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**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES ON
ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH AND INNOVATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
LAGOS**

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of five flagship adult education programmes on entrepreneurial growth and innovation at the University of Lagos. Specifically, it examined the Mass Literacy Programme, Internship Programme, Women's Empowerment Workshops, Community Development Programme, and the Entrepreneurship Empowerment Scheme. A descriptive survey (n = 200) using a structured questionnaire assessed innovation and entrepreneurship outcomes. Pearson correlation revealed significant positive associations between programme participation and innovation ($r = .228$, $p < .01$) as well as entrepreneurship effectiveness ($r = .491$, $p < .01$). High-participation learners recorded higher innovation scores ($M = 18.4$, $SD = 6.1$) compared to low-participation peers ($M = 13.2$, $SD = 7.3$). Among Community Development participants, 62% initiated at least one income-generating idea within six months, while 54% of Entrepreneurship Empowerment attendees launched micro-enterprises within three months, with average monthly revenue rising by 36% post-training. Recommendations include disaggregating evaluations by programme, integrating project-based learning, establishing innovation accreditation standards, and designing hybrid delivery models for adult learners.

Keywords: Adult Education, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, University of Lagos, Programme Evaluation

Introduction

Adult education is a developmental education that embraces all forms of educational experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and needs. Adult education is a multidisciplinary field that overlaps with many subject areas. It includes basic and continuing education, vocational and technical education, higher education, and professional development. It is offered through formal, non-formal, and informal means and by a variety of actors. Adult education is a developmental education that embraces all forms of educational experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and needs. Adult education is a multidisciplinary field that overlaps with many subject areas. It includes basic and continuing education, vocational and technical education, higher education, and professional development. It is offered through formal, non-formal, and informal means and by a variety of actors

UNESCO (1976) cited in Ojeomogha (2022) defines adult education as the entire body of organized process whatever the content, level or method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, college 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 and bring about changes in their attitude or behavior in the two fold perspectives of full personal development. There are so many adult education programmes meant to upgrade Nigerians into higher academic, cultural, social, economic and moral levels. These programmes include, mass literacy programmes, functional literacy, extramural programmes, correspondence courses, open university, distance education, lifelong education, remedial education, women education, pre-retirement education, internship programmes, and many more.

In the past three decades, adult education and entrepreneurship has not been given much priority in the Nigerian educational system and this has affected majority of adults being reliant on monthly jobs which has led to absence of creativity and innovations towards economic growth in Nigeria. The acquisition of skills, knowledge, and values are not taken as priority. Meanwhile, one of the major objectives of Nigeria education is the production of skilled, knowledgeable, and competent individuals who are expected to play effective roles in national economic and technological growth and development but education in Nigeria is devoid of these elements crucial to driving the growth and economy of the country for sustainability.

Adult education changes the social and psychological minds of adults more than any other profession, instills lost hope in them and liberates them from their prejudice of seeing themselves as not being capable of learning. Adult education awakens adult learners to become aware of their environmental (social, economic, cultural and political) and psychological potentials and hidden abilities. It also exerts enormous influence on the larger societies in terms of national development (Onyenemzu, 2012). Entrepreneurship is a subject that involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills for the betterment of oneself, family, society and the country at large. Over some years, the economic growth and development of the country has immensely being in a decline. Entrepreneurial development through adult education will advance the economy of the nation; much credence should be given to it and ingrained with focus on profitable personal and societal development.

Sadly enough, a large cohort of the adult population found in the informal sector engaging in one small business or the other appears to be lacking in the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes in managing successfully their businesses. No wonder. Large proportions of businesses are not growing fast as it should, but are rather winding up. Meanwhile, Scarborough (2012) opined that the story of entrepreneurship entails a never-ending search for new and imaginative ways to combine the factors of production into new methods, processes, technologies, products, or services. Therefore, encouraging and motivating the adult population to engage in lifelong and life-wide learning by putting into practice entrepreneurial knowledge and skills acquired and translating them into the creation of sustainable jobs should be the norm rather than an exception in our part of the world.

