



## Facilitators' Professional Qualities as Correlates of Learning Outcomes among Learners of Non-Formal Education (LNE) in Sokoto, Nigeria: Implications for Educational Counselling

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#### ABSTRACT

The importance of facilitators in attainment of learning outcomes in adult and non-formal education centres cannot be over-emphasized. This can only be possible if the facilitators possess the requisites professional qualities. It is on this note that the study examined facilitators' professional qualities as correlates of learning outcomes among LNE in Sokoto, Nigeria and implications for educational counselling. Quantitative research of correlational design was used for this study. The population of this study was 3464 learners (LNE) and 68 Basic Literacy Facilitators in 3 Basic Literacy Centres of the Agency for Mass Education, Sokoto. A sample size of 380 basic literacy learners was proportionately selected while the whole of 68 Basic Literacy facilitators were used. Proforma, Facilitators' Demographic Scale (FDS) and Facilitators Andragogical Competence Scale (FACS) were the instruments used for data collection. The reliability coefficient indexes ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.86 and 0.82 were obtained for the FACS and FDS respectively. Demographic data were presented using frequency and percentages. The null hypotheses were tested with the use of PPMC at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that educational qualification, andragogical competencies and years of experience are very vital to the realization of the learning outcomes of adult and non-formal education learners. The study recommends that opportunities should be given to facilitators to acquire further qualifications and the experienced facilitators should be retained and motivated while on-the job training opportunities in from of seminar, conferences mentorship should be given to facilitators to enhance their andragogical competence.

**Keywords:** Adult & Non-formal Education Learners, Facilitators, Learning Outcome, Professional.

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### I. Introduction

In Nigeria, adult and non-formal education (ANFE) programmes are considered as important integral parts of education system since colonial era. This was done to give adult population and underserved individuals and groups opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and preparation for ever dynamic society. ANFE programmes provide educational services designed to empower adults with the knowledge and skills necessary for personal and

societal advancement. By equipping adults with the requisite education and skills, these programmes contribute to their ability to succeed in a competitive economy and enhance their overall well-being. (Obiozor, Madu & Ibe, 2014). Adult literacy as an important programme of ANFE in developing countries Nigeria inclusive. This is because the issue of high adult illiteracy in Africa and by extension Nigeria must be addressed (Zakari & Yusuf, 2014). And for the purpose of this study basic literacy programme is considered as one of the important programmes of adult and non-formal education. Basic literacy is defined as

programme that is meant to provide skills of reading, writing and numeracy for adults and youths who have no any form of formal education. This programme is usually run for nine or six months.

Literacy education as an important aspect of life, was described by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (<http://uis.unesco.org/node/3079547>) (2023) acquisition of the skills of recognizing, comprehending, analyzing, producing, sharing, and calculating information using written and printed materials across various contexts. It's a lifelong learning process that empowers individuals to reach their full potential, expand their knowledge, and actively engage in their communities and society as a whole. In view of the above explanations, literacy now extends beyond the traditional skills of reading, writing, and critical thinking. The relevance of literacy for the nation is as important as air to life. The need to enlighten citizens is more inevitable than ever as today's world is driven by knowledge and globalization is at the forefront. The main focus of literacy is development, people lead to development, and development is reflected in people. Taiwo and Alakoso (2009) observed that development is more related to the enrichment of human resources and human potential compared to simple structures such as roads, elegant buildings and superstructures. True development comes from the aspect of improving life which is attained through qualitative education in which basic literacy serves as its foundation. In the same vein, the National Policy on Education (2013) in Nigeria emphasizing on the importance of adult literacy makes it to be one of the important objectives of ANFE as the provision of functional literacy and continuing education for the adults and youths.

The attainment of the aforementioned objective lies with the competence of the adult literacy facilitators. Facilitator is a person who helps adults to learn. While referring to Ngwu (2013) Ogu, Osaru and Yahaya (2019) described a facilitator as one who intelligently handles complex learning situations, and simplifies learning for the adult learners. Facilitator is a key factor in running a successful adult education programmes. This is because the quality of facilitators to a large extent determines the success or otherwise of adult literacy programmes. In recognition of this fact, the Nigerian Federal Government's 2013 Education Policy states, the quality of a nation's teachers directly impacts the quality of its education system. This holds true for adult literacy facilitators as well. To effectively support adult learners, facilitators must be experienced, skilled, and competent professionals.

