

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING QUALITY OF ADULT LITERACY FACILITATORS IN ENUGU STATE

ONYINYECHI E. OKOYE

E-Mail: onyinyechi.okoye@unn.edu.ng

GSM: 08038847494

NGOZI U. CHUKE

E-Mail: ngozi.chuke@unn.edu.ng

GSM: 07030764900

FELICIA O. MBAGWU

E-Mail: Felicia.mbagu@unn.edu.ng

GSM: 08037948452

Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

In order to enhance the quality in Adult Literacy instructors/facilitators in Enugu State, the assessment of the professional development strategies so far becomes imperative. Three research questions were posed while one hypothesis was formulated and tested. The population of the study was four hundred and forty-nine (449) facilitators of Adult Literacy Education while the sample was two hundred and fifty-nine (259) facilitators. A 22-item structured questionnaire was designed for data collection. The questionnaire was face-validated by two (2) experts in faculty of education. Cronbach Alpha co-efficient estimate was used to establish the reliability before the administration to the respondents. Reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained. The data collated were analyzed by computing and comparing the mean scores, and by the use of t-test for the hypothesis. The study showed that the in-service training that were employed in enhancing the quality of adult literacy instructors are the use of induction training and orientation, seminars and workshops. More so, the use of coaching, job instruction were employed under on-the-job training. Also, there was low engagement on training under off-the-job strategies, which include attending conferences and lectures for instructors. Finally, the study recommended that there is need to train and re-train the instructors in order to update their knowledge and skills with the current theories and practices in education. This should be done through organizing conferences, workshops, short and long courses, on-the-job trainings, among others by the government and administrators.

Keywords: literacy, adult literacy, professional development and professional development strategies.

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Introduction

Literacy is the ability to read and write. Literacy, according to UNESCO (1997), confers a wide range of benefits on individuals, communities and nations. Literacy in the workplace, community, society and in the nation is in tune with goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people (UNESCO, 2002). With this in mind, an increasing number of countries have embarked upon the organization of nation-wide adult literacy programmes over the last few decades. Although the rationale behind these programmes varies from country to country, it is generally expected that efforts to increase the literacy levels of adults will have positive consequences for both the learners and the nation as a whole. According to U.S Department of Education in Obetta and Nwizu (2011), literacy is the ability to use printed and written information to function in the society, to achieve one's goal and to

develop one's knowledge and potential. In other words, a person or nation that is not literate is dead. Spatks (2002) also added that to be literate is to be able to use those acquired skills effectively for communication in all aspects of one's life (social, cultural, economic and political spheres).

Adult literacy should be seen as an integral section of adult education which is taken to mean any educational activity designed for adults with the aim of bringing about change in knowledge, skills and attitudes. According to Karl Marx in Smith (2002) it is a means of combating the alienation of man from economic activity, and it leads to improved knowledge, health and skills, better organization and management of one's life. The process of acquiring these attributes is therefore part of basic education for all which is regarded as a basic human right and a requirement for human development. The promotion of adult literacy education programme is in accordance with the objectives of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education as stipulated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2013). These objectives include:

- i. provide functional basic education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who are left school too early;
- ii. provide remedial/lifelong education for youths and adults who did not complete secondary school;
- iii. provide further education for different categories of completers of formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills;
- iv. to provide in-service, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills; and
- v. give the adult citizens of the country aesthetic, cultural and civil education for public enlightenment.

These objectives are geared towards providing an opportunity for the adults to embrace change and attain their desirable height in life. NMEC (2017) also affirmed that the components of adult literacy education programmes include: basic literacy, post literacy, functional literacy, vocational education, liberal education, continuing education, and workplace basic skills.

Adult literacy as an important programme of Adult and Non-Formal Education in developing countries, Nigeria inclusive. This is because the issue of high adult illiteracy in Africa and by extension Nigeria must be addressed (Zakari & Yusuf, 2014). And for the purpose of this study professional development strategies is considered very important to enhance the quality of adult literacy facilitators. A facilitator is a person who helps adults to learn. While Ogu, Osaru and Yahaya (2019) described a facilitator as one who intelligently handles complex learning situations, and simplifies learning for the adult learners. Facilitator is a key factor in running a successful adult education programmes. This is because the quality of facilitators to a large extent determines the success or otherwise of adult literacy programmes. In recognition of this fact, the Nigerian Federal Government's 2013 Education Policy states, the quality of a nation's teachers directly impacts the quality of its education system. This holds true for adult literacy facilitators as well. To effectively support adult learners, facilitators must be experienced, skilled, and competent professionals. Their skills also need to be continuously upgraded through various professional development programmes because the quality of learning in adult literacy centres is to a great extent determined by the facilitators.

