
The use of Information and Communication on Effective Coordination of Adult Education Programmes in The South East Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of information and communication on effective co-ordination of adult education programmes in the South East zone of Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey while the population of the study was 3202 subjects. It included 5 states directors of Agencies of adult and non-formal education, 62 proprietors of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), 15 coordinators of donor agencies and 3120 instructors of adult education. The sample for the study was 394 subjects. The sample comprised 312 instructors composed through purposive sampling technique while 5 states directors of Agencies of adult and non-formal education, 62 proprietors of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), 15 coordinators of donor agencies were all used due to their manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire while the data collected were analysed using mean score for the research questions and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the hypotheses. The findings included that information flow approaches have impact on coordination of adult education programmes as negative information flow are frequently used in the coordination of adult education programmes in the area, and that communication approaches determine effective coordination of adult education programmes in the South East zone of Nigeria. Four recommendations were proffered for proper coordination of adult education programmes.

Introduction

Adult education is associated with everyday life activities of adults. It includes any education given to adults based on their social, economic, political and cultural needs to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society (Nzeneri, 2005). This definition has shown the diverse nature of adult education both in the clientele it serves and in the programme it provides. Consequently, adult education is any kind of education designed for the illiterate population, the formal school dropout, the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, carried out outside the formal school setting (Eyibe, 2005).

The programmes adult education provides are numerous but diverse. It includes literacy programmes, remedial education, skill training programmes and retraining programmes, properly planned and implemented for the purpose of improving the beneficiaries.

The above programmes are provided by many private agencies and organs of the central and state governments. They all reach the rural areas with these programme to solve one social or individual problems or the other. There are also local government bodies, their constituent units and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating at

the local level with adult education programmes which have similar objectives with those of the government. Some of these NGOs are centrally organized and have a nation wide coverage while there are others which are essentially regional or local (UNESCO, 1982). The multi-sectoral provision of adult education programmes makes coordination of the programmes imperative.

Coordination is the orderly synchronization (or putting together) of efforts of workers to provide the proper amount, timing, and quality of execution so that their organized effort lead to the accomplishment of the stated objectives of the enterprise. (Haimann and Hilgert 1977). The Crux of co-ordination is to avoid waste and reduce duplication. In this sense coordination is seen as the process of unifying the contributions of people, materials and other resources towards the achievement of a recognized purpose.

Co-ordination of adult education programmes is brought about when the adult education administrator performs the five managerial functions appropriately. Thus coordination is not a separate managerial function. Adult education administrator can achieve co-ordination of adult education programmes while properly performing the five managerial functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Thus, synchronizing the efforts of the people should be a prominent consideration whenever adult education administrator goes about performing the managerial functions.

In the administration of adult education programmes therefore, coordination attempts:

1. to bring about the consistent and harmonious action of persons toward a common end;
2. to adjust the parts to each other, and the movement and operations of parts in time so that each makes its maximum contribution to the adult education programme as a whole;
3. to combine the action of a number of muscles in a complex movement and in administration the harmonious combination of actions of adult education agents or functions toward a given objective;
4. the process of understanding, unifying, harmonizing and integrating managerial functions, actions, and operations (Jerome & Lawrence, 1998: 229).

The nature of adult education programmes is one in which the adult learners can find answers to their varied needs and problems. The programmes are largely non – formal and flexible, geared towards greater diversity in design, geared towards giving learner some skills, knowledge, understanding, attitude and appreciation (Barikor, 1991). Adult education programmes are diverse. Its division may include basic education, technical education, socio-economic education, ideological political education and education for improving the quality of life (Okedera, 1992). Adult education programmes therefore are important elements in the personal development of adults and the environment. Their coordination therefore requires cooperative and democratic information flow and communication approaches (UNESCO, 1982). Communication involves the process by which information and understanding are transferred from one person to another. According to Anyanwu (2002) communication is essential when it acts as a tool for the establishment and maintenance of good social and working relations.

