

Potentials of Adult Education for Knowledge Economy and Sustainability

Dr. Ifeoma F. Uzoagu^{1*}

¹Department of Adult and Non Formal Education Faculty of Education University of Port Harcourt Port Harcourt

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*Corresponding author: Dr. Ifeoma F. Uzoagu

Department of Adult and Non Formal Education Faculty of Education University of Port Harcourt Port Harcourt

Abstract

Investing in human capital is the priority to make the most of the evolving economic opportunity. The world is dynamic and must be followed for the fulfillment and meeting up with technology and trend of time. It is of great importance to work with trend by incorporating a knowledge driven development. Human capital is gaining importance, the workers are becoming increasingly responsible for every aspect of their work and professional life. Successes in knowledge economy require commitment of both workers and firms, to continually learn and increase their skills and expertise which foster innovation. Adult learning and education is available for continuous change, making knowledge available for initials and continuing workforce. Adult learning and education equips people with the necessary knowledge, capabilities, skills competences and values to exercise and advance their rights and take control of their destinies.

Keywords: Adult Education, Knowledge Economy, Human capital.

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INTRODUCTION

Within the last few years, political as well as scientific debates have stressed the growing importance of adult education. There prevails a consensus that adult education plays great role in promoting personal, economic and social well-being, which has also long been recognized. There is a deep rooted belief that adult learning has the potential to create personal economy and social value (Ricarda Motschulnig 2012). Taking a course can be gateway to a new career or a vital stepping stone to that promotion you have been after. Whatever field you are in, learning new skills is key to branching out and moving forward. The term, “adult learner”, describes anyone who is not a conventional student (formal school learning). Brussels (2014), asserts that the potentials of adult education could be derived from the method of impartation, that is methodology for impartation, physical and psychological, economic, social and political. This paper asserts that adult education cut across various fields of endeavour and affecting people lives in ways that go beyond what can be measured by economic growth and by labour market earning.

Adult learning play a significant role in promoting personal, social, economic wellbeing and

value, such as health, civic engagement and social cohesion, attitude change, educational progression etc. Adult education has been the most expanded sector of education in the last few decades.

Learning in Adult Education

Learning in adult education could be formal, non-formal and informal. In whichever way, the learning is acquired, it must as a necessity involve a person doing the teaching whom in adult learning is called a facilitator, tutor, an agent of change, instructor or a catalyst. It must also logically have the recipients of the action, a learner or learners. Teaching in adult education involves somebody listening to the subject matter or content of what is being taught. Learning on the other hand is an indispensable process in education. Education cannot take place without some learning taking or having taken place. Learning is becoming aware or conscious of information, knowledge, skill etc in which one may not be aware of before. It could also be seen as self-development that is concepts, knowledge, ideas, skills and attitudes necessary for solving situational problems through effective participation in adult education activities. Learning is therefore conceptualized as a designed process to liberate man from constraints, from ignorance and from exploitation (Nzeneri, 2010). Since the adult are the

targets of the deliberate process called education, certain conditions affect or influence how adult should learn and also how they should be taught for effective mastery.

Method of teaching adult must be appropriate for the age. Adults have acquired some knowledge and should be used as the bases for their further learning. Adult many years of experience have really exposed them to certain ways of living which can influence their new learning, so such experience must not be overlooked by the facilitator. The autonomy and freedom factor which makes the adult participation in or withdrawal from the learning is a matter of personal decision by the adult learner. The social responsibility factor, which compels their learning to be situational relevant and present needs oriented rather than future oriented or preparatory, in view of the short time at his disposal from other social obligations and pressing problems crying to be solved (Oyebamiji, 2019).

Malcolm Shephard Knowles theory of Andragogy informs how adult should be taught bearing in mind their characteristics. Andragogy is the act and science of helping adult to learn. Andragogy is the act of teaching and learning in which the core activity is centred on the adult learner.

Andragogy as an art and science of helping adults to learn is based on such principles:

- Learning for adult is voluntary
- Adult learners are full of experience with which they can relate to new ideas.
- Adult educator is only a facilitator and not a teacher.
- Curriculum is learner centred unlike in pedagogy where the curriculum is subject centred.
- The objectives of the learning situation are jointly determined and formulated by learners and facilitators.
- The curriculum and subject content are determined by the needs of the adult learner.
- Teaching and learning process is based on mutual dialogue between the learners and the facilitator.
- In andragogical method, the facilitator and the learner jointly participate in every aspect of the education.

