

Global And Societal Issues In Management Of Adult Education Programmes In Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Adult Education is an educational activity largely organized for different categories of people, specifically, adults, experiencing some inadequacies in coping with current life problems. It does not necessarily serve as a means-to-an-end. It is multidimensional and covers many sectors globally; be it social, political, economic or ecological. Adult Education Programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria, seek to empower not only Niger Delta communities but also face global and local barriers that weaken their management. This study explores global and societal challenges in management of Adult Education Programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria and proposes practical solutions to improve their impact. A qualitative review of recent global and Nigerian studies (2020–2023) analysed key issues and solutions for effective programme management. Global barriers like limited technology and funding hinder programme delivery. Locally, stigma against learners, corruption, gender gaps, and oil spills reduce participation. Only 20% of programmes use digital tools, and women make up just 25% of learners. Using affordable digital tools, partnering with businesses, raising community awareness, and offering mobile classes in community halls can strengthen programmes and empower learners.

Keywords: Adult Education, Adult Education Programmes, Global, Management, Societal issues.

Introduction

Adult education programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria, are vital for empowering communities and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes inclusive, lifelong learning. According to Umar et al (2010) there is a positive association between adult education programmes and increased levels of self-esteem and high levels of knowledge and skills which thereby encourage positive and active engagement of people in their own development. The management of these adult education programmes to some extent determines a lot of things in the attainment of the National Policy of Education (NPE, 2013) goals on adult education. It has been

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observed that despite government provision towards positive development of Adult Education Programmes, there are still some problems that affect adult literacy programmes. Some of the problems are adult learner's personal business, engagements at the place of work, domestic activities, personal laziness, and poor management of such programmes. Other problems that contribute negatively are non-payment of educators, non-payment of monthly emolument as at when due, inadequate provision of facilities for learning and high cost of registration fees among others. Hence, the need to carry out this study to determine strategies for managing adult education programme for global competitiveness in the contemporary Nigerian society as these programmes faces significant global and societal challenges that hinder effectiveness in the Niger Delta's unique socio-economic context. This paper examines these global and societal issues and proposes solutions to enhance programme management. Globally, Adult Education struggles with technological disparities and underfunding. UNESCO (2023) highlights that limited digital access restricts e-learning, with only 30% of Nigerian adult learners having internet connectivity. Funding shortages, with Nigeria allocating just 5% of education budgets to adult programmes (Wami, 2023), exacerbate resource constraints in Rivers State. Societally, stigma, corruption, gender disparities, and oil-related disruptions pose barriers. Kobani & Mba (2020) note that 25% of potential learners avoid programmes due to negative perceptions, while women face cultural barriers, comprising only 25% of participants. Oil pollution further disrupts attendance in affected communities. Addressing these challenges requires aligning with global standards (UNESCO, 2021) and adopting local strategies like community engagement and mobile learning units. By exploring global and societal issues and proposing practical solutions, this article aims to strengthen adult education management in Rivers State, fostering sustainable community development in the region.

With the world becoming a global village, adult education helps to breakdown stereotype ideas and reduces prejudice, injustice, deprivation and oppression. By implication, this means that adult education in addition to being a tool for global peace and harmony, makes the educated adults not only to be more sophisticated and polished in their chosen profession, but also to be a 'hands-on' problem-solver as pointed out that two major attributes that characterise the adult is that he is pragmatic and problem-centred (Kobani, 2018). Adult education should be geared towards solving societal problems of injustice, deprivation and oppression which will in turn bring peace and harmony among adult members of the world. It will solve these current problems of kidnapping, youth restiveness and indiscriminate bombings in the country (Ayantunji, 2023).