Scholars such as Ufonabasi and Friday (2014), Aina, Olanipekun and Garuba (2015), Alkali (2016), Adeshina (2017), and Agbo-Egwu, Adadu, Nwokolo-ojo and Enaboifo (2017) have recognized teaching qualification as an important factor in determining the quality of facilitators. The minimum qualification required for a teacher in the formal education system is a Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE). This is also applicable for facilitators in ANFE sector. Adeshina (2017) pointed out that many adult education facilitators lack the necessary

specialized training and expertise to effectively teach adult learners. A facilitator's qualification refers to the foundational training they receive to equip them for teaching. Aina et al. (2015) define qualification as a specific skill, experience, or knowledge that makes someone suitable for a particular role. It involves acquiring the relevant knowledge, skills, and creative abilities required for effective teaching. Hence, a teacher's qualification is a specific skill or experience that makes them suitable for teaching (Aina et al., 2015). It can also refer to a teacher's certification. Alkali (2016) emphasizes that facilitators play a crucial role in shaping learner outcomes. Therefore, matters of facilitators in teaching and learning must be taken seriously.

While there is existing research on the link between teacher qualifications and student outcomes, the findings are often inconsistent and difficult to interpret. Oviawe (2020) discovered that teacher quality positively impacts student performance in technical drawing. Similarly, Alufohai (2013) found that teacher certification and relevant degrees are associated with better student attitudes and academic achievement.

Aina et al. (2015) highlight that a facilitator's years of experience significantly influence learner performance. More experienced facilitators tend to produce better outcomes (Aina et al., 2015). Experience fosters a proactive approach to seeking new ideas and challenges, which is crucial for effective teaching (Rice, 2010). Rice (2010) further explains that the impact of experience varies based on the facilitator's education level and subject area. Experience enhances knowledge, skills, and productivity over time. Akinyele (2001) and Commey-Ras (2003), as cited in Etiubon and Benson (2014), suggest that experience improves teaching skills and strengthens the bond between facilitators and learners. Senechal (2010), also referenced in Etiubon and Benson (2014), found a strong positive correlation between facilitator experience and learner achievement, with significant gains occurring early in a facilitator's career and continuing at a slower pace over subsequent years. Experienced facilitators exhibit confidence in their ability to reach even the most challenging learners, while less experienced facilitators may feel overwhelmed by unmotivated learners (Etiubon & Benson, 2014).

The quality of a facilitator is also believed to be determined by his andragogical competence (Ogu, et al., 2019). Competency means the ability of facilitators to perform using various andragogical skills in adult education programmes. Competency is the ability to do something well. So, if a facilitator can show knowledge, skills or attitudes required to ease adult learning in adult education programmes, this shows his/her competence. If a facilitator could not show knowledge, skills or attitudes that are required to help adults learn in adult education programmes, then the individual has a skill gap which shows a lack of competencies (Ogu, et al., 2019). A number of researchers (Bakare, 2011; 2015; Onwuadi, 2014; Yusuf & Zakari, 2015) however provide evidence that adult facilitators' andragogical competence has an effect on both the content and the processes of instruction, thus

influencing both what and how they facilitate. Studies indicated that research efforts have been made to better the competence of adult facilitators' facilitation in Nigeria (Onwuadi, 2014; Yusuf & Zakari, 2015; Ogu, et al., 2019), however, despite these efforts for improvement, the quality of adult facilitators in facilitation of Adult learning in many literacy centers have been called for questioning (Alkali, 2016; Zakari, 2015).

As important as adult literacy education for adults the problems around the quality of facilitators in Non-formal Education centres in Sokoto metropolis has been a thing of concern to adult educators among other stakeholders. Some of the notable challenges facing non-formal learning centres are; non-availability of teaching and learning materials; non review of adult literacy curricula; financial constraint and most importantly scarcity of professional adult facilitators that possess required and relevant educational qualifications; andragogical competence; and requisite years of teaching experiences (Alkali, 2016; Zakari, 2015). These problems have called for concern as the attainment of developmental agenda is partly determined by the level of literacy rate of the state's citizens. In light of the above, it is relevant to look in to the facilitator's professional qualities and how they relate to learners' outcomes in Adult and Non-formal learning centres in Sokoto metropolis.