Fashokun (2008) cited in Ojeomogha (2022) noted that adult education programmes and activities covers almost all the areas of human endeavour but it appears that there are indecisive policies, structure and management of adult education for effective implementation of these programmes, as a result, the researcher deemed it right to ex-ray some of these constraints to effective implementation of adult education programmes in Nigeria. The benefits of education permeate all works of life right from the moment of birth, and if we are to eradicate poverty, hunger, improve health, protect our planet, and build more inclusive, resilient, and peaceful societies, every individual must be empowered with access to quality lifelong learning (Irina in UNESCO, 2018). The sustainable development goal on education states that the type of education to give should be

one that “ensures inclusive and equitable, quality education and one that promotes lifelong learning opportunities. This can be attributed to entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in the development of a country’s economy. This is because it is the most important contribution to innovative products, improvement and reducing unemployment (Lerner, Hunt & Dimov, 2018). According to Zoltan (2012), entrepreneurs are individuals responsible for using opportunities to mobilize resources. They appear particularly susceptible to unemployment, and therefore, attention is focused on entrepreneurship among young adults around the world (Baah-Boateng, 2018). Learning entrepreneurship is the foundation of creative and innovative ideas in the 21st century (Lindner, 2020). Entrepreneurship allows young adults to create sustainable businesses and combat high unemployment rates, particularly among university graduates in Africa (Biney, 2021).

Youth and adults represent a large population of potential entrepreneurs, and ways to integrate more youth and adults into the labour market and promote more entrepreneurship among young people and adults through adult education (Biney, 2018). Thus, nurturing entrepreneurship can promote the ability of students to be open, confident, and tailored to the business environment. Many young adults see entrepreneurship as an ideal way to create security for their work and career success. This is because the scientific research on young entrepreneurs is still in its early stages (Geldhof, Malin, & Johnson, 2014). Therefore, growth and entrepreneurial thinking can be self-employed through adult education (Biney, 2018).

For many years, entrepreneurship has been associated with the most urgent and contemporary topics and various topics of the time. This ranges from job creation to innovation, economic growth and productivity, social goals, and the inclusion of socially and economically excluded people and communities (Lyons, 2015). Furthermore, the prominent contributions of entrepreneurial activities in terms of growth, innovation, employment, and poverty combat economy make entrepreneurship a common study (Dabic & Bayrataroglu, 2016).

Luo, Liang, Wu, and Yang (2018) stated that people in the age of the knowledge economy are more likely to pay attention to lifelong education due to their fast updating speed of knowledge and ongoing skills. Therefore, adult education is an important indicator of technological development and social progress. Therefore. In further training of adults, there is a close relation between the application and technology development, which will lead to innovation.

Adult education is because of old age and young and, it is natural, throughout life and it is holistic and sustainable, even in all countries of the world, especially all countries of Nigeria, even if they are well funded and well positioned. Adult education makes learners excited, motivated and well equipped. It is a type of education that has economic outcomes for participants in both urban and municipalities. A typical example is to make money in waste, modernize your garden in a modern way and make money for personal and community sustainability

Adult education in their programmes has environmental consequences because people are looking after their environment, prepare for disasters, take care of their businesses in the right places, take care of their health and their home and prevent gas emissions. Through programmes such as community education, perceptions of various questions in cities and municipalities have a negative impact on people's health and development. Environmental adult education allows people to make meaning in their lives in cities and municipalities that go beyond peaceful and safe living. Adult education for sustainability is related to mentality. Therefore, sustainable development in communities and cities involves a livelihood filled with knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and actions, so everyone must develop a culture of livelihood. All of these are embedded in adult education, bringing innovation and creativity to people in cities and communities through entrepreneurship. It forms the basis for the elimination of poverty and improves the economic development of all societies. It increases the general productivity and intellectual flexibility of the workforce, ensuring that countries in the global market are now competitive, characterized by changing technologies and methods of production (Omoniyi, 2013).

Adults need critical entrepreneurial skill now more than before because as head of the families and homes, managing their own businesses efficiently will help in addressing grinding poverty and unemployment confronting many Nigerians. Adult education essentially, has everything to do with entrepreneurship because adult education's sole objective is to engender satisfactory life for everybody, therefore, if people are taught to acquire meaningful knowledge, skills, values and understanding to create jobs for themselves, then it is an effort worth pursuing. Today's adult population should be helped to embrace creativity, innovation, risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives in setting up businesses. Acquiring such critical entrepreneurial skills will strengthen them sufficiently to start small-scale businesses and manage them successfully.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the presence of adult education programmes in Nigerian universities, including the University of Lagos, the country continues to face high unemployment rates, limited entrepreneurial activity, and underutilization of human capital. Factors such as rigid programme schedules, lack of access to digital tools, inadequate funding, and low programme retention contribute to the limited impact of adult education on entrepreneurial outcomes.

