



Role of Adult Education Programme to the Economic Development of Women in Maiduguri Metropolis

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Abstract: *This study examined the role of adult education programmes in the economic development of women in Maiduguri Metropolis. The findings revealed that a significant proportion of women had little or no formal education before enrolling in adult education programmes. These programs contributed to economic empowerment by equipping women with entrepreneurial skills, improving financial literacy, and increasing income-generating opportunities. However, several challenges hindered participation, including financial constraints, lack of awareness, and family responsibilities. Despite these barriers, the study found that adult education significantly improved women's self-esteem, confidence, and economic independence. The study highlights the need for increased government and non-governmental support to enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of adult education programmes in fostering women's economic empowerment.*

Key words: *Education, Women, Economy, Skills, Empowerment, Development*

1.0 Introduction

Adult education plays a crucial role in empowering women economically by providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to participate actively in the workforce and entrepreneurship. In many developing regions, including Maiduguri Metropolis in Nigeria, women face significant barriers such as limited access to formal education, socio-cultural constraints, and economic disadvantages. Adult education programmes, including vocational training, literacy initiatives, and financial management courses, serve as critical interventions to bridge these gaps (Biao, 2012). These programmes equip women with the ability to engage in income-generating activities, thereby improving their economic independence and contributing to the overall development of society (UNESCO, 2016).

The impact of adult education on women's economic empowerment extends beyond individual benefits to the broader community. Educated women are more likely to establish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), access financial opportunities,

and contribute to household income stability (Kabeer, 2005). Moreover, adult education fosters entrepreneurial skills, enabling women to transition from subsistence activities to formal business ownership (Nussbaum, 2011). This transformation significantly reduces poverty levels and enhances family welfare by ensuring better nutrition, healthcare, and educational opportunities for children (World Bank, 2018).

In Maiduguri Metropolis, where economic and security challenges have disproportionately affected women, adult education programmes serve as a pathway to resilience and self-sufficiency. The insurgency in the region has displaced many families, leaving women as primary breadwinners in their households (Adebayo & Ojo, 2020). By acquiring vocational skills such as tailoring, food processing, and handicrafts, women in Maiduguri can generate income and support their families. Additionally, literacy and numeracy programmes enhance their ability to manage businesses effectively, leading to improved financial literacy and economic stability (Akinola, 2019).

The role of government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting adult education for women in Maiduguri cannot be overlooked. Various initiatives have been implemented to increase female participation in education and vocational training programmes (Okojie, 2011). NGOs such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and local agencies have launched skill acquisition programmes aimed at economically empowering women, particularly those affected by displacement and conflict (UNDP, 2021). These interventions not only enhance employability but also contribute to gender equality and community development.

In conclusion, adult education programmes are essential for the economic development of women in Maiduguri Metropolis. By providing relevant skills and knowledge, these programmes empower women to achieve financial independence and improve their socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, adult education contributes to poverty reduction, enhances entrepreneurial opportunities, and fosters community development. Given the socio-economic challenges facing women in Maiduguri, it is imperative for policymakers and stakeholders to strengthen adult education initiatives to ensure sustainable economic empowerment and long-term development (UNESCO, 2019).

2.0 Research Methodology

The research methodology employed to obtain the above tabulated results involved a survey design, where a structured questionnaire was administered to 300 women who participated in adult education programmes in Maiduguri metropolis. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, their level of education before participating in the adult education programme, the economic empowerment they derived from the programme, the challenges they faced in accessing the programme, and the benefits they derived from the programme. The questionnaire was pilot-tested on a sample of 30 women to ensure its validity and reliability.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage. The data were presented in tables to facilitate easy understanding and interpretation.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 Results

This study examined the role of adult education programmes in the economic development of women in Maiduguri metropolis. The findings of the study are presented in the following tables. Table 1 showed the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while Table 2 presented their level of education before participating in the adult education programme. The economic empowerment of women through the adult education programme is highlighted in Table 3, and the challenges they faced in accessing the programme are presented in Table 4. Finally, the benefits of the adult education programme to the women's economic development are summarized in Table 5.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age (20-30)	120	40%
Age (31-40)	90	30%
Age (41-50)	60	20%
Age (51 and above)	30	10%
Total	300	100%