Facilitating adult learning requires facilitators who possess relevant and required educational qualifications, years of experience, and andragogical competence. It is believed that where facilitators do not possess these qualities the consequences will not be palatable for learning outcome of learners. Experience and observations of the researchers have shown that Adult Literacy programme in Sokoto Metropolis have suffered from learners' low enrolment, high incidence of drop outs and generally, poor teaching and learning outcomes. It is not certain what might have been responsible for these situations. This is the reason the current study examined how facilitators' professional qualities relate to learning outcomes of adult and non-formal education learners in Sokoto Metropolis.

Research questions developed to guide the conduct of the study were that: How facilitators' educational qualification relate to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto? How facilitator's andragogical competence relate to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto? How facilitators' years of experience to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto Metropolis?

This study is first hinged upon facilitation theory by Carl Rogers (1969). The theory is also referred to as facilitative teaching, which is linked to a humanist approach to learning. Rogers (1969) argues that effective learning is not solely dependent on a facilitator's teaching skills, knowledge, curriculum design, or use of technology. Instead, it hinges on the quality of the relationship between the facilitator and the learner. Rogers (1961) further emphasizes that facilitators cannot directly impart knowledge but can only create conditions that support learning.

Rogers (1969) distinguishes between two types of learning: rote learning, which involves mindless memorization, and experiential learning, which is meaningful and personally relevant. Experiential learning stems from curiosity and is often acquired through active participation.

Rogers' theory positions the teacher as a facilitator of learning rather than a knowledge transmitter. This facilitation is achieved through the teacher's attitude and the quality of their relationship with students. Rogers identifies three core conditions essential for effective facilitation: genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding.

Secondly, the study was based on Abraham Maslow's (1943) Motivation Theory, which highlights the positive potential of human beings (Schacter, Gilbert & Wegner, as cited in Aliero, Aliero & Tsagem, 2022). This theory emphasizes how actions are driven by the desire to fulfill specific needs. To effectively motivate adult learners, facilitators should incorporate motivational techniques into their teaching strategies. This can positively reinforce learners, inspiring them to strive for and achieve their learning goals. The theory is crucial in educational counseling as it empowers facilitators to guide learners toward meaningful behavior change, enabling them to reach their learning objectives.

Implication of all of these is that for a facilitator to do the real work of facilitation he/she must possess/show qualities such as relevant qualification, experience, and andragogical competence. How each of these qualities relates to learning outcomes is the question that the study is out to answer. Thus, the researchers hypothesized that:

HO1: Facilitators' educational qualification is not significantly related to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto.

HO2: Facilitator's andragogical competence is not significantly related to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto.

HO3: Facilitators' years of experience is not significantly related to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto.

## **II. Methodology**

This study employed a correlational research design to examine the relationship between facilitators' professional qualities and the learning outcomes of LNE. A correlational study is suitable for investigating the association between two variables without actively controlling extraneous factors (Dalhousie University Psychology and Neuroscience Team, n.d.). The population of this study was 3464 LNE and 68 Basic Literacy Facilitators in 3 Basic Literacy Centres owned by the Agency for Mass Education, Sokoto (Sokoto State Agency for Mass Education, Sokoto, 2022) totaling 3,532. A sample size of 380 basic literacy learners was proportionately sampled while the whole of 68 Basic Literacy facilitators were used. The selection of the basic literacy learners was on the stand of Research Advisors (2006) which signifies that a sample of 380 is sufficient for

a population between 3001 and 4000.