Ethical Issues in Adult Education

To achieve great success in Adult teaching and learning which contributes to its potentials, there are some ethical issues that guide the teaching and learning in Adult education. According to Peterson in Oyebamiji (2019), the ethical issues that are of great concern to adult education are equality, worthwhile activities, consideration of interest, freedom and respect for persons and community.

Equality: Every individual is equal and should be treated so. Adult education provides equal opportunities to adult learners. The adult learners have expectations and purposes of attending adult learning programmes and must be awarded equal opportunities. No adult learner must be looked down on as it may destroy the interest of such learner. The adult learner experiences must come into play in the course of teaching and learning. They come with some certain level of experiences and should therefore receive equal lessons and level of fulfillment.

Worthwhile Activities: This has to do with the adult education programme. The curriculum content for adult learners should be planned that learners can acquire the knowledge skills and attitudes that are important for individual and communal survival. Adult learners are attracted to lessons they feel are relevant and will improve their daily living. It then implies that the curriculum content in adult education must create functionality and must be significant and relevant to the lives of the adult learners.

Interest: Consideration of adult learners' interests is very important. Every adult learner comes into the programme with a particular interest to satisfy. Any programme for adult learners must be geared towards meeting their immediate needs. The knowledge and skills they acquire must be tailored towards solving their problem. Thus, adult educators have to be democratic and have a good understanding to their learners needs.

Freedom: This means that the liberty for individuals to do whatever they wish. It must also be stated however that total freedom cannot be experienced because it could lead to infringing into other individual freedom which could destroy the effort of the programme or even the adult learners. All learners should have a say in their learning and thus have an active role in their learning environment. Every learner should be privileged to ask questions. No learners should be looked down on. The facilitator should not write any learner off. All learners should have their fulfillment as an expected outcome.

Respect for Persons and Community: This has to do with attitudes for others in which people are perceived as worth beings. This is so, whether we are referring to the teacher's attitude towards students or student towards teachers or students among each other, other people's point of view need to be respected whether they are in agreement with our own or not. Adequate respect must be accorded to the adult learner as a result of the high level positions they may have acquired in the society. Because of diverse economic and social pedigree and status, learners should be given some certain degree of respect to bring about a harmonious learning environment. This will strengthen

learner's self-esteem and give them the self-confidence to participate in the learning programme.

Adult Education and Knowledge Economy

A knowledge economy is an economy directly based on production, distribution and utilization of knowledge and information as fundamental enablers of growth, wealth creation and employment. Grimsley (2017) define knowledge economy as economy in which the production of goods and services is based primarily upon knowledge intensive activities. Knowledge economy cannot be developed without an efficient and modern education system. Adult education in meeting up with knowledge economy has brought and will continue to bring changes to the way we work and live. It has also to do with the collection, analysis and synthesis of information which has to do with continuing education or lifelong education. Success in knowledge economy require commitment of both workers and firm to continually learn and to increase their skills and expertise which foster innovation. Today, the main driving force of the economy is knowledge. Lifelong learning has the dual function of responding to societal challenges and economic growth. Meeting up with knowledge requires an equal demand of education and training that encompasses learning throughout the life cycle, from early childhood to retirement which has to do with adult education of continuing study and lifelong education. The world is dynamic and must be followed as such for the fulfillment and meeting up with technology and trend of time.

It is of great importance to work with the trend by incorporating a knowledge base by investing in higher education and research in other to attract high skilled labour and better position in adult education.

According to recent theories of development, knowledge has become an important factor for achieving economic development. In order to achieve these goals, a well-educated and highly skilled workforce is necessary. Adult education strives in creating development strategy by striving towards developing knowledge on a sustainable economy based on employment, innovation and education due to the fact that the current situation requires new policies and approaches. The World Bank (2019) observes the changing nature of work and informs that adult learning is an important channel to help readjust workers skills to fit in the future of work and suggest ways to improve its effectiveness. Investing in human capital is the priority to make the most of the evolving economic opportunity. Three types of skills are increasingly important in labour market; advanced cognitive skills such as complex problem-solving, socio-behavioral skills such as teamwork, skill combinations that are predictive of adaptability such as reasoning and solve efficacy. Building these skills require strong human capital. Adult learning opportunities enable those who

left school to reskill according to changing labour market demands. Deloitte (2015) opines that the concept of knowledge is changing from the mere acquisition of the theoretical knowledge towards the application of such knowledge to large developmental processes. Human capital is gaining importance; the workers are becoming increasingly responsible for every aspect of their work and professional life.