The implication is that in this era of globalization and technology innovations, there is a need to update knowledge and skills as a professional in teaching adults.

Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development includes all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. This was supported by Abadiano (2004) who described it as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage. Guskey (2000) defines professional development “as those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students”.

Professional development strategies enable facilitators and teachers to improve their own education through in-service training, on-the-job training and off-the-job training. Through these professional development strategies, facilitators learn new things to improve the quality of teaching and this allows them to make changes in the way they teach their learners, integrating new teaching methods in the classroom. In higher education, for example, demands made by society and students have forced institutions to transform professional development in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of the facilitators (Brancato, 2003). It teaches them how to work with a variety of learning styles, since not all learners learn the same way. Smith et al. (2003) agreed that adult literacy facilitators changes as a result of participating in one of three strategies of professional development. Furthermore, it helps facilitators change their day-to-day teaching methods, encouraging them to accept new methods based on accurate education theory and research. Learners’ achievement is linked to numerous factors, but quality facilitators are one of the most important components of learner success. If facilitators do not have the tools they need to teach learners effectively, their learners will suffer. To teach effectively, facilitators need access to professional development on regular basis.

In-service training is to ensure the predisposition of public officials in service, is an educational activities that aim to increase their level of efficiency and increase their knowledge, experience, and skills so that they can better fulfill their future duties and responsibilities. According to Halidu (2015) in-service training are planned interventions aimed at enhancing the elements of individual job effectiveness and performance. It is the attempt to improve the performance of the individuals on the current job or prepares them for an intended job. It is the process of bridging the gap between the current performance and the standard desired performance. It must be mentioned here that the completion of in-service training, in most cases, leads to certification which qualifies one to a new status. For example, an NCE holder who attends a Degree training course while in the service would later qualify as a Degree holder (a new status), following the completion of the in-service programme. For the purposes of this paper, in-service training includes seminars, demonstrations, exhibitions, conferences, workshop etc for facilitators to acquire new knowledge, better methods and for improving their skills toward more effective, efficient and competent rendering of service in various fields and to diverse groups of people. Zamumuzi (2004) noted that in-service training as a professional strategy can be offered to the voluntary facilitators through short and long courses, induction training, university education, guidance, shadowing and monitoring. The in-service training will equip them with the current innovation on the theories and practices of adult education that will boost their competencies. A good in-service training should enhance and improve the quality of the development of facilitators in learning centres. Hirsh, (2001) also affirms that these training programmes are

good at providing facilitators with the opportunity to gain insight into teaching experiences, reflect on learning practice and cope with swift changes that happen to be in today's world. In-service training increases facilitators' efficiency, morale, human relations as well as organizational flexibility.

On-the-job training (OJT) strategies, sometimes called [direct instruction](#) is one-on-one training located at the learning centres or job site. According to Oyitso and Olomukoro (2012), an on-the-job training programme takes place at a work location. As the name goes, on-the-job training (OTJ) for a facilitator is a method of giving training to facilitators when they have involved in the act of facilitating the adult learners. The main idea behind this training is learning by doing where the supervisor or the more experienced facilitator shows the less experienced how to perform a specific task or how to use new facilitation techniques. The learners take after the directions of the supervisor and carry out the task. Noe (2002) defines OJT as training that is planned and structured and takes place mainly at the learning centre or normal work stations of the trainee although some instructions may be provided in a special training area on site-and where a supervisor, trainer or peer colleague spends significant time with a trainee to teach a set of skills that have been specified in advance. On-the-job training is teaching the skills, knowledge, and competencies that are needed for facilitators to perform a specific job within the learning environment. It occurs within the normal teaching environment that a facilitator experiences on the job. It may occur as he or she performs actual work, or it may occur elsewhere within the learning place using training rooms, training work stations, or training equipment. On-the-job training includes staff meeting, induction, workshop, apprenticeship, coaching, job rotation, mentorship, computer training and delegation of duty. Adelaida (2013) affirmed that on-the-job training is perceived to be more real life, contextualized and relevant, concerned primarily with the 'how', efficient though not necessarily correct, more observational and manipulative, more immediate, more time pressures, more 'just in time' and improvised, and more incidental and one to one in nature.

