

Technological Implication of Family Structure and Occupational Status Affecting Academic Involvement of Adult Learners in Literacy Programmes

¹Linus Okechukwu Nwabuko, ¹Ngozika J. Ugwuoke, ¹Eberechukwu Charity Eneh, ¹Charity O. Imo

¹Ann Ebere Okechukwu, ¹Elizabeth Ebere Obiozor, ¹Georgina Chinagorom Eze

²Eunice R. Idakpo and ³Favour Mkpoikanke Otu

¹Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

²Department of Adult Education, College of Education, Okene, Nigeria

³Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

ngozika.ugwuoke@unn.edu.ng

Abstract: This study investigated family structure and occupational status affecting academic involvement of adult learners in a literacy programme in Kogi State, Nigeria. The specific purpose of the study was to find out the extent family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State Nigeria and to ascertain the extent occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State, Nigeria. The design of the study was a descriptive survey design. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data which was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation while t-test statistic was used to test the two hypothesis that guided the study. Results of the analysis showed among others that family structure such as single-parenthood, large family size and family crises such as divorce affect academic involvement of adult learners while the small-sized family enhances academic involvement of adult learners. The results also showed that adult learners in occupation offering meagre wages are unable to undertake some financial obligations involved in their academic research. Based on the findings, recommendations were preferred which included that family life education should be included in the content of literacy programmes to educate the adult learners on family issues and how to resolve them. This will help to ameliorate some of the obvious family structure and occupational status factors that affect academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Key words: Structure occupational, investigated, literacy, financial obligations, recommendations, ameliorate

INTRODUCTION

The home is the oldest and the most important of all the institutions that man has devised to regulate and integrate his behaviour as he strives to satisfy his basic needs. It is a unit in which parents, children and other relatives live together. The key position of the home rests on the multiple functions performed by each member to bring about the overall development of members in terms of protection and general well-being. Home is a place where individuals who are related by blood or otherwise live together and share things in common. The home is a place of residence or refuge and comfort it is usually a place in which individuals live together, rest and be able to keep personal properties (Douglas, 2009). In the same vein, Obeta (2014) stated that a home is a place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household it is not a mere transient shelter but its

essence lies in the personalities of the people who live in it. Consequently, a home signifies the physical, socio-economic and other activities which go on within it and could also be seen as the physical houses people occupy and also where aspects of people's domestic lives contribute to their living conditions in such an environment.

The home has an environment the home environment is the surrounding within the area where someone lives and also, environmental variables operating in and around the home. According to Mdanda (2007), the home environment is the abode of family relations and all factors that make for the existence of family members within the society. In addition, Sani (2013a, b) stated that the home environment is the general outlook of the home that is the state of the home. The home environmental has some elements as the physical setting of the home which is the building, facilities and activities that make for a

living (Gecas and Nye, 1974). These elements are also recognized as home environmental factors (Duben, 2001). According to Manglakayise (2007), home environmental factors include family structure and occupational status. Nye posited that these home environmental factors have some level of impacts on adult learning activities. The home environment, therefore, connotes environmental variables surrounding the home that make for man's existence.

Home can be said to be stable and people live together happily. On the other hand, the home can equally be characterized with unhappiness and instability and people live at variance with each other. Hence, adult learner's acuity can be affected by instability and unhappiness within the home. Separation and divorce, for example have now taken their place as widespread phenomena resulting in a change from a two-parent home to the single-parent family structure, usually run by the mother (Marjoribank, 2009). In addition, it is thus, evident that the adult learner's emotional disturbance is increased by stress not from society but within the home environment and their occupational status. Occupational status means the position one occupies on the job profile. Occupational status refers to the consensual nature of rating a job based on the belief of its worthiness. It is the position that an individual occupies in the job profile (Downie, 2001). Job on the low professional profile attracts meagre wages. On the other hand, jobs of high profile attract higher income. Occupational status determines the financial state of the adults (Adams, 2006). For instance, an adult needs to be financially empowered to be able to undergo literacy programmes because finance is needed to obtain learning materials.