An increasing number of tertiary institutions are offering part time, evening, weekend and summer to meet the needs of working adult. There are major partnership and in-house businesses and industry training groups serving as adult training needs. The growing industry of professional continuing education providers though, both professional association and businesses serving all professionals. The incorporation of internet technology delivery as well as more creative approaches towards problem-based learning and case simulations. The contextual learning of adult workers is faced with the demands of changing knowledge base in the knowledge economy. Adult education provide people with the necessary capabilities, skills and competences to exercise and advance their rights, take control of their destiny, contribute to equity and inclusion, help to end poverty and build equitable tolerant and sustainable societies.

Kasworn, (2011) asserts that adult education has been the key provider for the workforce education to adult, becoming a more dominant educational leader through recent turbulent economic restructuring of work in particular, adult education has offered an important role in the outreach and support to the under-educated, disenfranchised and often dislocated workers. World Bank (2003) posits that an increase number of tertiary institution are offering par time, evening, weekend, and summer course to meet the needs of working adults. In Finland, the number of adults enrolled in the continuing education programmes at tertiary level exceeds the number of young people enrolled in traditional degree courses.

Adult education offer adult degree programmes, evening and weekend offering and heavy investment in the internet supported credit and noncredit programmes. This also includes major partnership and in house business and industry training servicing adult learning needs. Incorporating internet technology delivery as well as more creative approaches through problem-based learning and case stimulations. Learning of the adult workers with a changing knowledge is based on knowledge economy. Adult education has become more entrepreneurial, market-oriented and revenue-generating effort based within the digital economy.

Tawari and Oghenekohwo (2019) assert that the urgent need to focus on adult education investment needs because of its response to human capital

development, social capital development and sustainable development needs of adults throughout life. Thus, investment in adult education is a derived demand that leverages on the economy, health, environment, security, governance, learning and technologies.

Adult learning and education are more important than ever as an empowering tool to release the creative potential of people and communities as a critical resource that adds to the well-being of the nations.

Lifelong Learning and Knowledge Economy

Adult learning cannot be separated from lifelong learning that has to do with the entire body of the ongoing learning processes formal, informal and non-formal, whereby people regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve the technical or professional qualification or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society.

Belem framework for action (2009) opines that at a time of expending globalization, new opportunities has arisen for the world, but also new challenges, conflicts and barriers with the structural socio-economic shifts and growing uncertainties in daily life. Knowledge economy are emerging with new environment, new forms of social organization and channels of communication, which make the demands for updating and adapting our collective and individual skills and competences ever more urgent. Adult learning provide people with the necessary capabilities, skills and competences to exercise and advance their rights, take control of their destiny, contribute to equity and help to end poverty and built equitable, tolerant and sustainable society.

World Bank (2013) posits that the emergence of the global knowledge economy has added value to learning ideas, knowledge enrichment and know-how as source of economic growth and development along with the application of new technologies, have important implication on how people learn and apply knowledge throughout their lives. The opportunity a nation offer to her citizen for learning throughout one's lifetime are critical for countries to compete in the global knowledge economy. Lifelong learning which is an aspect of adult education encompasses learning throughout the life circle, from cradle to the grave within this framework, knowledge and learning are all encompassing and all-inclusive whether it takes place in school, communities or workplace. Increasingly, people need skills not just on individual bases but on team work and problem solving. The need for the learning system to bring in multitude of players, including the learners, the family, the employer, the provider and state. Ideas and know-how are sources of economic

growth with significant implications on how people learn, create and apply knowledge throughout their lives.

The world is dynamic, nowadays faster than ever before under the influence of information and communication technologies (ICT) to keep pace with these developments. Arina, (2012) posits that lifelong learning has undergone a great number of interpretations during the years, but several key characteristics were stressed out. The lifelong dimension of learning process is a character that defines learning in the knowledge economy. The traditional method of studying for a particular period of time to complete education before moving to labour market is increasingly replaced by continuous learning throughout the entire lifecycle of individual. This represents a requirement of the knowledge economy, since knowledge is developing at a faster pace, becoming easily obsolete and requiring individuals to continuously update and upgrade their knowledge, skills and competences. Lifelong learning contexts are learner centred, it is voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal professional reasons. Learners are expected to actively seek to acquire and develop knowledge and competences. It provides opportunity for the learning and training needs of more diverse clients, adult students, part time student, working student, travelling student like nomads, stay at home students, evening students etc.