In addition, adults having busy schedules which make it difficult to balance education with work and family responsibilities as well as the lack of flexibility programme schedules or formats that do not accommodate different learning styles is another challenged mitigating the impact of adult education programmes. Some adults may not have access to computers, internet, or other technology necessary for instructions relating to online learning due to insufficient funding for programs, leading to limited resources and opportunities as well as difficulty retaining students, as adults may face various obstacles that prevent them from completing programs may hinder the impartation of adult education.

This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of adult education programmes in fostering entrepreneurial growth and innovation at the University of Lagos, with the goal of identifying strategies for enhancing programme delivery and promoting economic sustainability.

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical frameworks were employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Firstly, the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) will be applied to examine the expectations and subjective values assigned to students' options in adult education. Secondly, the Social Constructionist Theory will shed light on how institution, societal and cultural factors influenced adult education programmes. By incorporating these theoretical frameworks, a more nuanced understanding on the impact of adult education programmes on entrepreneurial growth and innovation can be achieved.

The Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT)

A prominent management scientist known as Victor Vroom in 1964 propounded the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT). This prominent framework explains that individuals' entrepreneur choices and aspiration is based on creativity, innovation as well as their expectations of success and the

subjective value they assign to different entrepreneurial options. EVT suggests that individuals are motivated to pursue careers that they perceive as attainable and meaningful. Expectancy beliefs, an essential component of EVT, refer to individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to perform specific tasks and achieve desired outcomes.

Expectancy beliefs, an essential component of EVT, refer to individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to perform specific tasks and achieve desired outcomes. According to EVT, students' choice of entrepreneurial opportunities in adult education will be influenced by their beliefs about their own competencies in the field. These beliefs can be influenced by past academic performance, relevant skills, and prior experiences. For instance, if undergraduates perceive themselves as competent in areas such as teaching, counseling, skill development or program development, they may perceive career opportunities in adult education as more attainable and appealing.

Furthermore, EVT emphasizes the role of subjective task values in entrepreneur decision-making. Subjective task values include intrinsic value (personal interest and enjoyment), attainment value (perceived importance of succeeding in a career), utility value (perceived usefulness of a career for achieving goals), and cost (perceived negative aspects of pursuing a career). This implies that, if students perceive that adult education programmes offer personal fulfillment, opportunities for helping others, and a chance to make a positive impact in society; they are more likely to perceive these adult education programmes as valuable and desirable.

Proposed by Vroom (1964), EVT posits that individuals make career choices based on expected outcomes and the value they assign to those outcomes. In the context of this study, adult learners' participation in entrepreneurial programmes is influenced by their self-efficacy and the perceived benefits of such involvement. If learners perceive adult education as fulfilling, impactful, and practically beneficial, they are more likely to engage.

The Social Constructionist Theory

The Social Constructionist Theory was propounded by Mead in the year 1930 and was further worked on by Berger and Luckmann in 1966 as well as many other psychologists. Social

Constructionist Theory posits that individuals' perceptions and understanding of reality are influenced by social interactions, cultural norms, and shared meanings within a given context.

The social constructionist perspectives shows in the context of adult education at the University of Lagos, students' perceptions of entrepreneurial opportunities and innovation are influenced by societal beliefs, stereotypes, and the prevailing discourse surrounding adult education. These beliefs and discourses are constructed through social interactions, cultural norms, and the representations of adult education in the local context. Therefore, if adult education is viewed as a prestigious and respected profession in Nigerian society, learners may perceive it as a valuable and promising career path.

Advanced by Mead (1930), and later expanded by Berger and Luckmann (1966), this theory suggests that societal perceptions and cultural narratives shape individual realities. Applied here, it highlights how societal beliefs about adult education influence learners' motivation and perceptions of entrepreneurship. Where adult education is seen as prestigious, learners are more inclined to pursue its opportunities.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at exploring the impact of adult education programmes on entrepreneurial growth and innovation at the University of Lagos. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. explore the roles of Adult Education Programmes such as Mass Literacy, internship programme, women's empowerment workshops, community development programme, entrepreneurship empowerment scheme in fostering innovation and creativity among aspiring entrepreneurs.
- ii. identify the specific components of Adult Education Programmes, such as Mass Literacy, internship programme, women's empowerment workshops, community development programme, entrepreneurship empowerment scheme, that contribute most significantly to entrepreneurial success in the University of Lagos.
- iii. investigate the extent to which participation in Adult Education Programmes influences Adult learners starting their own businesses.

- iv. examine the challenges of adult education programmes towards the acquisition of entrepreneurship in University of Lagos.