An adult is any individual who has attained a level of physical and mental maturity and who also is responsible and exercises a level of independence. Jegede (2011) stated that an adult is a person who has attained a specific chronological age in a particular society and who can be regarded as a mature and experienced individual. An adult, must be physiologically and psychologically mature, economically independent, socially and politically responsible and an active citizen. Other identification criteria for adulthood are marriage and inheritance. An adult is therefore, someone who is old enough to take personal decisions, fend for self and others and also able to take responsibility for his or her actions.

Adults can engage themselves in learning activities. When that happens they are referred to as adult learners. According to Jegede (2011), an adult learner is an individual who possesses the characteristics of adulthood and who is undergoing an academic activity. Hence, adult

learner is primarily an adult before becoming a learner; therefore, his 'make up' including his environment may likely affect his involvement in the learning activities academically. Academic involvement means the level of learner's dedication toward his or her academic activities. Astin (1984) described academic involvement as the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student or learner devotes to the academic experience. Continuing the researcher asserted that the concept of academic involvement resembles closely to what learning theorists have traditionally referred to as vigilance or time-on-task. Academic involvement is the degree of attachment, commitment, devotion, enthusiasm and engagement that the student exhibit towards any educational programme per time. It has been observed by some researcher that academic involvement occurs along a continuum that is different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given subject and a learner manifests different degrees of involvement in different subjects at different times.

The degree of academic involvement among learners varies. Supporting this opinion, Astin (2008) asserted that a highly involved learner is one who devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time to do assignments, participate actively in class and group discussion while a typical uninvolved learner neglects studies, spends little time on personal reading, abstains from classes, group discussion and has infrequent contact with teachers and other learners. Academic involvement is measurable. Supporting this view, Gagne (2007) stated that academic involvement is measured quantitatively by the number of hours the learner spends studying and qualitatively by how much the learner is able to review and comprehend assignments. Similarly, Weiner (1979) asserted that the amount of learning and personal development associated with any educational programme is proportional to the quality and quantity of learner's involvement in that programme.

Academic involvement emphasizes active participation of the learner in the learning process. Learning will be best when the learning environment is structured to encourage active participation by the learner. The extent to which students can achieve particular developmental goals is a direct function of the time and effort they devote to activities designed to produce these gains (Brown, 2007).

Academic involvement of adult learners includes such activities as attendance at literacy classes, listening to the facilitators, participating in group discussion doing of take-home-assignments, tests and examinations among others as planned in the adult literacy programmes. Going by this, therefore, adult literacy programmes by nature

and scope ought to be designed in a manner that can elicit learner's involvement. Academic involvement, in a nutshell connotes the application of sufficient effort and investment of energy by the learner to bring about the desired learning outcome and development. Adult literacy, education is one of the major components of adult education programmes. Literacy simply means the ability to read write and compute in a given language at an appreciable level. Continuing, the researcher stressed that literacy includes a combination of factors that contribute to the liberation of man and to his full development. During the 1990s, many state governments set up their own adult education agencies with a view to changing the adult literacy condition of their citizens for the better. It is in the realization of this which the National Commission for Mass Literacy, adult and non-formal education was established in 1991 to foster the development of youth and adult literacy education in Nigeria (NCML and ANE, 2008).

Programmes generally, offered are adult basic literacy, post-literacy and functional literacy. A programme is a plan of action aimed at accomplishing a clear business objective with details on what work is to be done by whom when or what means or resources will be used (Googleplex, 2015). These programmes are offered in the various states under the supervision of the state agencies for mass literacy adult and non-formal education and have literacy and numeracy at the core of educational activities. Adult learners in Kogi State are engaged in academic programmes ranging from adult basic education, post-literacy education, functional literacy programmes to professional programmes such as correspondence studies in colleges of education and postgraduate studies in the universities. However, this study is focused on adult learners in adult basic education programme in Kogi State. Adult basic education implies the acquisition of the skills of reading writing and numeracy (Oduaran, 2002). There are a good number of literacy centres in all the local government areas in Kogi State. Equally, in each of the centres the government made sure that there are a good number of facilitators that implement literacy activities. This is part of the overall effort of the Nigerian Government to eradicate illiteracy within the shortest possible time (Igono, 2005).

