

Original Article

MOBILE LEARNING FOR FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION AS A MECHANISM FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PERSPECTIVES FROM ONDO STATE WOMEN

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Abstract

The current digital age has brought numerous technological advancements and opened a range of potential opportunities for the delivery of life-changing education for national development. This study explored the perception of women in Ondo State, Nigeria, about the use of mobile learning as a mechanism for national development through family life education. Descriptive survey design was used with pre-tested structured questionnaire to collect data from 348 women selected using multistage sampling procedure from the State. Descriptive statistics was used for analysing the data received to answer the four research questions raised for the study. Findings revealed among others that a significant proportion of the women had knowledge of mobile devices and were in support of its usage for family life education. Additionally, majority believed that mobile learning could be a mechanism for national development. It was affirmed that mobile learning for family life education is a vital mechanism for national development. Some ways to enhance mobile learning for family life education vis-à-vis national development were also identified. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that there should be more public enlightenment and functional literacy on mobile learning. Also there should adequate data access, devices, and finance for women to access mobile learning resources in order to contribute to the promotion of national development. **Keyword:** Mobile learning; Family life education; National development; Female education; Adult education.

Introduction

Advancement of individuals vis-a-vis the nation is a quantum of development. This means that development is the capability of national government to attain qualitative improvement and self-reliance in her citizens for national drive whereas development

and advancement are essential and critical to the sustenance and growth of any nation. Although often time development is tagged as financial or economical advancements of individuals, this seems to be a myopic assumption of development because it transcends just the monetary aspect of life to

evolve total wellbeing of individuals. Nwapi (2018) noted that it is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic activity but also socio-economic, political and all aspects of societal life. Hence development from a national perspective can be described as a progressive alteration of economic, political and social structures of a nation from relatively less efficient and less desirable arrangements to relatively more efficient and desirable ones. Also national development can be explained in terms of measurable growth and quality advancement which results in an improved standard of living of citizens. It is therefore important to know that human development is a critical dimension to achieving national development. National development from the dimension of United Nation 1944 declaration means a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development (Kunanayakam, 2013).

In discussing development at national level, citizens have massive role to play. Nwapi (2018) noted that human resources development is a sine qua non to Nigeria national development; and the well-being of citizens should be taken care of for cooperation and participation to be achieved in all communities during development processes. It was further noted that when Nigerians see themselves as one and not belonging to one section of the country or the other as portrayed presently, the urge to develop Nigeria will be birthed and sustained. Therefore, this study aligns with Bamgbose (2022) that national development is an improvement to internal cohesion, integration, unity, economic well-being, mass participation in government and educational growth. Therefore national development cannot be discussed without the mention of education especially for human capital development because it is the bedrock

of growth and development in any country. Inaolaji (2020) noted that many international and national conferences have over emphasized the importance of education to a nation and the world at large. Adeleye (2023) further affirmed that any country who greatly desire developmental changes and sustainability will give appropriate priority to the educational orientation of her citizens.

Education can be viewed as a process of facilitating learning in order to acquire knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. Moreover it is an important weapon to improve individual life. It can be said also to be a tool for the empowerment of individuals as well as the society they belong to. Ewhe and Kulu (2020) explained that education does not merely enable individuals to attain their intellectual capacity to the fullest, it also helps them develop emotionally, morally, socially, culturally and physically. Therefore it equips citizens with necessary skills for combating immediate and future social problems such as underdevelopment. Education in this perspective is therefore seen as a factor which produces changes in attitude and value helping individuals behave more responsibly and rationally to make informed decisions and achieve improved quality of life through effective management of national resources (Inaolaji, 2020). This means that education is not limited to formal schooling but a lifelong process in the face of constant changes existing in the society socially, culturally and economically. It has to include life-changing learning borne out of the changes which hamper human development such as urbanization, industrialization, family and societal difficulties, changing roles of women, increased parent-child strife, juvenile delinquency, shifts in marital roles, and an increased divorce rate. When discussing education for individuals and national development, the family cannot be ignored. Olatosi (2020) noted that for a nation to develop properly, it is important

to invest in the development of families because it is the building blocks of any society. A Yoruba adage says *ile la ti n ke'so rode* meaning the beauty and wellbeing of individuals in family reflects in the society. Therefore, the family should be invested in to be a space for love, sharing, and care, a place where citizens should be accepted for who they are, a refuge when times are tough and a springboard to go out into the world and achieve great things. This has become vital to national development because a breakdown in families and its learning process causes new and unforeseen challenges affecting the development and growth of the nation as a whole (Olatosimi, 2020). Abdul Kalam (n.d.) also noted that if a country is to become a nation of beautiful minds, there are three key societal members who can make such become reality, they are the father, the mother and the teacher. This affirms that the family and education plays vital roles in national development and has made family life education (FLE) gain a lot of attention by stakeholders as a form of education providing contents on internal dynamics of families, human sexuality, families in society, interpersonal relationships, parent education and guidance, family resource management, family law and public policy, ethics, and human growth and development (Bredehoft, 2001). Understanding these content and roles of Family Life Education (FLE) can be seen to be helpful in minimizing practices that are harmful to physical, social, political, and economical lives of individuals and the nation. In Nigeria, traditionally FLE is a form of learning derived by individuals from family members informally without rigid curriculum or organized setting or dispensation. In addition, then it was mostly in native languages with major focus on inculcating norms, ethics, values, culture, trade and commerce in child-member of a family so as to live independent and productive adult life in the society in future. However, this aspect of education is

