

INFLUENCE OF ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION ON WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Women are mostly denied access to western education as they are believed to be another man's property and this usually affect their participation in politics in Ilorin Metropolis. Thus, this necessitated the study. The total population of the study comprised of Four hundred and fifty adult learners in the literacy education centers in Ilorin Metropolis. The sample size of the study comprised of two hundred adult learners Adult Literacy and Women Political Participation Instrument (ALWPPI) was used for data collection. The experts in the field of Adult Education, University of Ilorin, validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established with test retest method yielding a value of 0.86. ANOVA and t-test was used to analyse the hypotheses raised in the study. The result showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin Metropolis based on age ($F_{(2,197)} = 1.667, p > 0.05$). There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on marital status ($t_{(197)} = 1.714, p > 0.05$). There was no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on occupational status ($F_{(2,197)} = 1.352, p > 0.05$). It was recommended that Government should ensure that basic literacy education that help an individual to read and write should be directed towards the women as this will enhance their participation in the political activities of their respective places.

Keywords: Adult education, Basic literacy, Functional literacy and Political participation

Introduction

Nigerian women have been faced with numerous constraints, militating against them in the political arena, beaming from the first republic, though the fourth republic has been seen as a new dawn for women participation politics as it has more women in government both elective and positions of appointments. In political circle and public governance, the percentage of Nigerian women elected to public offices are not encouraging when compared with some developed countries where the political system are favourable to women aspirations into public offices without any harassment or

intimidation. Agbalajobi (2019) asserted that the involvement of women participation in electioneering process are at lower ebb despite the facts that there are many Nigerian women who highly educated and possesses the needed requirements to vie for any political offices but unfortunately. The researches carried out by Duflo, 2001; Egbo (2019) proved that many women decided to fortifies their inalienable rights to seek for political offices because, the nature of electioneering process has been characterized with intimidation ,harassment, monetization and violence which are not favorable to them.

Adult education is very relevant and is a strategy for empowering women towards contributing to the development of their communities through its myriads of programmes designed to improve the capacity of women in all aspect of life. According to Ugwu & Mbalisi (2016), adult education refers to all forms of learning and empowerment programmes in which adult men and women participate in order to develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical or professional qualifications to enable them meet their needs and those of their communities. Adult education according to Ihejirika (2015), promote learning in women and encourage mutual, respect and cooperative activities that ensure social and economic emancipation of individuals or communities concerned.

Adults are individual that are decision makers whose decisions and actions, affect the environment while Eheazu (2016) conceptualise an adult to be an individual who actively engage in productive activities for social, economic development in the country. Oyebamiji (2012) identified the following as universally qualitative and quantitative characteristics of an adult; chronological characteristics, psychological characteristics, biological characteristics, mental characteristics, social characteristics, political characteristics and educational characteristic.

The scope of adult education is as broad as life. Nzeneri (2012) emphasised that adult education is an integral part of lifelong education which contributes to economic, cultural, educational and social development of any nation, community or rural area. Adult education is however perceived to be a response to the educational needs of men and women through lifelong educational process that includes functional, vocational, civic, social, cultural, professional and recreational education for adults. Nzeneri (2012) perceived adult education as all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varying interests and requirements of their differing levels of comprehension ability and in their changing roles and responsibilities throughout life.

According to Akamare (2013) political participation is an aspect of political behaviour and it focuses on the way in which individuals take part in politics. It is a voluntary activity and one may participate directly or indirectly. The various ways by which the people can be involved in the political system include selection or election of political leaders, formulation of policies, community activities and other civic engagements. According to Arowowo & Aluko (2016), the essence of political participation in any society, either civilised or primitive, is to seek control of power, acquisition of power and to influence decision making. Political participation is a means of contributing ones quota to the political system and overall development of the nation, political participation is one of the fundamental requirements of democratic governance. This is the reason why Adelekan (2019) emphasized that ideally, democracy means individual participation in the decisions that involves one's life. In a democratic system, there is the necessity for the citizenry to be fully involved in the democratic procedures of the choice of rulers and effective communication of the public policies and attitudes. Any claim to democratic regime or state must essentially embrace a high degree of competitive choice, openness, and enjoyment of civic and political liberties and political participation that involves all groups of the society (Arowolo and Aluko, 2016).