However, despite this effort by the government, it has been observed by researchers that the academic involvement of the adult learners in these literacy centres has been on the decline. Agreeing with this, Sani (2013a, b) asserted that adult and youth literacy level in the state is very crucial to national development but stands at 56%, lamenting that there is low academic involvement among adult learners recorded in the various

literacy centres across Kogi State. It has been observed that absenteeism, lateness to literacy centres and truancy are some of the features that characterized the adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State. Therefore, owing to the low academic involvement among adult learners in the literacy centres Kogi State it is imperative to find out how family structure and occupational status as home environmental factors affect academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State. The general purpose of this study was to assess the effect of family structure and occupational status on academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State. Specifically, the study was intended to:

- Find out the extent to which family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State
- Ascertain the extent to which occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State

The following null Hypothesis (H_0) guided the study at 0.05% level of significance.

- H_{01} : there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State
- H_{02} : there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design adopted in this study is a descriptive survey research design. According to Omede and Odiba (2009), survey design is a descriptive study that attempts to identify, explain or compare events in their settings. This design will be used because the study seeks information from the respondents as the situation exists without any form of manipulation. This study was carried out in Kogi, State Nigeria. Kogi State is bordered by the following states. Benue and Nassarawa to the East, Kwara to the West, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to the North, Edo and Enugu to the South East. Kogi State is divided into three senatorial zones namely: Kogi East, West and Central. Kogi State is structured into 21 local government areas. It comprises three major ethnic groups: Igala, Ebirá

and Okun (Yoruba). Education is the State's main social industry. The people take pride in the education of their children. Many festivals exist in Kogi State. These include Italo Egbe, Ibegwu and Ogani among the Igalas, Apanibe fishing festival among the Okun speaking people. The people of Kogi State are predominantly farmers in the cultivation of the following, yam, cassava, maize, groundnut etc. The choice of Kogi State for this study was justified by the reported low academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in the state (Sani, 2013a, b). This development indicates that some factors may be responsible. There is therefore, the need to investigate the effect of family structure and occupational status on academic involvement of adult learners in Kogi State. The population of the study consisted of Adult-Education facilitators and Adult Learners from the 21 Local Government Areas of Kogi State. The population for the study comprised 2, 115 facilitators and 3, 185 adult learners-making a total of 5, 300 respondents.

The sample for the study consisted of 2646 respondents, comprising 1, 053 facilitators and 1593 adult learners in the 21 Local Government Areas of Kogi State. A proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used to draw the sample from the population. According to Omede and Odiba (2009), stratified sampling is a technique of sampling procedure by which a homogenous subgroup can be identified within a given population. The technique divides the population into homogenous sub-groups containing members who share common characteristics. The choice of these respondents was as a result of their involvement in adult literacy programmes. About 50% of facilitators and adult learners were randomly drawn from the entire population to ensure average representativeness. This sampling technique is in agreement with the recommendation of Waifor (2001) that at most 50% rating should be used to sample any population in thousands. This procedure was adopted because it aims at ensuring proportionate representation of these sub-groups in the sample.

The instrument that was used in this study was the questionnaire. It was designed by the researcher based on the purpose of the study. It was designed to assess the effects of family structure and occupational status on academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State.

