

INFLUENCE OF WORKING CONDITIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT IN RETAINING ADULT EDUCATORS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

This study assessed the influence of working conditions and administrative support in retaining adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Two specific purposes and research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised of all the 19 facilitators of the eight (8) functional adult education centres in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The instrument used for data collection for the study was a researcher structured questionnaire, titled. "Assessment of influence of working conditions and administrative support in retaining adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes (WCASRAEQ). It was structured using four-point rating scales. The instrument was validated by three experts. The instrument's overall reliability coefficient was 0.99 which showed that it was reliable. The findings revealed among others that working conditions and administrative support influences the retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes to a high extent. It was recommended among others that the government should provide adequate funding for the provision of resources such as instructional materials, building facilities and accessible technology, among others.

Keywords: working conditions, administrative support, adult educators, sustainability

Introduction

The sustainability of adult education programmes is dependent on highly motivated adult educators, who play crucial roles in the effective implementation of the various programmes. adult education has been long utilized as a tool targeted at improving the lives of people and meeting their needs through education. Hence, Mbalisi and Oyebamiji (2015) defined adult education as any education given to adults based on their social, political, cultural and economic needs and problems to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society. Furthermore, Owede (2015) emphasized that adult education involved organized and sequential learning experiences designed to meet the needs of adults. It is development oriented and includes programme geared towards making adults to be more useful to themselves and society. In the same line of thought, Zuofa and Olori (2022) emphasized that adult education is further described as programme to encourage individuals of all ages especially adults and youths to enhance their abilities and potentials through formal, informal and non-formal education. This implies that adult education programme can thrive well both within and outside the four walls of conventional schooling.

Contextually, adult education programme refer to organized learning activities designed to cater specifically to the educational needs and interests of individuals who have surpassed the traditional age of compulsory schooling. This is to equip them with the right skills, knowledge and attitude necessary to contribute meaningfully in national development. Hence, adult education programmes, which according to Adetuyi (2016) exists in various forms such as literacy education (literacy skills for adults and out-of-school kids), distance education, continuing education (evening schools, extra-mural classes etc.), community development, vocational education, and extension education among others, has become the panacea to challenges confronting adults in a constantly changing world. The potential of adult education

programmes to contribute to the economic, cultural and social progress demands the need for the sustainability. According to Mollenkamp (2023) sustainability broadly refers to the ability to maintain or support a process continuously over time.

Therefore, in this study, sustainability of adult education programmes refers to the capacity of these educational activities provided for the adults to continue and maintain their effectiveness over time through the help adult educators. Adult educators according to Eidoo (2019) are people who guide lifelong learning journeys of children, youth, adults and elders. In this study, an adult educator is defined as someone responsible for planning, organizing, and delivering adult educational programmes tailored to the needs and interests of adult learners, fostering their continuous learning and skill development. Adult educator goes by various names as diverse as the contexts in which they operate. Some of the names are teacher, trainer, tutor, coach, instructor or facilitator. Council of European Union (CoEU) (2020) further noted that adult educators are an indispensable driving force of education and training and work in the world of today and have a crucial role in preparing individuals of all backgrounds and ages to live, learn and work in the world of today, as well as in creating and leading future changes. Loannou (2023) added that adult educators form the backbone of adult education system, and their situation, their interests and motivations, their skills, competences and working conditions must be such so as to ensure that adult education programmes are of high quality. As the demand for adult education programmes continues to grow, a critical factor in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of these programmes is the retention of qualified and motivated adult educators. Adult Educators' retention is defined as the ability to prevent good adult educators or teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons' (Kelchtermans, 2017). Some of the wrong reasons why adult educators abandoned or are considering to abandon their profession according to Combs (2015) include: accountability, salary considerations, increased paperwork, student attitudes, accountability, no family support, low status of the profession and unresponsive administration. All of these tend to negatively affect the retention of adult educators thereby causing the loss of quality adult education facilitators which in turn negatively impact the quality of adult education programmes obtainable in our communities, particularly in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

However, in a bid to retain best quality adult educators in the profession, several researchers such as Pederson (2022) highlighted factors which influence retention of teachers, which includes adult educators. Some of the factors influencing retention according to Pederson (2022) include working conditions and administrative supports among others. Working conditions is one of the factors that influences the retention of instructors of all levels of education including adult education. Working condition, according to Turanlıgil and Farooq (2019) refers to the working environment in which one works, as influenced by factors such as working hours, physical aspects, legal rights and responsibilities etc. Furthermore, Spacey (2023) defined working conditions as the demands, environment and terms of the job that influence the satisfaction of an employee. These definitions suggest that favorable working conditions are to encompass reasonable working hours, a conducive physical teaching environment, and clear understanding of legal rights and responsibilities. Also, it may involve a supportive atmosphere, manageable job demands, and fair employment terms to ensure overall job satisfaction, all of which may influence the retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes. Therefore, in this study working conditions encompass the various elements that shape the environment in which adult educators perform their job duties. This includes factors such as working hours, conducive physical surroundings and learning environment, legal rights, and responsibilities, adequate resources, opportunities for professional development, among others. Hence, in a bid to retain teachers, administrators of adult education programmes may compete to offer attractive working conditions.

