

## Curriculum innovation in Adult Education for Teacher Adult Education

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**ABSTRACT**

This study focused on curriculum innovation in adult education with emphasis on teacher education. It x-rayed how the gains of participation in adult education by men and women (alone, in groups, or in institutional settings) can be deepened through need-specific curricula and qualitative repackaging of adult teachers/ facilitators in terms of methods and skill sets demanded in facilitating Adult Education programmes. It drew attention to the prospects of tangible benefits to Adult learners and their society when investments are targeted at enriching the curriculum of adult education programmes with problem solving contents as well as equipping Adult teachers/facilitators with the proper theories and approaches necessary to help adult learners achieve their educational goals. The total learning experience provided by adult education; which includes the content of courses (the syllabus), the methods employed (strategies), and other aspects, like norms and values were discussed. It was revealed that the sum total of the policies, guidelines and procedures that are aimed at helping prospective teachers with the necessary skills to excel in their careers are the hallmark of teacher education.

**Keywords:** curriculum, innovation, curriculum innovation, adult education, teacher education.

## Introduction

Innovation is important to improve quality, access and equity in a cost effective manner. Innovation is seen as something novel and/or improved in its context, sector or to the world (Edna, 2008). In search of ways to promote innovation in the education system, the curriculum holds an outstanding place by reflecting the vision of its designers for education. Curriculum documents tend to reflect the development and the cultural heritage of a society. They may also address problems needing educational responses or aim to increase the relevance of education to the world of work and adult life (Libbert, 2008).

Curriculum is a systematic and intended packaging of competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes that

are underpinned by values) that learners should acquire through organized learning experiences both in formal and non-formal settings.(UNESCO 2020) Curriculum innovation can take a form of completely new subjects or combine old subjects with new ones. They can include, for example, new content, concepts, sequencing and time allocation within or across already existing subjects. Curriculum innovations can even translate to new and improved ways of teaching students. New curriculum can be introduced within the existing school system. This paper is aimed at discussing the rationale for curriculum innovation in adult education with emphasis on teacher education in Nigeria. It aims at discussing the elements of curriculum innovation in adult education with respect to teacher education. It

also focuses on the contents of curriculum innovation in adult education for teacher education.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Curriculum**

Curriculum has numerous definitions, which can be slightly confusing. In its broadest sense, the word is used to refer to all courses offered at a school. Curriculum according to Ark (2017) typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning.

Similarly, Mizan (2022) points out that the curriculum serves as a primary guide for all educators in terms of what is required for effective teaching and learning, ensuring that every student has access to challenging academic experiences. A curriculum's structure, organization, and concerns are designed to help students learn more effectively and efficiently.

Curriculum may also refer to a defined and prescribed course of studies, which students must fulfill in order to pass a certain level of education (White, 2008). What is central to these definitions is that every curriculum contains the contents of an academic programme, usually directed at meeting the educational objective, regardless of the level of education. It is therefore a critical aspect of every educational programme.

#### **Innovation**

Innovation is the application of new solutions that meet new requirements. According to Innolytics (2020) Innovation is a process by which a domain, a product, or a service is renewed and brought up to date by applying new processes, introducing new techniques, or establishing successful ideas to create new value. The term innovation can also be defined as something original and new that "breaks into" the market or into society (Austine, 2009). Innovation is usually associated with new phenomena that are important in some way.

Innovation in education is about more than new technology. It's about solving a real problem in a

fresh, simple way to promote equity and improve learning (UNICEF 2022).

#### **Adult Education**

Adult education is one of the most misunderstood concepts, particularly in developing countries. It is often perceived as a programme for old people or older adults who missed the opportunity of acquiring elementary school. While people in this category are catered to in the broad range of adult education programmes, limiting ones understanding exclusively to this aspect will be skewed. Strohschen (2014) is of the view that Adult Education is part of extension education which is aimed at educating adults including educating at work place. Other learning places include, trade centers, technical colleges and universities, libraries, and lifelong learning centers. The practice is also often referred to as "Training and Development" and is often associated with workforce or professional development (Ramas, 2004).

However ISECD(2011) aptly captures a wider definition of adult education made popular by UNESCO as Education specifically targeting individuals who are regarded as adults by the society to which they belong to improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge with the purpose to complete a level of formal education, or to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies in a new field or to refresh or update their knowledge in a particular field. This also includes what may be referred to as 'continuing education', 'recurrent education' or 'second chance education'.

