

## OVERVIEW OF ATTITUDE OF ADULT LEARNERS TOWARDS EXAMINATION IN MASS LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Attitude is a general term which refers to one's feelings, thought and predisposition to behave in a particular manners towards some aspects Mukherjee (2008) in this case attitude can be defined as the way of thinking, feeling, interest and behaviour of adult learners towards examination. Examination in the other hand is administered to adult learners enrolled in basic literacy programme at the end of their course duration aimed at certifying them. Examination is a yardstick by which learners learning abilities and potentials are identified, help learners to discover how much they know and areas to improve upon, provide feedback to the teacher as to how much impact he is making on his learners (Oni, 1994). Therefore, seeing the importance of examination to students and adult literacy programmes, this paper attempted to give an overview of the attitude of adult learners towards examination, with close look at attitude, examination, proper teaching and learning situation, classroom communication and their implications in literacy programmes in Borno State. The paper concludes by making some suggestions to address negative attitudes of adult learners toward examination.

**Keywords:** Overview, Attitude, Adult Learners, Examination and Mass Literacy Programme

**Reference** to this paper should be made as follows: Abubakar Abba Aji And Mariam M.A Zakari (2014), Overview of Attitude of Adult Learners towards Examination in Mass Literacy Programmes in Borno State, Nigeria. *J. of Education and Leadership Development* Vol. 6, No. 2, Pp. 151 – 158.

### Introduction

Examination is a written, oral or practical test at school, colleges or universities which every learner is subjected to in order to get a certification. Examination is a very formal word. A test is something that student might be given in addition to or sometime instead of regular examination to see how much they have learned. (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Oni (1994) says, examination is a yardstick by which learners learning abilities and potentials are identified, help learners to discover how much they learnt and areas to improve upon; provide feedback to the teachers as to how much impact he is making on his learners. He further stated that examinations identify the areas that need to be stressed again and

to know learners who need special attention. Additionally, according to him examination help parents and guardian to know how much their wards are faring in what they are learning, it is the main criterion by which learners are confirmed successful or unsuccessful during or at the end of their academic programmes, and it is yet the primary basis by which learners are promoted from one learning stage to the other. Therefore, the researcher believes that since there is no way adult learners can do away or avoid examination, if they develop negative attitude towards examination they will have learning problems. Thus, proper assessment on the content of attitude of adult learners towards examination and its implication will facilitate the development of positive attitude toward literacy programme. There is no educational aspiration that can be effectively accomplished without the aid of competent and dedicated instructors. To achieve this, Borno State Government established Agency for Mass Literacy by Edict No. 10 of 1987 to meet the demand of adults who are in one way or the other affected educationally to improve their livelihood and charged the agency with the following functions:-

- a. Laying down policy for mass literacy and non-formal education geared towards the overall social and economic development of the state.
- b. Organizing and carrying out literacy programmes in both Roman and Arabic scripts for adult and non-formal education in the state with the aim of eradicating illiteracy.
- c. Developing in adult's ability to use skills acquired to enhance their physical and social environment in order to improve their modes of living e.t.c ( Borno State Edict No. 10 of 1987). To achieve the above mentioned objectives of the state government adult learners, government, interest groups, and philanthropic individual want adult learners to be given equal opportunity for a "second chance" education. Indabawa (1996). After all effort by the government the learners need to be tested and examined in order for the instructors, government and every individual who are participating in the programme to know their performance.

An examination is a process of assessing adult learners on what they have learnt in the course of their study duration with a view to certifying them. Usually, in an adult basic literacy programme, the examination comes up at the end of the sixth or ninth month as the case may be. The type of examination given in Agency for Mass Literacy is usually a teacher made test that is not standardized. It consist of paper and pen examination for a fixed period of time. From the author's experience, adult learners in the Agency for Mass Literacy in Borno State have an unfavorable attitude towards examination. This is evident in their high rate of drop out before examination period or high rate of failure in examinations sat for. Sometimes, the unfavorable attitude shown by adults to examination leads to high rate of cheating or examination malpractice which affects the credibility of the examination results presented.

Regrettably, below is the statistics of the examination results of mass literacy programme in Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy.