The extents to which people participate in the political system differ from person to person. Falade (2018) identified six types of political participants. These are: The inactive which refers to people that take no part in any .political activity; Voting specialists are the people that get eagerly engaged only in voting. Besides voting, they are not concerned about other political activities. Parochial participants: These people participate in politics occasionally. They vote or get involved in any other political activity only when it affects their personal interest. The communalist: These are those who get engaged in voting regularly, they also get involved in community affairs but they are not involved in political campaign activities. The campaigners: They are actively involved in political campaign but inactive in other community affairs. Complete activists: They are highly involved in all political activities. They actively participate in voting, political campaign, community activities and make contact with public officials. Some of the factors that determine political participation are: cultural, economic, political, religious and educational backgrounds of individuals. Also, the level of political awareness as well as the measure of confidence in the political process determines the extent to which the citizens participate in the political system.

Literacy has been defined in a number of ways by diverse scholars and practitioners in education and development fields. UNESCO (2010) submitted that Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. Basic literacy has been popularly defined as form of abilities to read, write, and do basic arithmetic or numeracy. Women who constitute a large proportion of the nation's population have important role to play in politics and nation building. Egbo (2019) pointed out that a large proportion of these women are illiterate and consequently, their level of participation is low when compared with the participation of men. In addition, cultural values which emphasise women's primary roles as wives and home makers are psychological barriers to women.

In recent times, nations of the world have witnessed increased discussions and debates on gender issues with emphasis on women liberation, emancipation, empowerment, protection of women rights, and women participation in politics among others. In order to ensure women development in modern democracies, governments, world organisations and various stakeholders at different levels have made declarations that are supposed to be binding on member States among which include the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, which prohibit all forms of discriminations based on sex and ensure the right to life, liberty and security (UNDP, 2005).

Generally, women have been relegated to the background and are often seen as second-class citizens which are almost the height of gender discrimination in the world. Reducing the female gender to reproductive stooge, child bearing and upbringing, will create a space for exclusion from decision making processes in political matters even as it will neither allow them take up official appointments nor enable them appear in public places or functions of trust and authority in the state and the nation at large. Women are mostly denied access to western education as they are believed to be another man's property. In Ilorin East, most parents out of ignorance and sheer illiteracy pay much attention to the training and education (formal or non-formal) of the male child, while the girl child happens to be victim of all kinds of prevalent antiquities fashioned as norms, values, attitudes, standards, belief, and traditions as experienced in the study area which are opposing to the tenets of adult education.

The findings made from this study will be of immense contributions to government, women, the community and the nation at large. The study will assist the government to know the impact of

adult education on the political participation of women as well as the importance and significance of women in politics. Women will benefit from the findings of this study as it will enable them to know how paramount politics is in the society and the benefits of political participation, how adult education programmes such as basic literacy and functional literacy programme can be a wheel towards their effective participation in politics which is their franchise right as a citizen of the country wherein they will be able to participate actively in politics notwithstanding the cultural, societal, religious and political barrier facing political participation of women in their community and the nation at large. Lastly, the findings of this study will thereby contribute to the political development of the community and the nation at large through effective participation of women in politics which will bring about more capable and intellectual minds in government, promoting citizen's participation in politics and getting rid of political apathy amongst women.

The study hung on empowerment theory which was developed by Batliwala in 1994 and the theory was further expanded by Stromquist in 1995. The core assumption of Stromquist model was that cognitive, psychological, political, and economic components of empowerment are needed to advance the status of women and increase their participation in developmental processes. This empowerment theory was chosen because it applies to areas of communities where denial of right due to patriarchal ideology and values are inherent. Ilorin Metropolis are known for its culture of patriarchy which has resulted in denial of women's rights in many respects. Women's access to both material and non-material resources are limited. Women therefore need cognitive, psychological, political, and economic empowerment to advance their status and contribute meaningfully to the development of their community and the society at large.

Batliwala, in her own perspective outlined three approaches to empowerment which include integrated development, economic empowerment, and awakening critical consciousness. The integrated approach proceeds by forming women's organisations and coalitions among women that engage in developmental activities and tackle social problems such as inequality, child marriage, violence against women, and other factors limiting women's potentials, using healthy programmes. The economic empowerment approach attributes women's subordination to lack of economic power. This approach focuses on improving women's control over material resources. This is done through organising women for savings and exposure to credit facilities, income generating, and skill training activities to give them some degree of independence. The third approach is rising of consciousness

which argues that women's empowerment requires awareness of complex factors causing women's subordination. This is accomplished through education and other awareness programmes.

The objectives of this study are to: examine the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East; investigate the difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on age; ascertain the difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on marital status; determine the difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East, based on occupational status.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East?

Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on age.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on marital status.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on occupational status.