Off-the-job training strategies are conducted in separate form from the job environment, study material is supplied, there is full concentration on learning rather than performing, and there is freedom of expression. Off-the-job training for facilitators takes place outside the work situation and are usually provided by established training institutions such as NMEC, NCNE, NIEPA, NTI, among others. The new type of knowledge, skills and attitudes which are best provided through series of courses carried out of job situation (Oyitso & Olomukoro, 2012). Important strategies include: Lectures and Conferences, Vestibule Training, Simulation Exercises, Sensitivity Training and Transactional Analysis. Rashid and Rahman (2004) agreed that the success of adult literacy and basic education largely depends on the part-time facilitators, and their efficiency depends on the training they are given. Short courses are the training programmes designed by established capacity building institutions undertaken within a short duration and are certificated. The period of the programme depends on the type of course or area of need. Adult literacy facilitators who desire to update their knowledge do enrol in this form of training programmes. Similarly, Strickland et al (2001) also noted that this kind of training gives facilitators the opportunity to talk with their employer about their training, and also a gap between what the adults feels is important for their learning and what actually existed in the learning centres.

In other words, there is need for professional development of facilitators in adult literacy centres. Collaborating this, Aghedo (2019) asserted that the diverse nature of the functional

roles of the facilitators, which include instructional design, effective use of instructional materials, implementation of instructional plan and evaluation of learning outcomes which have been on the low in recent time make it imperative that they are properly trained professionally as adult literacy facilitators. Without proper professional development strategies, facilitators may not be able to utilize the andragogical skills necessary to attend to the peculiarity of the adult learners. With frequent policy changes in education and also in the evolving new technology-based society, an effective training programme for adult literacy facilitators should bring about improvement in adult education teaching/learning centres, while inadequate training can cause frustration, reduced performance and lack of job satisfaction among facilitators in adult literacy centres. Against this backdrop, this paper focused on enhancing the effectiveness of adult literacy facilitators through professional development strategies in form of in-service, on the job and off the job training.

Statement of the problem

Over the years, the purpose of adult education has been to address the educational needs of the nation and to provide opportunities for adults to improve their lives. Adult education programmes are also required to establish or operate professional development programmes that are of high quality and that lead to improvements in adult education and literacy activities. These activities should be delivered “by well-trained facilitators, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means”.

Therefore, implementation of professional development depends on strategies that will perhaps enhance the quality of facilitators to become more effective when working with adult learners, and thus, help learners achieve their goals. Facilitators here are encouraged to collaborate and plan lessons, but there are no checks in place to ensure that this consistently takes place or how it impacts learner achievement. Many adult literacy facilitators across the nation do not hold certification in adult education. There is need for appropriate and ongoing professional development opportunities specifically planned for facilitators. To help learners improve and achieve success, adult education organizers agree that more trainings on adult literacy facilitator quality is needed. Conversely, there is no record to show that any assessment has been carried out on professional development strategies on adult literacy facilitators in the state. Therefore, the study posed this question: to what extent have in-service; on-the-job and off-the-job training enhanced the quality of adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State?

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at the following:

- i. To ascertain ways in which in-service training strategy has enhanced adult literacy facilitators’ professional development in Enugu State.
- ii. To find out ways in which on-the-job training strategy has enhanced adult literacy facilitators’ professional development in Enugu State.
- iii. To ascertain the ways in which off-the-job training strategy has enhanced adult literacy facilitators’ professional development in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- i. In what way have in-service training strategy enhanced adult literacy facilitators professional development in Enugu State?
- ii. In what way have on-the-job training strategy enhanced adult literacy facilitators professional development in Enugu State?
- iii. In what way have off-the-job training strategy enhanced adult literacy facilitators professional development in Enugu State?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in the mean ratings of male and female Adult facilitators on the ways in which in-service training have enhanced Adult Literacy facilitators in Enugu State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised four hundred and forty-nine (449) facilitators in adult literacy centres in the seventeen local government in Enugu state. Simple random sampling techniques was employed to select 259 facilitators as sample size from eight zones out of seventeen local government. The zones are Nsukka (24), Awgu (70), Enugu East (30), Enugu North (30), Igboeze North (30), Nkanu East (30), Uzo-uwani (28), and Aninri (17) Educational Zone (Agency for Mass Literacy, Enugu State, 2024). A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection titled: Professional Development Strategies for Enhancing Quality Adult Literacy Facilitators questionnaire (PDSEQALFQ) designed by the researchers. The data were collated and analyzed using weighted mean. The cut-off mean was 2.50. Therefore, items with mean rating of 2.50 or above were regarded as accepted, while items with mean rating below 2.50 were regarded as rejected. In addition, t-test was used for the test of the hypothesis, at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: In what ways have in-service training to enhanced adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State?