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument a trial-testing was done by administering the questionnaire to 50 adult education facilitators and adult learners from two local government areas-Gboko and Oturkpo of Benue State that were not involved in the

study. The choice of this location was because they possess similar characteristics with the target population in terms of their involvement in adult literacy programmes, agricultural practices, culture and value system. The reliability of the instrument was estimated in terms of internal consistency using Cronbach alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained for clusters A-B were 0.81, 0.88, respectively while the grand respectively Co-efficient of the instrument was 0.95. This is a pointer to the fact that the instrument was reliable.

The data for this study were subjected to statistical analysis using means standard deviation and t-test to test the two hypothesis at 0.05% level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.5 and above were accepted while those below 2.5 was rejected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data for this study were organized according to research questions and null hypothesis that guided the study.

Research question 1: To what extent does family structure affect academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State?

Table 1 shows that facilitators and adult learners rated the items, above 2.5 mean benchmark. This means that they accepted at a high extent that family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes. Hence, single-parenthood affects academic involvement of adult learners large family size affects academic involvement of adult learners, family crises such as divorce affect academic involvement of adult learners, re-marriage affects academic involvement of adult learners and small-sized family enhances academic involvement of adult learners.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners, family crisis such as divorce affect academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes Kogi State.

Table 2 revealed that the calculated value of $t(-0.69)$ has a probability value (0.70) of which is >0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State was upheld.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation ratings of facilitators and adult learners on the extent to which family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State

Items	Facilitators (N = 1053)			Adult learners (N = 1593)		
	Mean	SD	Remarks	Mean	SD	Remarks
Single-parenthood affects academic involvement of adult learners	3.6	0.50	HE	3.71	0.46	HE
Large family size affects academic involvement of adult learners	3.73	0.40	HE	3.78	0.41	HE
Family crisis such as divorce affect academic involvement of adult learners	3.31	0.99	HE	3.29	1.03	HE
Re-marriage affects academic involvement of adult learners	3.84	0.42	HE	3.92		HE
Small-sized family enhances academic involvement of adult learners	3.39	0.62	HE	3.43	0.63	HE

SD = Standard Deviation; HE = High Extent; N = Number of respondents

Table 2: t-test of independent showing mean and standard deviation ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State

Parameter	N	Mean	SD	t-values	df	Sig. (2-Decision tailed)
Overall						
Facilitators	2053	3.59	0.37	0.69	2644	(NS)
Adult learners	1593	3.63	0.35			

NB: NS = Not Significant; t = t-test calculated, df = degree freedom and N = Number of respondents

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation ratings of facilitators and adult learners on the extent to which occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State

Items	Facilitators (N = 1053)			Adult learners (n = 1593)		
	Mean	SD	-	Mean	SD	-
The nature of adult learner's job can affect his or her academic involvement	3.57	0.63	HE	3.64	0.61	HE
Adult learners in occupation offering meagre wages are not able to undertake some financial obligations involved in their academic work	3.70	0.63	HE	3.78	0.56	HE
Adult learners in occupation offering high wages are able to afford enough learning materials	3.43	0.53	HE	3.49	0.51	HE
Adult learners in menial jobs have a demeaning image about themselves making them develop an inferiority complex	3.21	1.09	HE	3.22	1.09	HE
Adult learners in unskilled jobs hardly have time for academic involvement	2.72	0.68	HE	2.71	0.70	HE

SD = Standard Deviation, HE = High Extent, N = Number of respondents

Research question 2: To what extent does occupational status affect academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State?

Table 3 above reveals that both facilitators and adult learners rated the items above 2.5 mean benchmark. This means that they accepted at a high extent that occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes. Hence, the nature of adult learner's job can affect his or her academic involvement adult learners in occupation offering meagre wages are not able to undertake some financial obligations involved in their academic researcher adult learners in occupation offering high wages are able to afford enough learning materials adult learners in menial jobs have demeaning image about themselves making them develop inferiority complex and adult learners in unskilled jobs hardly have time for academic involvement.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State. Table 4 revealed that the calculated value of t (-1.64) has a probability value (0.280) of which is >0.05

level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State was upheld.

