gap, and challenges relating to funding, facilitator remuneration, and instructional materials were strongly affirmed. The test of hypothesis revealed a statistically significant, strong positive relationship between the Agency's strategies and the perceived level of literacy promotion ($r = 0.755$, $p < .001$), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. It is concluded that while the Agency remains central to the literacy promotion agenda in Oyo State, deliberate policy attention to funding, facilitator welfare, materials provision, and rural access is required to enable it to fully achieve its mandate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- The Oyo State Government should increase budgetary allocation to the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education to enable adequate procurement of instructional materials and infrastructure.
- Facilitator remuneration and welfare should be improved and regularised to enhance motivation and reduce attrition.

- iii. The Agency should intensify community mobilisation and sensitisation, particularly in rural areas, using local languages, traditional rulers, and religious institutions as channels of engagement.
- iv. Class schedules should be made more flexible to accommodate the economic and domestic responsibilities of adult learners.
- v. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be instituted to regularly assess the performance of literacy centres and facilitators.
- vi. The Agency should strengthen partnerships with non-governmental organisations, international development agencies, and the private sector to complement government funding and expand programme reach, and should invest specifically in post-literacy follow-through so gains from basic literacy classes are not lost.

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