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Adult Education

UNESCO's international conference in Nairobi, Kenya, (1976) as reported in Kobani & Alozie (2016:83) defines adult education as:

The entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level and method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications

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and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

The above definition is broad and encompassing in the sense that it does not only define adult education but it also defines its content and scope. Townsend-Coles in Kobani & Alozie (2016) could conceive adult education as all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and requirements at their differing levels of comprehension, ability and in their changing roles and responsibilities throughout life. Nzeneri in Kobani & Alozie (2016) added that adult education is any education given to adults based on their social, political, cultural and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust to changes and challenges in their lives and society. It is therefore, an integral part of lifelong education which contributes decisively to economic, cultural development, social progress and world peace as well as the development of educational system. Adult education provides dynamic and flexible educational programmes to all adults based on their needs. Since the programmes are voluntary and democratic, they are built on the assumptions that adults are generally voluntary learners who withdraw from any educational programme (formal and non-formal) that they perceive as irrelevant and not capable of addressing their immediate needs and interests (Kobani & Alozie, 2016). Adult education also emphasizes the following objectives;

- Fundamental and literacy education
- Vocational, technical, and professional education
- Education for health, welfare, and family competence.
- Education for civic, political or community competence; and
- Education for self-fulfillment and self-realization

Adult education is pragmatic and functionally related to needs of individual and society, whether short-term to long-term according to Kobani (2018). It is also change oriented in the area of felt-needs which it seeks to address. Adult Education Programmes include: Basic Literacy, Functional literacy, continuing education, Distance education, Adult remedial education, Aesthetic cultural & civic education, workers education, labour education, women education, Extension education, and so on (Kobani & Alozie, 2016).

Concept of Management

Management is the organizational process that includes strategic planning, setting objectives, managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve objectives, and measuring results. Management also includes recording and storing facts and information for later use or for others within the organization. Management functions are not limited to managers and supervisors. Every member of the organization has some management and reporting functions as part of their job (Liao, 2006). Corroborating this view, Ogbonnaya (2013) observed that management is a set of activities which is primarily concerned with planning, organizing, staffing, controlling and coordinating. It embraces all duties and functions that pertain to the initiation of an enterprise, its financing, the establishment of all major policies, the provision of all necessary equipment, the outlining of the general form of organization under which the enterprise is to operate and the selection of the principal officers. To Peretomode (1996) management is the social or interactional process involving a sequence of coordinated events, planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling or leading in order to use available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way. Management applies to all kinds of

organizations and to managers at all organizational levels. Principles of management are now used not only for managing business but in all walks of life viz., government, military, social and educational institutions. Essentially, management is same process in all forms of organization. But it may vary widely in its complexity with size and level of organization. Management is the life giving element of any organization (Umar et al 2010).

According to Vyada (2017) Henri Fayol states that to manage is to forecast and plan, to coordinate and control. Van Fleet and Peterson in Vyada (2017) define management as a set of activities directed at the efficient and effective utilisation of resources in pursuit of one or more goals. Keitner stated that Management is a problem solving process of effectively achieving organizational goals and objectives through efficient use of scarce resources in a changing environment. Brech in Vyada (2017) defined management as a social process which constitutes planning, controlling, coordinating and motivating. Okumbe in Vyada (2017) states that management is the process of designing, developing, and effecting organizational objectives and resources so as to achieve predetermined organizational goals. Management in simple terms means the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals. It comprises planning, organizing, resourcing, leading or directing, and controlling an organization (a group of one or more people or entities) or effort for the purpose of accomplishing a goal. Resourcing encompasses the deployment and manipulation of human resources, financial resources, technological resources, and natural resources (Nwachukwu in Vyada, 2017). Management is also seen as a process demanding the performance of a specific function. Here, management is a profession. According to the American institute of management, it is used to designate either a group of functions or the personnel who carry them out; to describe either an organization's official hierarchy or the activities of men who compose it: to provide autonomy to either labour or ownership. To Gareth & Jennifer in Vyada (2017) the term management is the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling of human and other resources to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently. While Smith & Lastett in Vyada (2017) define management as the skill that is applied by an individual in an organization also in the presentation of lesson, in such a way that all the learners are actively involved in learning. The process of planning, organising, directing, controlling financial, and physical resources within an educational institution is known as educational management. It includes many different tasks, such as supervising teachers, evaluating student activities, and providing a conducive teaching and learning environment for the achievement of educational goals and objectives (Koko and Dike, 2022)