Another important factor that influence retention of adult educators is administrative support. Administrative support, according to Watson (2021), refers to behaviors that encourage teachers to collaborate with each other, provide opportunities for growth and/or offer

encouragement. Pederson (2022) further defined Administrative support to involve the extent to which school leaders make teachers' work easier and help them to improve their teaching. This includes the following: support with behavior and discipline, staff collegiality, recognition of effort, input in Decision-making, professional development and evaluation. That is to say that administrative support focuses on cultivating a supportive culture that goes beyond logistical tasks, aiming to enhance the overall working experience for teachers and contribute to their professional development. Hence, Watson (2021) noted that administrative support in education can be categorized into the following: emotional support, appraisal Support, instrumental support, and informational support. Therefore, Combs (2015) noted that without the support from administrators, it is difficult for teachers, particularly adult educators, to believe they can achieve student success and that such situations have a detrimental effect on attracting adult educators and retaining them. Hence, in this study administrative support refers to those behaviors that encourage adult educators to collaborate with each other, provide opportunities for growth and/or offer encouragement.

In Nsukka Local Government Area, adult education programmes are carried out in some of the communities, however, there is existence of inadequate qualified adult educators which usually leads to the use of unqualified personnel. This inadequacy is attributed to the turnover of adult educators from service, even the unqualified personnel usually abandons the job once they are presented with better opportunities in other profession. The phenomenon of turnover among adult educators according to Wami (2022); Ayantunji (2023) may be attributed to several factors, including poor remuneration, irregular salary payments, unfavorable learning environments, insufficient teaching resources, lack of in-service training programme, marginalization of adult educators in the decision-making process among others. The challenge of losing adult education professionals negatively affect the sustainability of Adult education programmes as most of the centers are closed, thereby depriving adults of learning opportunities in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. It is against this background that the researcher intends to find out the extent working conditions and administrative support influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to examine the influence of working conditions and administrative support in retaining adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local government Area of Enugu State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. To find out the extent working conditions influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.
2. To determine the extent administrative support influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent do working conditions influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State?
2. To what extent do administrative support influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Methods

The research design used for this study was descriptive survey design. Descriptive design studies involve describing events as they are without any manipulation. According to

Salaria (2012), descriptive research involves the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. This type of research method is not simply amassing and tabulating facts but includes proper analyses, interpretation, comparisons, identification of trends and relationships. This design is appropriate for this study because it aims at assessing the factors facilitating the retention of adult educators for the sustainability of Adult Education Programmes in Nsukka Local Government. This was carried out by systematically gathering, analyzing, describing and interpreting information without any manipulation of events.

The research study was conducted in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Nsukka Local Government is situated in the northern part of Enugu State and is made up of autonomous communities comprising the following: Agu-Umabor, Opi-Agu, Breme, Edem-Ani, Eha-Uno, Eze-Bunagu, Ajuona -Obimo, Ibagwa -Agu, Ezi- Ani- Obimo, Okpuje, Ibagwa-Ani, Alor-Uno, Uwani Lejja, Eha-Ndiagu, Obouagu-Obukpa, Leijja, Okpaligbo-Ogu., Anuka, Ozzi Edem, Ede-Oballa, Ibeku -Opi, Ogbozalla- Opi, Idi-Opi, Agbamere, Ihe n' Owere, Eha-Azuabor, Nkpunano, Nru, Umabor, Obimo, Akpa-Edem, Obige Obukpa, Eha-Alumona, Opaugbo, Owere -Obukpa, Utobolo, Okutu and Edem-Enu. It shares common boundary with Igalamela-Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi State on the West, East with Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, on the South, with Uzo-Uwani and Igbo-Etiti Local Government Areas of Enugu State and on the North with Udenu Local Government Area. These communities share many things in common such as culture, religion and values. The people of the area are mostly farmers, artisans, traders and civil servants. The study of Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State is justified because of observable dearth of adult educators in existing functional literacy centers in the local government. The population of the study was 19 respondents, facilitators of the eight (8) functional Adult Education Centres in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. The researcher used the entire population for the study because it is small and manageable.