Uzoegwu and Illoanusi in Nwuzi (2018) outlined some scope of lifelong learning as

- a. Lifelong learning is based on the philosophy that is never too soon or too late for learning.
- b. Lifelong learning is the development of a mindset that one can and should be open to new ideas, decisions, skills, or behaviours. It provides learning opportunities for people of all ages and in different contexts such as workplace, at home and through leisure activities which are not formal like school and higher education.
- c. It is a form of pedagogy achieved through distance learning or e-learning, continuing education or correspondence courses.
- d. Lifelong education includes postgraduate programmes, people who work to improve their qualifications, update their skills or retain for a new line of work. It accelerates scientific and technological progress. It is a furtherance of knowledge and skills acquired in primary, secondary and university education. Knowledge possessed through these formal schools may not be sufficient for a professional career that will last many years.

Learning Cities

A learning city is one that promotes lifelong learning for all, it also

- Revitalizes learning in families and communities
- Facilitate learning for and in the work place
- Expands the use of modern learning technologies
- Improves quality and excellence in learning
- Fosters a lifelong learning culture
- Mobilizes its resources effectively in all sectors for promotion of inclusive learning from basic education to higher education.

Based on these, the city promotes individual empowerment and social inclusion economic development, cultural prosperity and sustainable development. Studies have shown that lifelong learning citizen who acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes in a wide range of context are better equipped to adapt to changes in their environment. Lifelong learning therefore has a critical role to play in empowering citizens and promoting a more sustainable future for all while national government is largely responsible for development of strategies that promote a learning society, lasting change require commitment at the local level in order words, a learning society created, province by province, city by city and community by community (UNESCO 2019).

Continuing Education

Continuing education is the vehicle through which tertiary institution connects with the communities to make life kind, pleasant, rich and long. Continuing education emerged because of increase in the demands of mankind. It is essential that education come decisively to grip with the world-wide crises of mankind. Meeting up with these demands, re-orientation of our thinking is highly needed for survival of mankind and also to move on to higher level. Liveright and Haygood (1996) defines continuing education as a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular full time basis undertakes sequential and organized activities with conscious intention of bringing about change in information, knowledge, understanding, skill appreciation and attitude for solving person or community problems. As the world moved to an industrialized economy, the need for continued education and improved access for adults for both professional and personal skill enhancement and enrichment.

Adult Education and Sustainability

Adult education for sustainability is all encompassing, empowering learners with knowledge, skills values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society. Education for sustainability is a key enabler, a lifelong learning process for sustainable development by transforming society both present and future generation.

Lau, Lang, Wu and Yang in Adelokun, Adeyemo and Agboola (2018) observe that in the era of knowledge, people pay more attention on lifelong education with the fast updating speed of knowledge and continuing emerging technologies. Adult education is becoming an important indicator of technological development and social progress. It also has a close relation between the application and development of technology in continuing education which would lead to innovation. Adult education cut across almost all discipline, and central to providing solutions to all these problems including security, making learners excited, motivated and well equipped, has economic outcomes for participants, making money out of waste, cultivating gardens in modern way and making money for personal and community sustainability. Adult education programmes influence environmental outcome as people are informed on keeping their environment safe. Satisfaction of basic human needs for clean air, water and locally source nutritious uncontaminated food. Adult education provides meaningful employment opportunities and education programmes that enable the workforce adjust to future needs. Adult education is holistic in nature as it provides for both the young and old; it is lifelong in nature as it involves knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviour. Adult education is about technology, be it traditional or modern, because majority of the innovation evolve on the existing traditional ideas. With innovation ideas, life is made easier and sustaining.

SUGGESTION/ CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussions, the following are suggested:

Developing countries should invest massively in all forms of out of school continuing education programmes in order to meet with the technological explosion demand of knowledge based economy that promotes knowledge, skills, competences, technology etc.

The curriculum content for adult learners should be (worthwhile) so planned that learners can acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for live improvement of individual and community survival for now and in the future.

Meeting up in knowledge based economy is capital intensive, policy makers need to consider a range of financing options. Whatever mechanism are used, financing of learning beyond the basic competencies should include both cost sharing and subsidy components.

Adult learning plays a great role in promoting personal, economic and social wellbeing which has always been recognized. Potentials of adult learning and education could be derived from the method of impartation, that is, methodology for impartation. Learning is therefore conceptualized as a designed

process that liberates man from constraints, from ignorance and from exploitation. Knowledge economy cannot be developed without an efficient and modern education system. Adult education in meeting up with knowledge economy has brought and will continue to bring changes to the way we work and live.

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