Adult education in Nigeria is presently geared towards national development. The objective of the processes of adult education and national development is to get the adults, either as individuals or as a group, to learn and through learning to change their attitudes and behaviour. According to (Mark, 2002), the policy on education states the objectives of adult education as:

1. To provide functional literacy education for adults who have never had the opportunity of any formal education.

2. To provide functional and remedial education for those young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system.

3. To provide further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.

4. To provide in-service and on-the-job vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.

5. To give the adult citizens of the country aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment.

According to Stephens (2021) Adult Education assumes that adult learners are autonomous, intrinsically motivated and goal-oriented, and that they have gathered some previous experience. Based on the theory of andragogy, adult learners may also have external responsibilities and situations that impact the learning process be it a job, family commitments, or both. Finally, adult learners are normally studying out of choice, so you can reasonably assume that intrinsic motivation is high.

The curriculum development of formal school is goal oriented while that of adult education is need oriented. Therefore, curriculum development in Adult Education in general and Adult Literacy in particular is a diligent activity. It is not something that can be done haphazardly. This is because the curriculum encompasses the learning needs of the adult learners and constitutes a factor in motivation to the adult learners. The curriculum for adult education programmes must therefore be seen by the adult learners as capable of solving their immediate problems.

A curriculum will be suitable and acceptable to the adult learners to the extent to which it actually meets their needs and aspirations.

### **Teacher Education**

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip potential teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behavior and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community (Ham, 2003). According to Taylor (2022) teacher education

is any of the formal programmes that have been established for the preparation of teachers at the elementary- and secondary-school levels. Teacher education is also the process of providing teachers and potential teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach effectively in a classroom environment. Most teacher education starts with initial training such as a degree program at a college or university, though other paths are available for a candidate to begin teacher education (Dan, 2004). Once a teacher has completed a degree program, and he or she has obtained certification, a teacher may continue his or her education while teaching full-time. The continuing education may be in form of in-service training or part-time / holiday programme.

A teacher must complete some sort of teacher education before becoming a full-time teacher. In most cases, a teaching candidate will enroll in a teacher training program at a college or university, thus allowing them the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in education (Anderson, 2002). A student may then choose to continue his or her teacher education by obtaining a master's degree, PhD. or professional certificate. Once a bachelor's degree is completed, however, a teacher may instead choose to take the necessary exams for certification and begin teaching immediately (Dan, 2004). Most schools require that a teacher works full-time to fulfill other educational requirements as he or she teaches; this often involves earning a master's degree in education or other fields that will improve the teacher's knowledge, skills, and techniques for delivering instruction in the classroom. For instance, if a teacher has no education qualification, he/she is required to undergo training in education field to obtain a post graduate diploma in education to enable him work as a professional. According to Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adodeyin (2015) , a coherent teacher education programme should systematically embrace integrated curriculum innovations which reflect the social, economic and political environment of a modern society to solve societal problems.

### **Curriculum Innovation**

Literally, curriculum innovation means "new curriculum" or "new courses", in the context of a change that has not been attempted before. For

teachers, curriculum innovation would mean developing new ways to teach a subject. For example, trying a new (for the teacher) technique of teaching students a difficult subject by expressing concepts in terms of other subjects that the students enjoy, or better understand, would be an application of curriculum innovation (Oscar, 2008). For school administrators, curriculum innovation would more likely refer to a radical change in what subjects are taught, or how different subjects are organized into different classes. One example of curriculum innovation of this type would be the combination of two related courses into a single class (at tertiary institution, there was an honors class that combined English with history/social studies) (Oscar, 2008). For students, curriculum innovation might refer to new methods of studying, but it is more likely to mean one of the above concepts being imposed upon them.

Many innovations have taken place in adult education curriculum in Nigeria over the past few decades (Okolo, 2001). These innovations have been inspired by the continuing necessity to update both subject matter and teaching methods, as well as by recurring innovations in the education system. However, as Cai and Kosaka (2019) rightly pointed out, the lack of highquality curriculum for older learners is still one of the key obstacles hindering the development of Older Adult Education.