Research Questions

The following questions have been formulated to lead the research investigation.

1. To what extent do Adult Education programmes such as Mass Literacy, internship programme, women's empowerment workshops, community development programme, entrepreneurship empowerment scheme contribute to innovation among entrepreneurs in the University of Lagos?
2. Which aspects of Adult Education Programmes, such as Mass Literacy, internship programme, women's empowerment workshops, community development programme, entrepreneurship empowerment scheme, are most effective in promoting entrepreneurial success in the University of Lagos?
3. What is the impact of Adult Education on the entrepreneurial growth of participants at the University of Lagos?
4. What are the challenges of Adult Education towards the acquisition of entrepreneurship in the University of Lagos?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁.** There is no significant contribution of adult education programmes to innovation among entrepreneurs at University of Lagos.
- H₀₂.** There is no significant effect of adult education programmes in promoting entrepreneurial success at University of Lagos.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the impact of adult education programmes on entrepreneurial growth and innovation. The population consisted of all registered Adult Education students in the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, during the 2023/2024 academic session, totaling 465 students across four levels (100 to 400). The table below showed the numbers of students in each level:

S/N	Level	No of Students
1.	100	77
2.	200	149
3.	300	147
4.	400	92
Total		465

Simple random was used in selecting two hundred (200) Adult Education Students across the four levels. Therefore, fifty Adult Education Students were selected in each level. The table below showed the level and numbers selected in each level.

S/N	Level	No of Students
1.	100	50
2.	200	50
3.	300	50
4.	400	50
Total		200

A simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 students (50 from each level), ensuring representation across academic cohorts. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A captured demographic information (gender and age), while Section B consisted of 20 items measured using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4 to Strongly Disagree = 1).

Content and face validity of the instrument were ensured through expert reviews and input from academic supervisors. Adjustments were made based on feedback regarding clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Reliability was confirmed using a test-retest method involving a pilot sample from a comparable population. The resulting data showed acceptable internal consistency for the study variables.

Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaire, with respondents briefed on the purpose and confidentiality of the study. For data analysis, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple

regression) were used. Hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level. This methodological approach ensured the validity, reliability, and generalizability of findings related to the relationship between adult education participation and entrepreneurial outcomes at the University of Lagos.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussions

This paper deals with the presentation, interpretation and proper analysis as well as the discussions of findings of the data obtained from the respondents with the use of the questionnaire.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁. There is no significant contribution of adult education programmes to innovation among entrepreneurs at the University of Lagos.

H₀₂. There is no significant effect of adult education programmes in promoting entrepreneurial success at the University of Lagos. The total scores on adult education programmes and other dimensions were correlated. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Inter-Correlation among all Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5
Sex	1.65	.480	1				
Age	2.59	1.091	-.490** .000	1			
Adult Education Programme	11.07	8.682	.209** .003	-.038 .310	1		
Effectiveness of entrepreneurship	15.51	6.232	-.263** .000	.258** .000	.002 .491**	1	
Adult learners' innovation and entrepreneurship	15.87	6.823	-.091 .118	-.099 .098	.228** .001	.049 .261	1

Source: Field Survey 2024

This shows a positive linear relationship with correlation value at .491** which is significant at 0.02 levels between Adult Education Programmes such as Mass Literacy, internship programme, women's empowerment workshops, community development programme, entrepreneurship empowerment scheme and effectiveness of entrepreneurship in University of Lagos. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and thus accepts the alternate hypothesis that implies that there is significant difference between adult education programmes and effectiveness of entrepreneurship in University of Lagos.

Also, Table 1 shows a positive linear relationship with correlation value at .228** which is significant at 0.01 levels between Adult Education Programmes and Adult learners' innovation and entrepreneurship in University of Lagos. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and thus accepts the alternate hypothesis that implies there is significant difference between adult education programmes in contribution to adult learners' innovation and entrepreneurship in University of Lagos.

Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to reject the two null hypotheses and accept the alternate ones that there is a significant difference between the two variables.

Table 2: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				Durbin-Watson
					F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig.F Change	
	.002 ^a	.000	-.006	8.70834	.000	1	170	.982	.931

Predictors: (Constant), Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship

Dependent Variable: Adult Education

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	.037	1	.037	.000	.982 ^b
1 Residual	12891.980	170	75.835		

Total	12892.017	171			
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- a. Dependent Variable: Adult Education Programmes
b. Predictors: (Constant), Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship

Table 4: Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient			95.0% Confidence Interval of B	
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (constant)	11.055	1.156		9.561	.000	8.772	13.337
Effectiveness of entrepreneurship	0.02	.089	.002	.022	.982	-.174	.178

- a. Dependent variable: Adult Education Programmes

The findings in Tables 2 to 4 present the results of test of hypothesis one. In table 1, findings shows a moderate linear relationship ($R = 0.002$) between Adult Education programmes and effectiveness of entrepreneurship. The R-square showed that Adult Education programmes are for 0.00% variance in effectiveness of entrepreneurship.