Research Methodology

Descriptive Survey Research design was adopted for this study. This design was selected because the study aims to identify the influence of adult education on women political participation. Two hundred adult learners were selected through simple random sampling technique. The total population of the study comprised of four hundred and fifty adult learners in the literacy education centers in Ilorin Metropolis. The research instrument used for the study was tagged Adult Literacy and Women Political Participation Instrument (ALWPPI). The instrument was divided into two sections, the first section comprised of the information on the demographic variables of the participants while the second section comprised of the information on the influence of adult literacy education on women political participation. The experts in the field of Adult Education, University of Ilorin, validated the instrument. Test re-test was conducted in Ilorin South where fifty research instruments were given to fifty adult learners in the selected local government. The data obtained were analyzed with Prime Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), the value obtained was 0.84. The research question was analyzed with descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while ANOVA and t-test was used to analyze the hypotheses raised in the study.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East?

Table 1: *Perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East, Kwara State, Nigeria.*

SN	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1	Basic literacy programme help me to confidently vote during election	3.71	1.26	Perceived
2	I can now read what is written on ballot papers as result of basic literacy	3.56	1.11	Perceived
3	I can now communicate with people now than ever before in political meetings as a result of basic literacy	3.43	0.69	Perceived
4	Basic literacy has improved my fluency in English language, which is the communication medium during elections	3.37	1.31	Perceived
5	Adult learning has improved my competency in performing any political role.	3.34	0.71	Perceived
6	Basic literacy has enabled me to write my name during voters registration	2.63	0.94	Perceived
7	Functional literacy has enabled me to achieve my immediate needs to contest in elections	2.57	1.03	Perceived
8	Functional literacy has equipped me with partial skills to vote for the party of my choice	3.02	0.89	Perceived
9	Functional literacy has enabled me to gain wage employment to sponsor a candidate of my choice	2.76	1.14	Perceived
10	Functional literacy has created political awareness in me.	2.53	1.12	Perceived
11	Functional literacy has enabled me to become conscious of my right to participate in elections	3.02	0.86	Perceived
12	I can now confidently participate in political campaigns as a result of women education	2.94	1.08	Perceived
13	Women education has improved my political awareness	2.91	1.19	Perceived
14	I can now compete for electoral position with my male counterpart as a result of women education	2.83	1.07	Perceived
15	Women education has enhanced my will and capacity for leadership	2.52	0.93	Perceived

As revealed in Table 1, the mean score of all the items are above 2.50. This implies that the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin Metropolis is positive as basic literacy programme helps women to confidently vote during election; women can

now read what is written on ballot papers as a result of basic literacy; women can now communicate with people now than ever before in political meetings as a result of basic literacy; basic literacy has improved women’s fluency in English-language, which is the communication medium during elections; adult learning has improved women competency in performing any political role; basic literacy has enabled women to write during voters registration; functional literacy has enabled women to achieve my immediate needs to contest in elections and equipped women with partial skills to vote for the party of their choice as well as enabled them to gain wage employment to sponsor a candidate of their choice. This has also created political awareness in them, enabled them to become conscious of their rights to participate in elections. As a result, women confidently participate in political campaigns as a result of women education, improved their political awareness; can now compete for electoral position with my male counterpart as a result of women education and enhanced their will and capacity for leadership.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin Metropolis based on age.

Table 2: ANOVA summary of the difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin Metropolis based on age.

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	331.248	2	165.624			
Within Groups	19584.345	197	99.413	1.667	0.71	NS
Total	19815.593	199				

*Significance at $p > 0.05$

As shown in Table 3, the F-value of 1.667 with a p-value of 0.71 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.71 obtained is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis one is retained. This thus implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin Metropolis based on age ($F_{\{2, 197\}} = 1.667, p > 0.05$).

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on marital status.

Table 3: *t-test Statistics showing the difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on marital status*

Marital Status	No	Mean	S. D.	Df	t-value	Sig.	Remark
Single	54	16.821	3.409	197	1.714	0.122	NS
Married	146	17.975	3.454				

*Insignificance at $p > 0.05$

Table 3 shows that the t-value 1.714 is obtained with a p-value of 0.122 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.122 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis two is retained. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on marital status ($t_{\{197\}} = 1.714, p > 0.05$).

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on occupational status.