### **Rationale for Curriculum Innovation in Adult Education for Teacher Education in Nigeria.**

The need for the education and training of adult educators lies in the fact that the teachers of adult students have not been adequately prepared in adult education. According to Adeyemo (2013) there are a lot of challenges facing adult education in Nigeria making it difficult to implement programmes that promote sustainable development. making it difficult for good quality education that is empowering and capable of bringing about sustainable development it difficult for good quality education that is empowering and capable of bringing about sustainable development quality education that is empowering and capable of bringing about sustainable development to be prove

The instruction teachers receive in colleges and universities prepares them to teach children or

adolescents but not to teach adults. In discussing this situation, Rivero (2006) observes as well that, in traditional forms of adult education such as basic education, in the vast majority of countries the teachers have been trained to work with children, and they take on jobs in evening or night schools for adults for economic reasons, while their principal activity continues to be teaching children or young people. The immense majority of adult education teachers are prepared either in elementary or secondary education. Also emphasis in curriculum development tends to alienate adult education or Androgogical practice in favour of pedagogical progression. The leaning towards pedagogical preferences can be observed in the definition of curriculum innovation by scholars even in the developed learning societies. For instance Shernett (2022) is of the view that curricular innovation is a managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters. It occurs when changes in teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values constitute the core dimensions of teaching and learning. These skewed positions have left a gap in the methodology of Adult Education practice. Consequently, the methods and techniques employed by teachers are those they learned in their preparation as elementary or secondary teachers.

According to Dorgu (2020) Innovations should be inspired by necessity to update the content and teaching methods in the country's educational system. It should be stated that in this educational system; educational goals, teaching materials and technological relevance in every subject differ over time as a result of the country's technological advancement.

Nevertheless, one of the major problems which adult education as a discipline experiences is that many individuals including the educated tend to believe that any and every person who can read and write can teach adult learners successfully. By deduction too, people tend to believe that every educator can prepare and mount a successful adult education programme. Perhaps, this wrong conception has been built up and reinforced that for many decades, adult education in



the formal setting, either as Adult literacy programmes or Adult education programmes have been provided, taught and supervised by non professionals in many places. To such non expert/professional adult educators, adult education has no theories, principles and methods distinct to the discipline. The challenge of liThis is also wrong because adult education had come of age and has such attributes that make it distinct. It is on account of this that Adults are voluntary learners. They are also busy individuals. These characteristics can militate against meaningful efforts at learning especially in the form of learning in the formal setting. Therefore, any individual who has to be involved in providing education for adults especially in the formal setting must be exposed to the major psychological theories that have implications for adult learning. A good knowledge of these will help the individual to know how to provide education to the adults in a way that it will be meaningful and acceptable to them. There is a clear difference also between adult education and formal schooling both in curriculum and organization. According to Azemovska (2019) the inclusion of the persons and their families in the programme of this type represents not only a supplement to the educational component in a society, but it also has a wider social meaning. This Programme for adult education contributes to potential improvement of the educational and socio-economic status for every participant, but as well, by gaining basic skills and competences, they become more competitive on the labor market.

The first step in curriculum development in Adult Literacy is to identify a target group which the adult educator wants to serve.

It is important that an adult educator works with a homogeneous group. This is so because a homogeneous group will likely have similar background, similar problems, similar needs and similar aspirations. An adult educator can get his target group from the social roles which adults perform namely citizen, worker, use of leisure, religious affiliate, mate, parent, friend, organization members, etc. Needs assessment can be done by interviewing the adults.

The actual curriculum development is a multi-disciplinary activity. It involves experts from different fields of human endeavor which have to do with the needs of adults.

This is acceptable because the adult learners require knowledge that will span across the nation, the state and the local levels. The curriculum must also be diversified in order to cover the different needs of the adult learners. Of course after the curriculum is put in order, the topics there in will be reduced into primers for the adult learners.

In this respect, Libbert (2008) points out the following: Most adult educators working in the field of Adult Basic Education are trained as elementary and/or secondary education teachers. Without staff development, the principles and techniques they would most likely use in the classroom are the ones they learned in their training as educators of children (p. 8). Although Libbert (2008) refers to staff development in his comment, the need for a curriculum innovation that prepares educators of adults can be inferred. This curriculum innovation would provide adult educators the principles, methods, and techniques necessary to teach adult students. Rurley (2005) suggests that "the preservice in-service training for instructional staff must be mindful of the characteristics unique to adult learners and reflect such both in the methodology and materials used to facilitate their learning process".