Year	Males	Females	Total	Certificated	Dropped	Percent
2007	18,686	4,657	23,343	12,386	10,957	88.4%
2008	22,213	3,816	26,029	14,390	11,639	80.8%
2009	15,376	3,684	19,060	9,715	9,345	96.1%
2010	10,397	2,143	12,540	6,834	5,706	83.4%
2011	4,224	1,107	5,331	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Source: Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy**

From the table above, it could be seen that a very high percentage of adult learners do not sit for the examinations across various years. Thus it could be inferred that adult learners in Borno State have a negative attitude towards examination. The researcher believes that if the instructors or teachers in Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy give learners professional training under reasonable conditions, adult learners are likely to have a positive attitude to examination. According to Oni, (1994) examination is a situation that calls for demonstration of one's knowledge, skills and ability. Man is ever faced with challenges in life, from the cradle to the grave. Thus, the challenge which makes him summon and use his knowledge, skill and ability could be referred to as examination. He further said that examination in the teaching learning situation may be referred to as that which has to do with the testing of knowledge, skill or ability of what the examinee has been taught, possesses or is supposed to know. This may involve asking verbal or written questions which will prompt responses in either verbal or written form on one hand or a demonstration or display of actions on the other hand. Examination is very important to every learner not only the adult learners. This is because it is used for the appraisal of the past and the present performance for certification and or improvement purposes. Examination help to elicit needed information on past and present endeavor and aids the predication of the anticipated future. This is essential in all human activities. The trader, farmers, learner, instructor e.t.c need to know whether or not they are making any progress and how much of such progress they are making or not making. The knowledge of this helps to determine what line of action should be taken. This makes examination imperative particularly to learners at different stages of their learning process, to know among other things how they are progressively coping with learning materials. Examinations are of different types. But in this paper, the researcher will consider those that have to do with academics. They include all forms of activities aimed at testing the examinees knowledge and potentials. Examinations are activities carried out in responses to deliberately drawn questions, either in verbal or written form by the examiner(s). This could take place within the regular/formal school system or in any form of adult education programme. Going through the

necessity of examination one can see that adult learners also need examination as much as possible.

Examination can be categorized into two: self imposed examination and externally-imposed examination. The self imposed examination can be referred to as self-attempted examination. The self imposed examination can be referred to as self-attempted examination which is always for the purpose of self-appraisal of what one feels one knows as against one's ability to demonstrate it in the way it ought to be demonstrated. The self-appraisal may employ brain drill. Brain drill is an attempt to recount, from one's memory, what one has learnt. It could also take the form of reading and rehearsing what one has read; in form of oral or written exercise. The individual could set questions or make use of practice questions set by the authors of the books he has read. Series of class assignments and or previous examination questions could be used too. Examination could take the forms of oral, written and skill or practical demonstration depending of the examines educational discipline and area being tested by the examining body while the external could be the examination that are impose on a learner for certification, employment or promotion. Having considered the two categories of examination, it is pertinent to identify forms of examination. These include oral examination which is often based purely on unwritten dialogue between the examiner and the examinee. It is by the verbal responses of the candidates to the examiner's question that the formers is assessed. Oral examination is used to test student's self expression, ability to listen and understand and ascertain or compliment written work. We also have written examination in which the responses are made in writing and examinees are expected to present their answers in legible, intelligible, logical and correct forms before they could earn pass marks. Under the written examination it could be objective, multiple choice or essay type. Whichever form examination takes, it is very essential to adult learners as that is the best way one can access whether or not he/she is progressing in whatever he learnt or whatever skill he acquires.

### **Attitude**

The concept of attitude is very important in social psychological. Herzberg (2009) in his study on job attitude as a sense of motivation, investigated things that make workers or learners to develop positive or negative attitude. According to him the hygiene or maintenance factors influence the behaviour and attitude of an individual. Thornike, (2009) defined attitude as feelings of favorableness towards some groups. Baying, (2002) remarks that a teaches is happy to impact knowledge to the learners is he is motivated. He further indicated that any educational programme depends on the satisfaction of the teacher. Therefore, literacy instructors in Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy need to be motivated so that they will develop a positive towards their work.