Application of appropriate management techniques would assist in taking care of all available facilities. In other words, in the management of facilities which might have suffered neglect as a result of carelessness, ignorance, lack of commitment and lack of resources for management, would receive attention from school administrators and inspectors. Also, school facilities which are well managed are likely to be durable and will help save the loss of replacement within a short period of procurement and there would be safety from danger, disaster, corruption and theft when facilities are well managed. Certain facilities, especially the ones in the

laboratories that may be considered delicate, dangerous, expensive and explosive will need to be well managed in order to avoid the danger which could arise from their poor usage and management. Also, disasters such as flood and fire could be avoided if there is proper planning for safety precautions.

Global Issues in the Management of Adult Education Programmes

Effective management of adult education programmes in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, faces global challenges that hinder planning, delivery, and sustainability. Technological disparities, inadequate funding, conflict and migration disruptions, and misalignment with international standards intersect with the Niger Delta's socio-economic context, complicating programme implementation.

1. **Technological Disparities:** The global shift to digital learning highlights Nigeria's infrastructure gaps. UNESCO (2023) reports that only 30% of Nigerian adult learners have internet access, limiting e-learning for vocational training in Rivers State. This digital divide restricts programme scalability, as managers lack resources for online platforms.
2. **Inadequate Funding Frameworks:** Globally, adult education is underfunded. Wami (2023) notes Nigeria allocates less than 5% of education budgets to adult programmes, reflecting global trends of prioritizing formal schooling. In Rivers State, this leads to shortages of materials and trained facilitators, undermining programme quality.
3. **Conflict And Migration Disruptions:** Global conflicts disrupt education continuity. UNESCO (2021) advocates flexible models for displaced populations, but Kobani & Mba (2020) highlight that oil-related unrest in Rivers State reduces enrolment by 25%, as communities face displacement, complicating logistics for programme managers.
4. **Misalignment with Global Standards:** Adult education must meet SDG 4 in areas like digital literacy and inclusivity. Kobani & Mba (2020) argue that Nigerian curricula, including Rivers State, often fail to incorporate these competencies, reducing programme relevance in a globalized economy. This misalignment limits learners' employability.

Addressing these challenges requires adopting global best practices, such as digital partnerships with tech firms, securing international funding, and aligning curricula with SDG 4. In Rivers State, managers can leverage community centres for mobile learning units to mitigate conflict disruptions, ensuring programmes remain accessible and relevant. These strategies align with global goals while addressing local realities, fostering sustainable development not only in the State but in the region as well.

Societal Issues in Managing Adult Education Programmes in Rivers State

Societal barriers in Rivers State, Nigeria, hinder effective management of adult education programmes, limiting community empowerment in the State. Negative attitudes, corruption, gender disparities, and oil-related disruptions pose significant challenges for programme managers. Negative Attitudes and stigma discourages participation, with Hailsham et al (2024) noting that 35% of youths

avoid programmes due to perceptions of failure, especially in Ijaw communities in Rivers State, requiring managers to prioritize community sensitization.

1. **Corruption:** Mismanagement of funds undermines programme quality. Wami (2023) reports that corruption in Rivers State diverts resources, leaving managers short of teaching materials and trained facilitators.
2. **Gender Disparities:** Cultural norms limit women's access, with Kobani & Mba (2020) finding that women constitute only 25% of learners due to expectations of early marriage, necessitating gender-focused programme designs.
3. **Environmental Disruptions:** Oil pollution displaces communities, reducing attendance. Hailsham et al. (2024) indicate a 20% drop in participation in affected areas, pushing managers to use mobile units in community halls.

Addressing these issues through transparent funding, community engagement, and adaptive delivery can enhance programme impact, fostering sustainable development in Rivers State.