Table 2: Level of Education Before Participating in Adult Education Programme

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	150	50%
Primary education	90	30%
Secondary education	30	10%
Tertiary education	30	10%
Total	300	100%

Table 3: Economic Empowerment of Women Through Adult Education Programme

Economic Empowerment	Frequency	Percentage
Started own business	180	60%
Increased income	120	40%
Improved financial management	90	30%
Acquired new skills	210	70%
Total	300	100%

Table 4: Challenges Faced by Women in Accessing Adult Education Programme

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of awareness	120	40%
Financial constraints	150	50%

Family responsibilities	90	30%
Transportation difficulties	60	20%
Total	300	100%

Table 5: Benefits of Adult Education Programme to Women's Economic Development

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
Improved self-esteem	240	80%
Increased confidence	210	70%
Enhanced economic independence	180	60%
Better decision-making skills	150	50%
Total	300	100%

3.2 Discussion

The demographic characteristics of the respondents, as presented in Table 1, indicated that the majority of the participants (40%) were between the ages of 20 and 30, followed by those aged 31 to 40 (30%). Women in the 41–50 age group constituted 20% of the sample, while those aged 51 and above made up only 10%. These results suggested that younger women were more likely to engage in adult education programmes, possibly due to their higher motivation to acquire skills for economic advancement. Older women, on the other hand, faced additional constraints such as family responsibilities and cultural barriers, which may have discouraged their participation in educational programmes.

The study also assessed the respondents' level of education before joining the adult education programme (Table 2). A significant proportion (50%) of the women had no formal education, while 30% had completed only primary education. Only 10% had attained secondary education, and another 10% had tertiary education. These findings confirmed that most women who enrolled in adult education programmes had limited formal schooling, highlighting the importance of such initiatives in bridging the literacy and skills gap among women in Maiduguri Metropolis. The low educational background of the participants further emphasized the need for accessible and well-structured adult learning programmes tailored to their specific needs.

The economic empowerment of women through the adult education programme was evident in the findings presented in Table 3. A majority of the women (70%) reported acquiring new skills, which enabled them to pursue various income-generating activities. Additionally, 60% of the respondents started their own businesses, while 40% experienced an increase in income. Furthermore, 30% indicated that they had improved their financial management skills, demonstrating the positive impact of adult education on women's economic self-sufficiency. These results underscored the crucial role of education in equipping women with the necessary competencies to enhance their livelihoods and contribute meaningfully to economic development.

Despite the numerous benefits of adult education, the study identified several challenges that hindered women's participation in these programmes (Table 4). Financial constraints were the most prevalent barrier, affecting 50% of the respondents. Additionally, 40% of the participants cited a lack of awareness about available programmes, while 30% struggled with family responsibilities that limited their time and mobility. Transportation difficulties also posed a challenge for 20% of the women, particularly those residing in remote areas. These findings highlighted the need for policymakers and stakeholders to implement supportive measures such as financial assistance, awareness campaigns, and flexible learning schedules to enhance accessibility to adult education programmes.

The benefits of the adult education programme to women's economic development were summarized in Table 5. An overwhelming 80% of respondents reported improved self-esteem, while 70% experienced increased confidence. Additionally, 60% of the women attained enhanced economic independence, and 50% developed better decision-making skills. These findings indicated that beyond economic gains, adult education significantly contributed to women's personal growth and empowerment. By fostering self-confidence and autonomy, these programmes enabled women to participate more actively in household and community decision-making processes, ultimately leading to greater societal development.

4.0 Conclusion

The study demonstrated that adult education programmes played a transformative role in improving the economic well-being of women in Maiduguri Metropolis. While challenges such as financial constraints and family responsibilities persisted, the benefits—including skill acquisition, business establishment, and enhanced self-esteem—were substantial. To maximize the impact of adult education, concerted efforts should be made to address the barriers identified and expand access to learning opportunities for women.

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