The researchers used three instruments for data collection. The tools were Proforma, Facilitators' Demographic Scale (FDS) and Facilitators Andragogical Competence Scale (FACS). Proforma was used to collect academic performance of Basic Literacy Learners in Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills in 2021/2022 academic session. The scores were used as the learning outcomes of the learners. FDS was used to collect self-reporting data on the demography of facilitators in educational qualifications and years of experience with two items. The FACS has 15 items that were adapted from the Facilitation Assessment Scale by Weyers and Rankin (2007). The FACS has three (3) sections. Section A focuses on knowledge of subject matter, Section B is on facilitators' presentation skills while Section C is on learning process exhibited by facilitators. Each section of the questionnaire contained five items. For instance, Section A included questions like "The facilitator is knowledgeable about the lesson content" and "The facilitator was able to tailor the lesson to the learners' understanding." Section B included items such as "I could easily understand the facilitator's instructions" and "The facilitator encouraged active learner participation." Lastly, Section C included questions like "The facilitator provided a clear overview of the lesson at the beginning" and "The facilitator ensured that learners understood each topic before moving on.". All the items were measured in 4 Likerts scale of Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2) Agree (3) Strongly Agree (4). The face and content validity of FDS and FACS were determined by experts in Adult and Non-formal Education from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The reliability of the FACS and FDS was determined using Cronbach Alpha and coefficient indexes ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.86 and 0.82 were obtained respectively. This proved that the instruments were reliable for the study.

The researchers with the help of trained research assistants administered 68 copies of Facilitators Demographic Scale (FDS) to 68 facilitators in the three centres in Sokoto metropolis. They also took the basic literacy learners through the filling of Andragogical Competence Scale (FACS). It was ensured that all the 380 sampled learners responded to the FACS. The researchers with the support of the facilitators got the academic performance of the 380 basic literacy learners in the prepared Proforma. Demographic data were presented using frequency and percentages. The null hypotheses were tested with the use of PPMC at 0.05 level of significance.

### III. Presentation and Analysis of Results

The following section presented information and data collected in the course of the study. Table 1 provided demographic information about educational qualification and years of working experience of the adult and non-formal education facilitators.

TABLE I  
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Item	Frequency	Percentage
B.Ed/ BSc.Ed/ B.A.Ed	9	13.24
B.A./BSc	7	10.29
NCE	24	35.29
ND	5	7.35
O' Level	23	33.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
1 - 4 Years	4	5.88
5 - 9 Years	21	30.88
10 - 14 Years	19	27.94
15 - 19 Years	13	19.12
20 years and above	11	16.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 1 presents information on the demographic data of the adult literacy facilitators. According to the first part of Table 1, a total of sixty-eight (68) adult education facilitators participated in the study. From the data, it could be observed that 9 (13.24%) of the facilitators possess B.Ed/ BSc.Ed/ B.A.Ed degrees while 7 (10.29) of them possess B.A./B.Sc degrees. The table further revealed that 24 (35.29%) of the facilitators possess Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) and 5 (7.35%) possess National Diploma (ND). Finally, Table 1 reveals that 23 (33.82%) of the facilitators possess O' level qualifications.

The second part of Table 1 has information on the years of working experience of the facilitators. The table reveals that 4 (5.88%) of the facilitators have spent 1 – 4 years in the work and 21 (30.88%) have spent 5 – 9 years as facilitators for adult education. Likewise, Table 1 also reveals that 19 (27.94%) of the facilitators spent 10 – 14 years in the job and another 13 (19.12%) have spent 15 – 19 years as facilitators of adult education learners. Finally, the part reveals that 11 (16.18%) of the facilitators have spent 20 years and more in the job.

HO1: Facilitators' educational qualification is not significantly related to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto.

TABLE II  
FACILITATORS' EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION  
AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Educational Qualification	68	38.90	8.392	.401	.001	H <sub>0</sub> Rejected
Learning Outcome	380	43.95	5.474			

The results in Table 2 indicate a significant positive relationship between facilitators' educational qualifications and learner outcomes ( $r(446) = .401, p < .001$ ). This means that higher levels of facilitator qualification are associated with better learner outcomes. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H01), which stated that there is no significant relationship between facilitator qualifications and learner outcomes, was rejected.

HO2: Facilitator' andragogical competence is not significantly related to learning outcomes of adult basic

literacy learners in Sokoto.

TABLE III  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FACILITATORS' ANDRAGOGICAL  
COMPETENCE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Andragogical Competence	380	36.90	9.399	.236	.000	H <sub>0</sub> Rejected
Learning Outcome	380	43.95	5.474			

The findings in Table 3 reveal a significant positive correlation between facilitators' andragogical competence and learner outcomes ( $r(758) = .236, p < .000$ ). This implies that higher levels of andragogical competence among facilitators are associated with improved learner outcomes. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H02), which posited no significant relationship between facilitator competence and learner outcomes, was rejected.