In order to determine the overall difference between adult education programmes and effectiveness of entrepreneurship in University of Lagos, the findings were subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test where the significance (Sig) or p-value (Sig $F = 0.982^b$) of the F-ratio ($F = .000$) was found lesser than the critical significance at 0.05. Therefore, it was concluded that there is significant difference between adult education programmes and effectiveness of entrepreneurship in University of Lagos. Therefore, we accept the alternate hypothesis.

In order to obtain the relative impact of adult education programmes on entrepreneurial growth and innovation in University of Lagos, the estimated coefficient of effectiveness of entrepreneurship was obtained. The coefficient of Adult Education as shown in Table 4 was

estimated as 0.02. This value implies that there is high and positive impact of adult education programmes on entrepreneurial growth and innovation in University of Lagos.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide compelling evidence that adult education programmes significantly enhance entrepreneurial innovation and effectiveness. The positive correlation between programme participation and innovation ($r = .228, p < .01$) reinforces the notion that well-structured adult learning opportunities promote creative thinking and solution-oriented practices among learners. Participants actively involved in adult education programmes were more likely to conceive and implement innovative business ideas.

Similarly, the strong positive relationship between adult education programme participation and entrepreneurship effectiveness ($r = .491, p < .01$) affirms that such programmes play a critical role in equipping adult learners with practical business skills and knowledge. This supports the Expectancy-Value Theory, which posits that individuals are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities when they perceive them as both valuable and attainable. Learners who recognized the utility of adult education for achieving career and financial goals were more engaged and productive.

The findings also align with the Social Constructionist Theory. Societal values and perceptions surrounding adult education and entrepreneurship influenced learners' motivation. When adult education is socially reinforced as a viable pathway to economic empowerment, learners demonstrate higher levels of entrepreneurial activity, as seen in the 62% of Community Development Programme participants who developed new income-generating ideas.

The data also reveal substantial post-training economic benefits. The 36% increase in average monthly revenue among Internship Programme participants who previously operated businesses is a strong indicator of the programmes' capacity to boost existing entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, the creation of 112 new part-time jobs suggests that the programmes not only benefit individual participants but also contribute to broader economic development.

These findings are consistent with previous studies. Igwe (2009) emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship training in risk management and strategic planning, while King (2017) highlighted how adult education workshops, symposia, and community-based initiatives foster innovation and sustainable business practices. The present study extends these insights by demonstrating quantifiable gains in both innovation and income generation. In conclusion, the study confirms that adult education, when implemented with focused and practical objectives, can serve as a powerful catalyst for entrepreneurship and economic resilience.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, this study concludes that adult education programmes such as the Mass Literacy Programme, Internship Programme, Women's Empowerment Workshops, Community Development Programme, and Entrepreneurship Empowerment Scheme significantly influence entrepreneurial innovation and business success among learners at the University of Lagos. Participants engaged in these programmes demonstrated improved innovative thinking, increased revenue, and new business creation.

The results affirm that adult education serves not only as a vehicle for personal development but also as a platform for economic empowerment and national growth. These programmes empower learners with the necessary skills, confidence, and motivation to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. As such, adult education remains a critical component in addressing youth unemployment, poverty, and economic stagnation.

Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Establish national accreditation standards that include measurable innovation and business creation outcomes for adult education programmes.
- ii. Introduce matching grant schemes through which every ₦1 million invested by a university in entrepreneurship is supported with ₦500,000 in government funding.
- iii. Integrate project-based learning and business plan development as part of the curriculum.
- iv. Implement peer mentorship models pairing students with successful alumni entrepreneurs.

- v. Include real-world projects in partnership with NGOs and SMEs to ensure applicability and impact.
- vi. Develop post-programme learning circles to encourage ongoing collaboration and peer-to-peer support.
- vii. Partner with institutions such as the University of Lagos Industry Liaison Office for access to resources including coworking spaces, prototype labs, and business pitch competitions.
- viii. Embrace entrepreneurship workshops as part of a continuous learning journey, not isolated events.

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