Rurley coincides with Rothwell and Kazanas (2009) who suggest that in conducting training or staff development activities, it is necessary to consider the characteristics of the trainees or of the learners which implies considering the unique characteristics of the adult learners. The need for teaching adult students employing an andragogical approach is also supported by McFarland (2005) who observes that "the many notions associated with andragogy must be employed to meet the needs of returning adult learners; teaching from a pedagogical perspective is simply not appropriate for adults". The implication for a teacher education curriculum to prepare teachers of adult students seems to be that this curriculum should be developed from an andragogical perspective. Hansford (2003) reviews some basic concepts in the area of adult education. One of the

areas Hansford discusses is the teaching of adults. In this respect, she observes that "The techniques of pedagogy which stress the teaching of immature by the mature, the enlightenment of the unknowing by experts, and the content centered syllabus presented in a teacher centered environment are totally inappropriate for adult learners" (p.4). Hanfords observation is supported by Seaman and Felling (2009) who recommend that adult students should be taught with techniques designed for adults because of the uniqueness of adult learning. This observation reinforces the need for curriculum innovation in adult education with relevance in Teacher Education.

### **Elements of Curriculum Innovation**

Curriculum Innovation must portray a deliberate effort to provide tangible benefits to any recipient of a structured education programme irrespective, of the level. According to Pratt (2004) planning a curriculum innovation does not follow a fixed sequence in terms of curriculum elements, but at some point the intention of the curriculum innovation must be made clear. There should be an overall aim to establish the purpose of the curriculum innovation. The curriculum innovation should also include a rationale that justifies the commitment of resources to the pursuit of the aim. Specific objectives that guide actual instructional decisions are an integral part of the curriculum innovation. Herrscher (2002), states that any curriculum innovation should include some basic elements. These are (a) philosophy statement, (b) rationale, (c) content, (d) learning outcome statements, (e) learning activities, (f) assessment of competency attainment, and (g) learning environment. These seven elements must be in concert with one another for the curriculum innovation to have integrity and alignment.

The philosophy statement presents a philosophical position for the programme and relates it to the institutional mission. The rationale builds a case for the importance of the content for the learner. The content defines the parameters of the material to be covered in the program. The learning outcome statements detail the cognitive, affective, and/or psychomotor learning outcomes the program is designed to help learners attain. The learning activities specify the appropriate facilities of learning,

including instructional resources and media. The assessment of competency attainment outlines procedures to be used in documenting competency attainment. The learning environment specifies those environmental factors and programme policies essential for learning. It is important for teachers or facilitators of Adult Education programmes to be conversant with the characteristics of Adult learners as well as the teaching methods most effective for actualizing the learning objectives. According to Azemovsca(2019) with the teaching units prepared by the educators, the participants gain basic knowledge of different areas and in a short period of time there are visible results. The participants gain more trust, selfconfidence and built positive attitude about themselves and their education and can talk openly about their future life plans while the elderly give them full support. The implemented program has a positive impact upon the users of this project as well as to strengthening their capacities and their everyday life.

### **Conclusion**

The majority, if not all, of the adult education teachers do not have an academic preparation in adult education. Teachers of adult students are elementary or secondary teachers who teach adult students using the same method and techniques they employ with children or adolescents. There is a need for an adult teacher education curriculum innovation to provide teachers with innovative knowledge and skills in adult education. Teacher education deals with policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, the adult education centers, church and the local and wider unity. There is a need for curriculum innovation to enhance teacher education hence improve adult education programmes in all ramifications.

### **Recommendations**

1. The curriculum used in Nigeria educational system especially in adult education should be reviewed, scrutinized, and evaluated periodically and necessary adjustment should be prudently made where necessary.

2. The andragogical model of Knowles (1970) which is based on principles and practices of adult education; therefore, should be adopted by teachers and facilitators of Adult Education programmes

3. The objective of Nigerian education should emphasize 21st century training of highly motivated, conscientious and successful classroom teachers for all educational level, as well as encourage in potential teachers, a spirit of improving creativity, nationalism and belongingness.

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