Muhammad in Usman, Obaka & Enefu (2018) enumerated the following as major challenges facing adult education programme delivery in Nigeria according to policy issues and practice. They include: inaccessibility of such programmes, inadequate funding, lack of mobilisation, lack or inadequate number of literacy instructors or personnel who possess Information and Communication Technology skills, dearth of skilled manpower in the area of monitoring and evaluation, poor remuneration of facilitators, inadequate number of qualified facilitators, poor record keeping, and poor attitude of the target group. Elsewhere, Olojede (2012), identified facilities, teaching and learning materials and choice of language of instruction as factors affecting access to literacy. Corroborating this, Anthony (2005) and Kathn (2006) opined that the following are the barriers to growth of adult literacy programmes. Adults in need of upgrading face barriers that makes it difficult to enter or remain in literacy programmes, such challenges are: lack of appropriate accessible education and training programmes, lack of financial resources and training programmes, lack of support systems; including child care and transportation, unsuitable living conditions including poor health and nutrition, inadequate housing personal circumstances, stress and low self-esteem and decimation based on races, class, gender and ability level.

Conclusion

Adult education programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria, hold immense potential to uplift communities not only in Rivers State but also in Niger Delta communities. However, they face global and societal barriers that weaken their management. Limited technology and funding, combined with stigma, corruption, gender gaps, and oil-related disruptions, reduce programme access and impact. This study highlights practical solutions to overcome these challenges: using low-cost digital tools, partnering with businesses, raising community awareness, and offering mobile classes in community halls. These strategies can boost participation, especially among women, disadvantaged and displaced groups, while aligning with global education goals. For Rivers State, stronger programmes mean more

empowered learners, less poverty, greater stability and inching closer to the achievement of the Sustainable Developing Goals in a region shaped by environmental and economic struggles. To succeed, programme managers must work with Community members, government, businesses, and local leaders to ensure trust and responsible use of resources. Further research should explore how digital tools can be scaled in rural areas. By addressing these issues, Rivers State can build adult education programmes that drive lasting change.

Suggestions

To address the global and societal issues hindering the management of adult education programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria, requires solutions to overcome global and societal challenges like technological disparities, funding shortages, conflict, stigma, corruption, and gender barriers, tailored to the Niger Delta's context. In view of the various challenges discussed above, the following are suggested as way forward:

1. **Bridging Technological Disparities:** UNESCO (2023) recommends low-cost digital tools to address Nigeria's digital divide, where only 30% of adult learners have internet access. Managers can use WhatsApp-based courses or other applications such as zoom to enhance vocational training access in Rivers State.
2. **Securing Funding:** Wami (2023) suggests public-private partnerships to address Nigeria's 5% adult education budget. In Rivers State, partnering with oil companies can fund materials and facilitators, ensuring programme sustainability.
3. **Mitigating Conflict:** Oil-related unrest reduces enrolment by 25% (Kobani & Mba, 2020). UNESCO (2021) advocates mobile units for displaced learners, refugees and migrants. Managers can use community halls to deliver classes, maintaining access.
4. **Reducing Stigma and Gender Barriers:** Kobani & Mba (2020) note women comprise only 25% of learners due to stigma and cultural norms. Community campaigns and women-only classes can boost participation.
5. **Combating Corruption:** Wami (2023) highlights corruption's impact on funds. Transparent budgeting ensures resources reach programmes.

These solutions: digital tools, partnerships, mobile units, campaigns, and transparency align with SDG 4, thus, enhancing programme management and empowering Rivers State communities.

Other proffered solutions to effectively revamp value education and digital innovation in the management of adult education Programmes in Rivers State include, adopting practical, targeted, and sustainable strategies. These suggestions are drawn from the key insights of this paper and are aimed at guiding policymakers, educators, and stakeholders toward meaningful and long-lasting reforms.

1. **Curriculum Integration:** Incorporate civic, ethical, and social values into adult education curricula tailored to the local realities of Rivers State.
2. **Digital Infrastructure:** Provide digital tools, internet access, and e-learning platforms in adult education Programmes, especially in underserved areas.

3. Educator Training: Organise regular training for Facilitators in Rivers State on value-based teaching methods and digital literacy.
4. Community Involvement: Engage local leaders, civil society, and traditional institutions in the planning and delivery of value-oriented programmes.
5. Policy Development: Establish a state-level policy to guide the integration of digital innovation and value education with clear goals and accountability measures.

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