Communication approaches therefore are the ways ideas, views and news are networked and communicated horizontally and vertically in an organization for effective operations and goal attainment (Anyanwu 2002). Its essence lies on the need not to overlook the role of mass media and their potential to support development efforts in adult and literacy education. Through communication various agencies that provide adult education can build up trust on themselves, coordinate their actions and plan strategies for the accomplishment of goals.

Information flow approaches on the other hand are the ways information are disseminated for its effective utilization in achieving organizations objectives (Anyanwu 2002). Information is important in realizing the objectives of adult education programmes as the effectiveness of organizations depend on the amount of information available.

Consequently, communication and information approaches are essential for effective coordination of adult education programmes. Since adult education programmes are provided by various agencies, even if the multifarious programmes operated by these agencies are not coordinated, at least their information communication component can be coordinated so that they can be mutually supportive.

Coordination bridges are between human operations and programme objectives in adult education and the link is largely accomplished by increasing the effective communication and information flow within and outside adult education agency. The task in the coordination and realization of the objectives of any adult education programme in South East Zone of Nigeria, therefore, require adequate information and communication flow among government, NGOs, donor agencies, and instructors.

In the operations of private organizations these links between levels and functions to coordinate are not always there but to obtain adult education programme unity, coordination then follows as the inevitable links that permit the effective reassembly of the parts of the programme between governmental levels and private organizations offering adult education programmes.

Statement of the Problem

The multi-sectoral provision of adult education programmes seems to encourage wastage of both human and material resources. It also makes duplication of programmes or projects most probable. Even if the multifarious adult education programmes operated by the various agencies may not be coordinated in their entirety, as would be ideals from the point of view of integrated community development, at least, their information and communication subsystems may be coordinated. This will make the programmes and projects to be mutually supportive. The trust of this study, therefore, is to assess the uses of information and communication approaches on effective coordination of adult education programmes.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the use of information flow and communication approaches for effective coordination of adult education programmes in the south East Zone of Nigeria.

Specifically, the study determined:

- 1) The uses of information flow on the coordination of adult education programmes.

- 2) The uses of communication approaches on the coordination of adult education programmes.

Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the uses of information flow approaches in effective coordination of adult education programmes?
 2. What are the uses of communication approaches in effective coordination of adult education programmes?
- Equally, the study hypothesizes that at P & 0.05 level of significance that:
- (1) There will be no significant differences among the mean ratings of government officials, proprietors of adult education centres, coordinators of Donor agencies and instructors on the uses of information flow in coordination of adult education programmes.
 - (2) There will be no significant differences among the mean rating of government officials, proprietors of adult education centres, coordinators of donor agencies and instructors on the uses of communication approaches in coordination of adult education programmes.

Method

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised directors of state agencies of adult and non-formal education, proprietors of adult education centres, coordinators of donor agencies and instructors in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. The population of the study was 3,202 subjects. It consists of 5 state directors, 62 proprietors, 15 coordinators of donor agencies and 3120 instructors from the five states. The purposive sampling technique was used to selecting a sample of 312 instructors who participated in facilitation workshop at Enugu, while all the 5 directors of state agencies, 62 proprietors of adult education centres and 15 coordinators of donor agencies, were used due to their manageable size. The total sample therefore was 394.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire for Coordination on Adult Education Programmes" (QCAEP) developed by the research for the state directors, proprietors, coordinators and instructors of adult education programmes in the five states. The instrument was face validated by three experts from measurement and evaluation unit of Department of Science Education and Department of Adult Education of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who scrutinized it and offer useful suggestions. The data were analysed using mean scores and analysis of variance (ANOVA). For the mean score, a cut off mean of 2.50 was used, using four point scales. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

TABLE 1: Mean rating on the uses of information flow approaches on coordination of adult education programmes.