Population distribution table

S/N	CENTRES	INSTRUCTORS
1.	St Charles Cathedral Adult Education Centre, Opi.	2
2.	Adult Education Centre, Okpuje	2
3.	Adult Education centre, primary school, Odenigbo Nsukka.	2
4.	Adult Education Centre, Edem Ani.	2
5.	Adult Education centre, Ugwoye Nsukka	3
6.	Adult Education Centre, Ibagwa Ani.	3
7.	Adult Education centre, Ede-Oballa	2
8.	Vocational Functional Literacy Centre, Obukpa.	3
	TOTAL	19

Source: Adult and Non-formal Education Unit, Nsukka Local Government Area (2024).

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire by the researchers titled “Assessment of factors facilitating the retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes questionnaire” (FFRAESAEP). The instrument was divided into two clusters with 11 items and was used to elicit information on the extent working conditions and administrative support influences the retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State. The instrument was organized on a four-point rating scale with numerical values assigned to them based on a 4-point rating scale as follows: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4; High Extent (HE)= 3; Low Extent (LE) = 2; Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.

The instrument was face validated by three experts to ensure the validity of the instrument prior to its administration. Two experts were from the Department of Adult Education band one in Measurement and Evaluation both in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts scrutinized the items on the drafted questionnaire in terms of clarity of the statements, relevance of the content and suitability of the rating scale adopted. The suggestions and inputs

of these experts were incorporated in the final copy of the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was trial tested on ten adult educators in Igbo-Etiti local government area. The choice of this local government area is based on the fact that they possess similar characteristics with the present target population in terms of shared values and cultures. The internal consistency reliability was obtained using Cronbach alpha method and reliability coefficients for sections A and B were obtained as 0.80 and 0.98 respectively. The general reliability coefficient for the items, which is 0.89 shows the instrument is reliable.

The researchers administered and collected the copies of the questionnaire from the respondents at their various adult education centres with the aid of one (1) research assistant. The assistant was trained on the objective and importance of the study to enable him give it effective attention. After the administration, the researchers and the assistant constantly visited the respondents and explained the importance of the research being carried out due to how close the centres and University were to the researchers and the assistant. At the end, 19 copies of the instrument were rightly completed and returned. This amounts to 100 percent return rate. The data collected from respondents in cluster A and B, research questions one to four was analyzed using mean. The criterion mean was determined by the sum of the values of weights

divided by the number of the response categories. Symbolically put $\frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{4} = 2.5$. The

decision rule was based on the following: 3.50 - 4.00 (Very High Extent), 2.50 - 3.49 (High Extent), 1.50 - 2.49 (Low Extent) and 1.49- 1.00 (Very Low Extent).

Results

Research Question One: To what extent do working conditions influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Table 1: Mean showing the responses on the extent to which working conditions influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total score	Mean score	Decision
1.	Ensuring availability of instructional resources such as textbooks, boards, projectors, audiovisual equipment etc.	4	10	2	3	53	2.78	High extent
2.	Encouraging conducive teaching and learning environment such as maintained learning facilities among others.	6	4	9	0	54	2.84	High extent
3.	Reducing workloads as a result of adequate human resources e.g. Facilitators	4	7	4	4	49	2.57	High Extent
4.	Ensuring technological availability	7	3	6	3	52	2.73	High Extent
5.	Prioritizing the safety of the adult educators	7	5	4	3	54	2.84	High Extent
Grand Mean							2.75	High Extent

Table 1 shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 had mean scores of 2.78, 2.84, 2.57, 2.73 and 2.84 respectively, thus the respondents agreed that to high extent the items listed facilitates retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka

Local Government Area of Enugu State. However, conducive teaching and learning environment such as maintained learning facilities and prioritizing the safety of the adult educators and among others scored the highest with mean score of 2.84 respectively. While reduced workloads as a result of adequate human resources e.g. facilitators scored the lowest with a mean score of 2.57.

Research Question Two: To what extent do administrative support influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean showing the responses on the extent to which administrative support influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total score	Mean score	Decision
6.	Providing adequate funding for the provision of resources such as instructional materials, building facilities etc.	11	4	2	2	62	3.26	High Extent
7.	Involving adult educators opinions in decision making	4	9	6	0	55	2.89	High Extent
8.	Communicating the goals of adult education programmes to the adult educators.	7	7	3	2	57	3.00	High Extent
9.	Providing frequent feedback on adult educators' performance by the supervisors	5	9	2	3	54	2.84	High Extent
10.	Recognizing publicly through words of acknowledgement, awards etc.	5	6	h5	3	51	2.68	High Extent
11.	Providing adequate opportunities for professional development such seminars, workshops, conferences etc.	5	8	2	4	52	2.73	High Extent
Grand Mean							2.90	High Extent

Table 2 shows that items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 had mean scores of 3.26, 2.89, 3.00, 2.84, 2.68 and 2.73 respectively, thus the respondents agreed that to high extent the items listed facilitates retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. However, adequate funding for the provision of resources such as instructional materials, building facilities etc; and clearly communicating the goals of adult education programme to the adult educators scored the highest with mean score of 3.26 and 3.00 respectively. While public recognition through words of acknowledgement, awards etc. scored the lowest with a mean score of 2.68.