The discussion of findings of the study was done under the following subheadings extent to which family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners.

The extent to which family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners:

The findings in Table 1 revealed that family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes to a high extent. It has also been revealed by this finding that single-parenthood affects academic involvement of adult learners, large family size affects academic involvement of adult learners, family crises such as divorce affects academic involvement of adult learners, re-marriage affects academic involvement of adult learners and small sized family enhances academic involvement of adult learners. These findings are in line with Itado

Table 4: t-test in independent showing mean and standard deviation ratings of facilitators and adult learners on how occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in adult literacy programmes in Kogi State

Parameter	Grouping	N	Mean	SD	t-values	df	Sig. (2-Decisiontailed)
Overall	Facilitators	1053	3.33	0.41	-1.64	2644	0.28 (NS)
	Adult Learners	1593	3.38	0.38			

NS = Not Significant = t-test calculated, df = degree of freedom and N = Number of respondents

who made it clear that students in divorced single-parent families are more likely to experience psychological disorder which automatically discourages articulation in learning. In addition, Lidner and Brown opined that a small sized family enhances the academic performance of students while large sized family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners as the findings above have revealed. The above findings are in line with the present study which sought to know the extent to which family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes.

The analysis on Hypothesis one (H_{01}) Table 2 revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of facilitators and adult learners on how family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners on how family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy structure is one of the major determinants of academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of facilitators and adult learners on the extent to which family structure affects academic involvement of adult learners in a literacy programme in Kogi State was upheld.

The extent to which occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners: The findings in Table 3 revealed the extent to which occupational status affects academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes it showed that all the items listed to a great extent affect academic involvement of adult learners. This finding is in support of that of Nwokedi which noted that the nature of one’s occupational profile is hardly able to cope academically. More so, Obashoro commented that under-achievers in schools are usually learners from low occupational profile because in most cases, they are not able to acquire the necessary learning materials which enhance academic involvement and performance. The researcher equally observed that learners on a job that requires shifting find it difficult to attend school regularly. This is in line with the findings of this study as it was the opinion of the respondents that the nature of adult learner’s job can affect his or her academic involvement, adult learners in occupation offering meagre wages are not able to undertake some financial obligations involved in their academic pursuit.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion was drawn based on the findings of the study. The study stressed that the home environment has some level of relationship with adult learner’s academic involvement. The study was carried out to ascertain home environmental factors affecting academic involvement of adult learners in literacy programmes in Kogi State and to also determine strategies for enhancing academic involvement of adult learners. These home environmental factors include family structure, occupational status, socioeconomic status and nutrition and health. According to the findings of this study, these home environmental factors affect adult learner’s academic involvement to a great extent. The assessment of these home environmental factors was necessary to enable the researchers to ascertain the extent to which they affect adult learners academic involvement thereby determining strategies for enhancing involvement of adult learner’s in literacy programmes in Kogi State. A technological implication of this study is that fact that the use of information and communication technology platforms in the adult learning should be improved as this may help overcome the influence of family structure and occupational status affecting academic involvement of adult learners in a literacy programme in Kogi State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made. Adult education facilitators should be enlightened on the need to provide necessary assistance and psychological supports for adult learners from different family backgrounds, so as to enable them to overcome their emotional problems arising from the family and improve their academic performance.

The government is encouraged to provide a conducive learning environment by providing comfortable furniture, good lighting system and a quiet atmosphere. There should be adequate learning materials for adult learners in the various learning centres in order to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor adult learners. Adult education facilitators should endeavour to probe into the family life of underachievers, so as to know what their challenges are and what measures to employ in solving them. This will go a long way to enhance adult

learner's academic involvement. Curriculum planners of adult education programmes should insert family life education in the curriculum alongside with the strategies for enhancing academic involvement of adult learners as highlighted in the findings of this study.

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