H03: Facilitators' years of experience is not significantly related to learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in Sokoto.

TABLE IV  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FACILITATORS' YEARS OF EXPERIENCE  
AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Years of Experience	68	40.91	7.041	.431	.000	H <sub>0</sub> Rejected
Learning Outcome	380	43.95	5.474			

The data presented in Table 4 demonstrates a significant positive correlation between facilitators' years of experience and learner outcomes ( $r(446) = .431, p < .000$ ). This implies that more experienced facilitators tend to have learners with better outcomes. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H03), which stated no significant relationship between facilitator experience and learner outcomes, was rejected.

#### IV. Discussion

Based on the results presented and analyzed, it shows that facilitators educational qualification is positively related to learning outcomes of the adult basic literacy learners in the centres, in other words, the educational qualifications of the facilitators play a key role in learners' literacy attainment. Incidentally, this has already been noted as a factor for success where it has been observed that facilitating adult learning requires facilitators who possess relevant and required educational qualifications. Furthermore, Alkali (2016) and Zakari (2015) noted that scarcity of professional adult facilitators that possess required and relevant educational qualifications was one of the most important factors for success in adult basic literacy centres. Likewise, studies such as that of Oviawe (2020), Ufonabasi and Friday (2014), Aina, Olanipekun and Garuba (2015), Alkali (2016), Adeshina (2017), Agbo-Egwu, Adadu, Nwokolo-ojo and Enaboifo (2017) and Alufohai (2013) have recognized teaching qualification as an important factor in determining the quality of facilitators. Thus, it is imperative that facilitators with the required qualifications should be given the job in such adult basic literacy centres and be encouraged to provide

their best. This is in order to avoid the observation by Adeshina (2017) that many of the adult facilitators are not specialists, professionally trained, or competent enough in facilitating an adult learning class.

The result also revealed that there is significant relationship between facilitators' andragogical competence and learning outcomes of adult basic literacy learners in the centres. In essence, this indicates that the facilitators' competency in his/her knowledge, skills and attitudes to ease adult learning is vital for the attainment of literacy success for the learners. This could well be the reason why Ogu, et al. (2019) maintained that the quality of a facilitator is also believed to be determined by his andragogical competence. To buttress this, studies like that of Bakare (2011, 2015), Onwuadi (2014), and Yusuf and Zakari (2015) provided that adult facilitators' andragogical competence has an effect on both the content and the processes of instruction, thus influencing both what and how they facilitate. Because of the apparent importance of this competence, it would benefit all to improve upon that though studies indicated that research efforts have been made to improve the quality of adult facilitators' teaching in Nigeria (Onwuadi, 2014; Yusuf & Zakari, 2015; Ogu, et al., 2019).

The results definitively establish a significant relationship between facilitators' years of experience and learner outcomes. This highlights the importance of fostering a continuous learning mindset among facilitators, encouraging them to seek out new ideas, challenges, and commitments to enhance learner achievement over time. Senechal (2010), as cited in Etiubon and Benson (2014), underscores the significant positive impact of facilitator experience on learner outcomes, with substantial gains occurring in the early years and continuing at a slower pace thereafter. Experienced facilitators exhibit confidence in their ability to reach even the most challenging learners, while less experienced facilitators may feel overwhelmed by unmotivated learners (Etiubon & Benson, 2014).

To maximize learner outcomes, authorities should prioritize retaining experienced facilitators, as they are a key determinant of learner performance (Aina et al., 2015). Additionally, experience enhances knowledge, skills, and productivity (Rice, 2010). Akinyele (2001) and Commey-Ras (2003), as cited in Etiubon and Benson (2014), further emphasize that experience improves teaching skills and strengthens the learner-facilitator relationship.

#### V. Conclusion

The study was able to contribute that educational qualification, andragogical competencies and years of experience are very vital to the realization of the objectives of adult basic literacy programme in the area of study. It also proves that for the adequate achievement of the aims of the programme, there is the need to put into consideration those aspects as they pertain to the requirements with which the facilitators could adequately provide the much desired services. Conclusively, the authorities concerned should ensure provision of the much-needed learning environments and particularly enticing conditions of service for the facilitators.

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