Discussions

Extent working conditions influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes

The findings of the study in research question one shows that to a high extent working conditions such as conducive teaching and learning environment such as maintained learning facilities, prioritizing the safety of the adult educators, availability of instructional resources such as textbooks, boards, projectors, audiovisual equipment etc., technological availability and reduced workloads as a result of adequate human resources e.g. facilitators influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes.

This is in line with Loeb et al. (2005) cited in Pederson (2022) whose research discovered that improving working conditions positively correlated with teacher retention. Also in support of this finding, Wynn et al. (2007) cited in Pederson (2022) acknowledged that

when improvements are made to working conditions, such as resources/material, appropriate classroom space, adequate facilities, common planning and collaboration, class size, and administrative support as well as salary, the potential exists for educational institutions to retain teachers regardless of specific learners' demographics. Turanlıgil and Farooq (2019) refers to working condition as the working environment in which one works, as influenced by factors such as working hours, physical aspects, legal rights and responsibilities etc. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2023) expressed that factors such as working time, staff-student ratios, good school leadership, infrastructure and facilities, influence teachers' satisfaction with the workplace, their tasks and the nature of the job as well as teachers' ability to do their work well and engage with students among others and play a crucial role for attracting teachers and for retaining effective teachers. Conversely, Tawalbeh, Muheidat, Tawalbeh, & Quwaider (2020) noted that there are several factors that contribute to instructors feeling overwhelmed, such as a heavy workload, insufficient resources, and little opportunities for professional development. Therefore, it is possible that teachers will go elsewhere for employment if they don't feel valued and supported in their current role. This suggests that high workload, levels of stress, and poor teaching environments, lack of teaching resources, lack of security may impact the job satisfaction of adult educators negatively causing them to leave their jobs.

Extent administrative support influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes

The findings of the study in research question two shows that to a high extent administrative support such as adequate funding for the provision of resources such as instructional materials, building facilities etc.; clearly communicating the goals of adult education programme to the adult educator; involvement of adult educators opinions in decision making; supervisors providing frequent feedback on adult educators' performance; Provision of adequate opportunities for professional development such seminars, workshops, conferences etc.; and public recognition through words of acknowledgement, awards etc. influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes.

The findings are in tandem with that of Garcia and Weiss (2019); Torres (2016) who found that teachers who had strong administrative support and leadership practices tended to teachers remain at those locations even when there was a high percentage of diversity, high poverty, and limited instructional resources. Also, in support of this study, Kersaint (2007) cited in Sumipo (2020)) found out that it may be more important to focus attention on providing teachers needed administrative support rather than focus solely on increasing teacher compensation because teachers are less likely to resign because of salary when other working conditions are satisfactory. When surveyed factors leading to teachers' job satisfaction, Billingsley et al. (2020), found that teachers reported working in supportive working environments derived from supportive administrators. Additionally, this support not only influenced the overall satisfaction of teachers but also contributes to teachers remaining in their current teaching assignments.

Similarly, administrative support, according to Watson (2021) further refers to behaviors that encourage teachers to collaborate with each other, provide opportunities for growth and/or offer encouragement. In addition, Teixeira (2023) stated that the administrative support currently can be best described as the institutional capability to support the participation of all in quality research, teaching and learning experiences.

Conclusion

Adult education is any organized educational activities purposefully designed to meet the needs of adults through the help of adult educators. Adult educators play a crucial role in teaching people of all experiences and ages for the sustainability of adult education programmes. As a result, there is need for the retention of the adult educators for sustainability of adult education programmes. Adult Educators' retention is the capability to stop good adult educators from quitting the job. The study concluded that working conditions and administrative support

influences retention of adult educators for the sustainability of adult education programmes on the high extend in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The administrators of adult education should provide conducive learning environment and teaching-learning facilities among others for the sustenance of adult education programmes.
2. The government should provide adequate funding for the provision of resources such as instructional materials, building facilities and accessible technology. The provision of adequate funding will make the facilitators of adult education programmes to be comfortable on the job.
3. The Federal Government, through the Ministry of Education should ensure the payment of improved salaries commensurate with the workload of adult educators.
4. Training opportunities should be provided for adult educators by National commission for Mass literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) annually to develop their skills on the use of effective instructional strategies for learners.

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