S/n	ITEMS	Directors		Proprietors		Coordinators		Instructors		Overall
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
1	Superordinate and subordinate relationship	3.68	.000	4.00	0.55	3.53	.516	3.72	.522	3.75
2	ministries dominate information flow	3.00	.707	2.92	.789	3.33	.617	3.27	.718	3.14
3	Ministries see themselves as boss	3.20	1.30	3.16	1.06	3.53	.834	2.91	1.08	3.20
4	Instruction are imposed	3.80	.447	3.19	.786	3.33	.817	3.31	.802	3.40
5	Information not on cooperative endeavour	3.29	.000	3.40	.877	3.60	.507	4.00	.746	3.57
6	All providers of adult education programmes are equal	2.20	.447	2.25	.502	2.50	.516	2.21	.814	2.29
7	Access to information is a means requiring power.	3.00	.707	3.24	.824	3.40	.737	3.08	.949	3.18
8	Access to information heightens sense of dedicating to work.	3.80	.447	3.48	.954	3.60	.507	3.21	1.017	3.52
Grand Means Score /SD		3.25	.807	3.16	.804	3.35	.631	3.25	.766	

Table 1 indicates that coordinators of donor agencies with a grand mean score of 3.35 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.631 have the highest score on uses of information flow on coordination of adult education programmes while the lowest mean score of 3.16 and accompanying SD of 0.804 was scored by the proprietors.

In all the items, the highest mean scores of 4.00, and 3.80 were scored for (information based on superordinate and subordinate relationship) by proprietors, (information not on cooperative endeavour) by instructors, and (access to information heightens sense of dedication to work) by directors respectively. The lowest mean scores of 2.20 with a SD of .449 and 2.21 with accompanying SD of .814 were recorded on “all providers of adult education programmes are equal” by directors and instructors respectively. For coordinators, the lowest X score of 2.50 and a SD of .516 was recorded on “All providers of adult education programmes are equal”.

Based on the attainment of grand means scores of 3.25, 3.16, 3.35 and 3.25 by the directors, proprietors, coordinators and instructors, which are above the criterion mean score of 2.50, it is established that information flow approaches are used for coordination of adult education programmes in all the items listed.

With regards to Hypothesis “There will be no significant differences among the mean ratings of directors, proprietors, coordinators and instructors on the uses of information flow in coordination of adult education programmes”. This hypothesis was tested using ANOVA method. The result is shown below.

Table 2: Analysis of variance on the respondents on the uses of information flow approaches on coordination of adult education programmes

Source	Score of Squares	DF	Means square	F	Significance of P	Remarks
Between groups	.846	3	.282	1.24	.294	Accepted
within groups	88.530	3.90	.227			
Total	89.376	393				

The result of data analysis in table 2 indicates that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of directors of state agencies, proprietors of adult education centres, coordinators of donor agencies and instructors. This is shown by the calculated F of 1.24 which is significant at .294 but not significant at .05 level. The hypothesis is therefore not rejected.

Table 3: Mean ratings on the uses of communication approaches on coordination of adult education programmes.

S/n	ITEMS	Directors		Proprietors		Coordinators		Instruction		Overall
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
9	Mass media support development of adult education programmes	3.00	.71	3.04	.97	2.80	.68	2.56	1.06	2.85
10	We make adequate effort to harness role of mass media	3.60	.55	3.66	.54	2.93	.79	3.23	.94	3.37
11	Media expertise in communication skill is sufficient to support adult education programme development	2.00	.71	2.85	.81	2.13	1.12	2.85	1.01	2.45
12	Media personnels are included in adult education programme development committees	3.40	.68	3.30	.80	3.20	.68	3.01	1.01	3.22
13	Media experts are committed insiders in adult education programme development	3.60	.55	3.40	.51	3.74	.51	3.06	.86	3.45
Grand Means Score /SD		3.90	.80	3.81	.90	2.27	.88	3.67	1.22	

Table 3 indicates that directors with a mean score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of .80 have the highest mean score on the impact of communication approaches on coordination of adult education programmes, while the lowest mean score of 2.77 and accompanying SD of .88 was recorded by coordinators.

In all items, the highest X scores of 3.90 and 3.74 were scored for (media experts are committed insiders in adult education programme development) by directors and coordinators respectively. The lowest X scores of 2.00, 2.13, 2.85 and 2.85 were scored for (media expertise in communication skill is sufficient) by the directors, coordinators, proprietors and instructors respectively. This shows that the media expertise in communication skills to support adult education programmes was insufficient.