Table 4: *ANOVA Summary of the difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin Metropolis based on occupational status.*

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	272.645	2	136.323			
Within Groups	19856.465	197	100.794	1.352	0.22	NS
Total	18329.110	199				

*Insignificance at $p > 0.05$

As shown in Table 5, the F-value of 1.352 with a p-value of 0.22 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.22 obtained is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis three is retained. This thus implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on occupational status ($F_{\{2, 197\}} = 1.352, p > 0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study revealed that the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East is positive as basic literacy programme help women to confidently vote during election; women can now read what is written on ballot papers as result of basic literacy; women can now communicate with people now than ever before in political meetings as a result of basic literacy; basic literacy has improved women's fluency in English language, which is the communication medium during elections; adult learning has improved women competency in performing any political role; basic literacy has enabled women to write during voters registration; functional literacy has enabled women to achieve my immediate needs to contest in elections and equipped women with partial skills to vote for the party of their choice as well as enabled them to gain wage employment to sponsor a candidate of their choice. This has also created political awareness in them, enabled them to become conscious of their rights to participate in elections. As a result, women confidently participate in political campaigns as a result of women education, improved their political awareness; can now compete for electoral position with my male counterpart as a result of women education and enhanced their will and capacity for leadership. Also, Agbalajobi (2019) argued that development cannot take place without education especially basic literacy. They maintained that development requires an educated and enlightened populace. This view was stressed by Aderinoye (2004), quoted in Adekola & Abanum (2010) that the difference between the developed and underdeveloped countries of the world is related to the level of literacy among the populace. A citizenry that can grasp what is happening in the global world and use that to better their society would contribute more meaningfully to the process of development than an illiterate who is ignorant of happenings in the global society. Literacy is a foundation on which education is built.

Findings of this study indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on age. This shows that women regardless of their age difference believed that adult education positively influenced their political participation. This finding negates the study of Chattopadhyay & Duflo (2001) whose results showed that of women varying ages women political participation is enhanced through adult education programme. Adult education makes women to exercise their right to political participation to influence public affairs without any discrimination, to seek decisions collectively and to choose

their own representative organisations, to vote and be voted in elections, to exercise political powers such as legislative executive, judiciary and all other public administrative powers and to influence the formulation and implementation of policy at international, national, regional and local levels and have freedom of democratic action, free interference.

Findings of this study showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on marital status. This implies that both single and married women were of similar opinion on the positive influence of adult education on their political participation in the studied area. This outcome corroborates Egbo (2019) who reported that literate women in Nigeria for example, reported confident enough to participate in community meetings unlike illiterate women. There is a wide variation between countries, however, in the relationship between women's education levels and their representation in formal politics, and their participation in other political activity. The United States, which outranks other industrialised democracies in terms of the numbers of women in higher education (and in the work force, and in professional positions), has seen persistently low numbers of women in formal politics, reaching an all-time high of just 14.3% of Congress in 2002 (Center for Voting and Democracy, 2003). Uganda, Rwanda, and Mozambique, among the poorest countries in the world with female adult literacy levels of just 41, 60.2 and 28.7 percent respectively, have parliaments in which between 25 to 30 percent of legislators are women. This contrast suggests that the connection between education and engagement in formal representative politics is not directly observable, and invites us to explore the nature of the relationship between women's education and political participation.

In the same vein, findings from this study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived influence of adult education on political participation of women in Ilorin East based on occupational status. This is in line with Kenworthy & Malami, (2019) who revealed in their recent cross-national study that the number of national women's political organizations was unrelated to gender inequality in political representation. This is an indication of a pattern that appears in other studies of women's political participation: the longer women have had access to the political sphere, the greater are the numbers of women in politics – this suggests a role model effect that encourages women to enter political activity, as well as a cultural effect whereby the political sphere becomes less hostile to women the longer it is exposed to them.

Conclusion

Based on the findings obtained from this study, it could be concluded that adult education has tremendously influenced women participation in politics as it allows women to write during voters registration; functional literacy has enabled women to achieve their immediate needs to contest in elections and equipped women with partial skills to vote for the party of their choice. It could also be concluded that both single and married women regardless of their age and occupational status hold positive perception of the influence of adult education on their participation in politics.

Recommendations

With respect to the findings from this study, the following recommendations are proffered;

1. Government should ensure that basic literacy programmes that help an individual to read and write should be directed towards the women as this will help them participate in political activities of their respective places given basic education required to enable them participate in development process.
2. Women should acquire through adequate provision of free basic education proper awareness of their potentials, rights and higher responsibilities in society.
3. Women should always harness the benefits of adult education programme by enrolling themselves to foster their political activism among themselves for the betterment of democracy and national development.
4. Political parties should actively engage their female illiterate members in adult education programme to promote active participation of women in politics.
5. Organizations supporting women should consider organizing trainings and workshops in line with adult education classes in such a way to sensitize women on the need to participate in political activities

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