According to Ukpong (2000) "Attitude of adult learners towards learning arises from their own past experience and directly from the attitudes and experience of the family and friends". The writer is of the opinion that the behaviour of adult learners towards learning depends on his past experience from friends and sometime from his family background. This view is true in that some people may be class activities. Ukpong, (2000) opines that some adult learners, while they were in their childhood, might have parental problem, economic status of their parents, teaching methods of their teacher's environment of the school and examination e.t.c. This may at times lead to drop out of the programme to avoid embarrassment. According to Rosenberg (2007) attitude is relative stable response to an object. He maintain that there are certain variables that affect attitude. Among these variables is the intensity of a person's belief in a specific value system. The other is the perceived importance of attitude object in leading to or blocking the attainment of the goals of that value system. The definition discrepancy between the self concept of adult learners and their performance can create negative attitude to examination.

### **Literacy Teaching And Learning Situation**

According to Farrants, (1974) learning is the process by which we acquire and retain attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behaviour patterns or physical growth. Capacity for learning is related to innate physiological factors while rate of learning depends on both inherited and environmental factors. Each types of learning goes by different name. affective learning has to do with feeling and values and therefore influences our attitudes and personalities; while cognitive learning is achieved by mental processes such as reasoning, remembering and recall. It helps in problem solving developing new ideas and evaluation. Therefore, in any educational activities, programme or learning one needs to be tested in order for one to assess how far one is progressing. When a learning situation is conducive to adults they learn better and are able to recall or remember what they are being taught. Therefore, for the adult learners to do well and reduce fear for examination they also need a good and pleasant atmosphere for their learning. However, when we say lesson is properly taught, it means a lot to adult instructor and adult learners. Because for a lesson to be properly taught requires certain factors such as the teaching method, instructional materials that are necessary, suitable, appreciate and relevant for both the teacher, learners and the subject matter. Given the above factors adult learners will have positive attitude to and perform better in examination.

Communication generally means the transfer, transmission or exchange of ideas, knowledge, belief or attitudes, values and the like from one person to another. Weaver and Shannon, (2002) in Brown (1982) defines communication thus "the word communication will be used in a broad sense to include all the procedures whereby one mine may affect another. This involves not only written and oral speech but also

music, the historical arts, the theatre, ballet, in fact all human behaviour". These two definitions imply the existence of people who have something significant to share with each other and that this sharing affect the way they believe. Here we shall be concerned with only human communication with special reference to teaching. Programme instruction is a self instructional to teaching. It is a kind of teaching that follows a sequence. In this system the learning materials is presented in an orders and structured programme which has been prepared before the learner begins his task. It is characterized by breaking up of the learning content into small bits that would lead the learners from what he knows to new and more fascinating things such as complex knowledge and principles. The small bit of information is presented in an orderly manner sequentially. Simple problems are also given in each step the learner responds at each step. When his response is correct, reinforcement is given by the immediate confirmation of the right answer or a correction of the wrong answer. Going by the above explanation about classroom communication, it means that is there is communication gap between the instructor and the learner, it means the outcome of what is taught will be low. If the learners does not understand the lesson that is taught by the instructor he will not actually perform well in examination. This shows that there is what we call communication gap between the adult instructors and the learners.

### **Implication Of Attitude Of Adult Learners Towards Examination In Literacy Programmes In Borno State**

Literacy is the pivot upon which all development of human endeavour rotates and revolves; Kolo (2006) revealed that when people became literate they can by themselves:

- (a) Overcome ignorance because they can read and write
- (b) Prevent diseases by taking care of themselves in the event of any disease outbreak since they could been educated on primary health care.
- (c) Become more aware of changes and importance of their environment to their existence and therefore, do everything possible to protect it.

Adult literacy as viewed by many scholars is an avenue for the disadvantaged and the underserved adults who missed the opportunity to acquire primary and secondary education, for one reason or the other. In order to bride gaps in their daily life activities, some observers see adult literacy education as a "second chance" educational mechanism for achievement in playing roles for self-fulfillment and national development. Adult literacy education in Borno State has been an attempt to grant and guarantee adult literacy learners equal educational opportunity. The government interest group and philanthropic individuals want illiterate adults to be given equal opportunity for a 'second chance" education. The researcher believes that is the instructors or teachers in Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy gives the learners professional training with free and comprehensive communication, a

sustainable adult literacy education with examination can be provided at an utmost level whereby adult literacy education in the state can reach everybody, become part of people culture and tradition involves everybody in the society and benefit all men and women, nomads and disabled.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion attitude are every factors in teaching and learning activities. Attitude to examination is a very importance factor in the performance of teaching. There is the need for adult literacy education to be carried out in conditions that will engender positive attitude to examination otherwise literacy programmes among adult will not succeed.

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