Based on the attainment of grand means scores of 3.90, 3.81, 2.77, and 3.67 which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, it is established that communication approaches are used for effective coordination of adult education programmes.

With regards to the Hypothesis "There is no significant differences among the mean ratings of government officials, proprietors of adult education centres, coordinators of donor agencies and instructors on the uses of communication approaches in coordination of adult education programmes, ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis as shown:

Table 4: ANOVA on the respondents ratings on the uses of communication approaches on coordination of adult education programmes

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Means square	F	Significance of P	Remarks
Between groups	2.079	3	1.0393	1.624	.000	Accepted
within groups	466.527	390	1.039			
Total	468.616	393	2.732			

Table 4 indicates that there were no significant differences in the mean ratings of director of state agencies, proprietors of adult education centres, coordinators of donor agencies, and instructors. This is shown by the calculated F of 1.624 which is significant at .000 but not significant at 0.05 levels. The hypothesis is therefore not rejected.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that negative information flow are frequently used in the coordination of adult education programmes in the area as rated by the proprietors, instructors, coordinators and even directors of state agencies of adult and non formal education. This result is supported by Akintayo, (2001) who observed that in developing countries, good and positive information flow are generally lacking in coordinating of adult education programmes. According to him, this has made provision of information on the cost and effectiveness of inputs very difficult coupled with federal domination of information flow. Highly centralized control, can however, create bottlenecks in information and resource flow; and limit the ability of adult learning centres to respond to local needs.

The analyses of the differences among the mean ratings of directors, proprietors coordinator and instructors as it concerns the use of information flow approaches shows that there is no significant differences among the mean ratings of the four groups in hypothesis one. This finding implies that all the respondents share the same opinions on the domination of information flow by ministries.

The study further shows that there is an encouraging communication network in the coordination of adult education programmes. This was revealed by the overwhelming agreement among respondents that mass media support adult education programmes, media personnel are included in adult education programmes committees, efforts are made to harness role of mass media and that media experts are committed insiders in adult education programmes development. This finding is supported by UNESCO (1982) stipulations that in coordinating adult education programmes, the editors and columnists of newspapers and magazines, the writer and artists who prepare comic books and strips, script writers and producers of radio and television programmes, have a very real expertise in communication skills that could, with some efforts, be harnessed in support of literacy and adult education programmes. However the study also shows that media expertise in communication skill is insufficient. This is regrettable as they are mostly needed to serve in committees that are set up to effect coordination, so that they also become committed insiders in the overall literacy and adult education movement.

The analyses of the differences among the mean ratings of the respondents as it concerns uses of communication approaches in coordination of adult education programmes, shows no significant differences among the mean ratings of the respondents. These findings imply that all the four groups of respondents were in agreement on the uses of communication approaches needed for effective coordination of adult education programmes in the South East Zone of Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A lot of resources, both human and material, have been wasted largely due to one sided information flow and poor communication network. The study shows that for proper coordination of adult education programmes, a cooperative, equal and democratic flow of information must be used and maintained among the government, proprietors of adult education centres, coordinators of donor agencies and the instructors. With an interactive information flow approach, proper coordination and realization of adult education programmes goals will be achieved.

One may not loose sight of the problems that may arise from the differences in training of the multi-sectoral personnel in adult education. Such problems may include low education level of most instructors, most directors of state agencies are not trained adult educators etc. these problems can be addressed through an interactive approach to coordination of adult education programmes (Nwizu, 2005).

For proper coordination of adult education programmes, it is therefore recommended that;

- 1) Information flow among the stakeholders should be on equal basis divorced from super ordinate – subordinate relationship. This is important since each stakeholder has something to offer in proper coordination of adult education programmes.

- 2) The government ministries should not impose instructions on the coordinators, proprietors and instructors. This is because all of them are involved in a information and communication exercise that would be mutually beneficial and contribute adequately to the effective coordination of adult education programmes.
- 3) Access to resources should not be a means of requiring power but should heighten the sense of dedication and group achievement goals.
- 4) Proper coordination of adult education programmes survives in an environment of effective communication. In this end more media expertise should be trained to argument the existing few. This is a specialized area that federal mass education commission should take action without delay.

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