Table 1: The Mean Ratings on in-service training to enhance adult literacy facilitators.

S/N	In-Service Training Programmes	Total Score	Mean Score	Decision
1	Instructors' participate in workshop	764	3.04	Accepted
2	Instructors participate in seminars	645	2.53	Accepted
3	Induction training and orientation are provided for newly employed instructors	998	3.98	Accepted
4	Instructors are sent abroad for short and long courses	366	1.45	Rejected
5	Is offered to instructors through guidance and shadowing	565	2.24	Rejected
6	Instructors attend long and short courses within Nigeria	536	2.15	Rejected
7	Is offered to instructors through university education	607	2.43	Rejected

8	Mentoring through observation of experts	513	2.06	Rejected
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Table 1 above indicates the various in-service training to enhance quality in adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State. From the table, it was found out that instructors participate in workshop had a mean score of 3.04, while induction training and orientation provided for newly employed facilitators had 3.98 as the means score. Others are: facilitators participation in seminars (2.53); university education offered (2.43), guidance and shadowing (2.24), mentoring through observation of experts (2.06), facilitators attend long and short courses within Nigeria (2.15), instructors are sent abroad for short and long courses (1.45). It is therefore inferred that in-service training to enhance adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State are the workshops, seminar, induction training and orientation.

Research Question 2: In what ways have on-the-job training enhanced adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State?

Table 2: The Mean Ratings on on-the-job training to enhance adult literacy facilitators.

S/N	On-the-Job Training Programmes	Total Score	Mean Score	Decision
1	Instructors' participate in orientation training	645	2.58	Accepted
2	Instructors participate in job instruction training	654	2.62	Accepted
3	Instructors participate in apprenticeship training	575	2.30	Rejected
4	Instructors are offered internship and assistantship training	250	1.00	Rejected
5	Instructors receive coaching on-the-job as a training	764	3.04	Accepted
6	Job rotation is offered to instructors	390	1.56	Rejected

Table 2 above shows various on-the-job training to enhance adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State. It shows that facilitators' participation in orientation training is 2.58 while instructor's participation in job instruction is 2.62. Others are: facilitators participate in apprenticeship training (2.30), facilitators are offered internship and assistantship (1.00), facilitators receive coaching on-the-job as a training (3.04), and job rotation (1.56). Therefore, it can be deduced from the analysis that orientation training, job instruction and coaching are various on-the-job training to enhance adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State.

Research Question 3: In what ways have off-the-job training enhanced adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State?

Table 3: The Mean Ratings on off-the-job training to enhance adult literacy facilitators.

S/N	On-the-Job Training Programmes	Total Score	Mean Score	Decision
1	Instructors' participate in and attend conferences	645	2.58	Accepted
2	Lectures are given to facilitators as part of training	952	3.81	Accepted
3	Instructors participate in case study training	430	1.72	Rejected
4	Instructors are offered vestibule training	565	2.26	Rejected
5	Role-playing is among the training given to instructors	340	1.36	Rejected
6	Stimulation is one of the off-the-training offered to instructors	505	2.02	Rejected

7	Laboratory training is offered to instructors	375	1.50	Rejected
8	Film is offered on off-the-job training	390	1.56	Rejected

Table 3 above indicates the various off-the-job training to enhance adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State. The respondents' mean scores are as follows: facilitators' participate in and attend conferences (2.58), lectures are given to facilitators as part of training (3.81), instructors participate in case study training (1.72), facilitators are offered vestibule training (2.26), role-playing is among the training given to facilitators (1.36), stimulation is one of the off-the-job training offered to facilitators (2.02), laboratory training is offered to facilitators (1.50) and film is offered on off-the-job training (1.56). It is therefore, inferred that off-the-job training to enhance adult literacy facilitators mostly are conferences and lectures.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in the mean ratings of male and female Adult facilitators on the ways in which in-service training have enhanced Adult Literacy facilitators in Enugu State.

Table 4: Mean Ratings of Male and Female facilitators on the ways in which in-service training have enhanced Adult Literacy facilitators in Enugu State.

Variables	Mean score	SD	No	Level of significance	Df	t-cal	t-tab	decision
Male facilitators	2.16	24.80	186		185			
Female facilitators	2.28	15.07	64		63			
Total	4.44	39.87	250	0.05	2.48	0.34	1.97	accepted

Table 4 above revealed the t-test mean ratings of both male and female facilitators on the ways in which in-service training have enhanced Adult Literacy facilitators in Enugu State. The analysis showed that the calculated t-ratio of 0.34 is less than the critical t-ratio of 1.97 at degree of freedom of 248, and at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted showing that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female facilitators on the extent to which in-service training have enhanced Adult Literacy facilitators. It means that both male and female facilitators perceived that the in-service training employed are just to an extent.

Discussion

The findings showed that the respondents accepted that induction training and orientation are provided for newly employed facilitators, participation in seminars and workshops are under the in-service training that has enhanced their quality as facilitators in adult literacy. The new knowledge acquired during in-service training will engender more achievement of the objectives of literacy education. This is in accordance with Akanbi (2001) who expressed that, no matter how automated an organization may be, high productivity depends on the level of development professionally and the effectiveness of the facilitators. Similarly, Starkey et al.(2009) highlighted the imperatives of professional development activities for teachers and adult facilitators by saying that in-service teacher education is also often viewed as an extension of pre-service teacher education in ensuring teachers- whether new or experienced- have up to date snapshots of the knowledge needed to be effective. While supporting the use of in-service training for professional development, Kreisman (2002) opined that if an organization does not recognize the individual's need and desire to grow,

then development becomes a primary reason for resignation. To this, Akanbi (2001) suggested that staff training is an indispensable strategy for enhancing quality of workers. The organization must have good training programme. This will provide the employee information on professional opportunities for self-improvement and development to meet the challenges and requirements of new equipment and new techniques of performing a task. So, there is need to improve on in-service strategies to enhance quality in adult literacy facilitators.

Also, the findings revealed that the facilitators receive coaching as a major training for on-the-job as well orientation and job instruction. These few methods of training under on-the-job training affect the realization and actualization of the ultimate goal of professional development in education, including adult education, which is improvement in student learning therefore, student learning outcomes should be one goal of professional development efforts. Guskey (2000) noted that general training and specific skills are many times embedded in one another. They found that facilitators that attended training, regardless of its specificity, became more invested worker. To address the challenges associated with maintaining highly qualified facilitators' status, professional development should be offered as a "means of collaborative support and training" by including basic principles and concepts from the field of adult education.

On off-the-job training, the findings showed that facilitators' participation in conferences and lectures are the major strategies carried out. It is not encouraging. It is in contrast to the postulation of Collinson (2000) which stated among other things, professional development provides ongoing opportunities for facilitators to continue to improve their knowledge and skills so they can help learners achieve. When facilitators go for training or learn, learners learn more.

Conclusion

The importance of adult literacy education in every society cannot be over-emphasized. It is an indispensable aspect of education that enables an adult to live well and participate actively in the affairs that concerns him. In-service training of facilitators through induction, orientation and participation in seminars and workshop will go a long in reducing the high rate of adult illiteracy in the country to the barest minimum. It will also enhance the quality of facilitators in adult literacy. However, there is need for improvement on the professional development strategies proffered for adult literacy facilitators in Enugu State. The professional development training should not be left for the facilitators alone. It should be a joint effort of all government and non-governmental organizations, voluntary agencies, religious bodies, co-operative societies, to see that adequate training for adult literacy facilitators goes beyond its level now. Finally, facilitators need to be encouraged to be attending workshops, seminars and in-service training on regular basis. These strategies will go a long way to improving the present state of Adult Literacy Education Programme in Enugu State and Nigeria in general.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings highlighted and the implications of the study, the researchers hereby proffer the following recommendations:

1. There is the need to train and re-train the facilitator to update their knowledge and skills with the current theories and practices in education. This should be done through organizing conferences, workshops, short and long courses, on-the-job trainings, among others by the government and school administrators.
2. Therefore, professional development should be viewed as a form of adult education programme. With this in mind, professional development for adult literacy facilitators could be improved by using adult learning theory and principles to design professional development activities.
3. The state agency for mass literacy adult and non-formal education in collaboration with NMEC as well as the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE) should work together towards enhancing adult literacy facilitators by organizing regular refresher courses/continuous training programmes for facilitators on various techniques.
4. Government should arrange for the organization of workshops, seminars and conferences for supervisors and administrators of Adult literacy programmes.

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