officially just gaining momentum as an addition to population education in Nigeria. Owlcation (2022) explained that the family is seen as the central focus of the National Population Programme, hence FLE is a necessary addition. Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2003) noted that FLE is concerned with the study of attitudes and skills related to personality, self image, relationships/dating, marriage, parenthood, resource management & health of a family. It is designed to help people in their physical, social, emotional and moral development. This aspect of education has been integrated into the formal education curriculum at basic and post-basic level of education in subjects' categories of basic science and technology, religion and national values, pre-vocational studies, and civic education; it is also included at tertiary education level for those training in the field of education especially those in early childhood (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013; NUC, 2022). This leaves out the knowledge to be acquired by youths who are not in these fields despite that youths and adults constitute the largest segment of the Nigeria population who contributes to the development of the nation. Country meters (n.d) affirms that the population of Nigerians who are 15years and above as at the beginning of 2023 is 58.1% of the entire population. This depicts that FLE should not be streamlined to just formal education setting, it should be part of our everyday living if development is to be attained. From the foregoing, this study considers FLE to be informal, and non-formal education tailored towards changing the lives of citizens by family members through knowledge of trade and entrepreneurial skill acquisition; enhancement of social relationships; knowledge of national norms, values, rights and responsibilities; information for securing lives and properties. However, the popularization and advancement of this education come with its own challenges, which may be converted to its benefit. The major issue

evolving and confronting the tenacity of family life can be described as modernization and advance technology (Ajayi & Kazeem, 2020). Specifically, highlighting the challenges of FLE, it is noted that the internet is a new challenge facing FLE (Inaolaji, 2011). This may be as a result of unhealthy content on the media which may truncate the good function of the FLE, however it can also enhance FLE in this current digital age. This new age has brought numerous technological advancements and opened a range of potential opportunities such as FLE for the delivery of life-changing education for national development. There is no gain saying advancement in technology improves education, health, commerce and socials which are indicators of national development with the opportunity to access quality information as often as possible. Murray (2010) observed that there is a need to re-conceptualize learning for the mobile age we are presently, to recognize the essential role of mobility and communication in the process of learning. Especially in this new age of post COVID 19 and the new economic situation of the country causing a social distance, technology through mobile learning has come to the rescue often times. Mobile learning, sometimes referred to as m-Learning, is a way of accessing learning content at the point of need whenever and wherever through mobile the use of devices. These devices includes internet enabled mobile phones, tablets, iPad, and laptops among others. According to Brew (n.d.), m-learning focuses on the mobility of learners by giving them access to choose when and where they want to access learning going at their own pace, increasing engagement and improving knowledge retention. Mobile learning is a rapidly emerging technology that can be used to facilitate access to educational opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings. As digital devices become opportunities for delivery of family life education, providing educational materials to

individuals, families and communities in remote, diverse locations. Johnson et.al. (2013) noted that mobile learning has been recognized as one of the most influential technologies in education. Through mobile devices the whole world is a global village and a reservoir of knowledge in the palm of the hand. When one needs information about content related to politics, social relationships, economic empowerment, and security among other contents of family life education important for national development, it's at beck and call with an internet enabled mobile device. Since FLE is a lifelong process according to Landry, Singh and Darroch (2000), the adequate utilization of mobile learning is undeniable.

Statement of the problem

Mobile learning involves individuals who have contemporary understating of learning and content creation using mobile devices. This gives rise to the question of gender in the use and familiarity with mobile devices. GSMA (2015) findings revealed that females are 14% less likely to have mobile devices than males, over 1.7 billion females do not own mobile phones in low and middle income countries. Whereas, in Africa women are the progenitors and custodians of FLE because of the inherent knowledge and skills instilled from generation to generation. It can be said that the larger population of females needing skills on mobile learning still lies mostly in African nations. For the few with knowledge on mobile device usage, its use for frivolities like chatting and movie watching rather than learning or creating learning content is more prominent. Our cultural and traditional beliefs restricting and relegating women to just a custodian of FLE operating conventionally in their homes seem to be limiting. This limitation is assumed that some women do not have adequate knowledge of teaching and receiving FLE as their civic responsibility towards national development.

Therefore this paper considered mobile learning for family life education as a mechanism for national development from the perspectives of women in Ondo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. To what extent do women utilize common mobile devices?
2. To what extent does family life education improve in national development?
3. What is the perception towards the use of mobile learning to improve family life education for national development?
4. To what extent can mobile learning enhance family life education vis-à-vis national development?

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey which is considered appropriate because it involves gathering one time information that relates to opinions of women towards the use of mobile learning for FLE as a mechanism for national development. The population of the study consists of women age 18 and above residing in Ondo State whose statistical population is 3651 (Ondo State Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

	Local Government	Location cluster	Area	Sample size
The sample distribution	Akoko North East	Urban	Ikare	44
		Rural	Iboropa	43
	Akoko South West	Urban	Akungba	44
		Rural	Ikun	43
	Owo	Urban	Owo	43
		Rural	Isuada	44
	Ose	Urban	Ifon	43
		Rural	Elegbeka	44
	Total			348

e size of 348 was chosen based on the size arrived at using Question Pro's sample size calculator. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the 348 participants for the study. The first stage was simple random sampling by balloting to choose one senatorial district in Ondo State. Simple random sampling technique was used as the next stage to select four local governments in the senatorial district. The third stage was stratified sampling technique to share areas with the local government to rural and urban based on the enumeration area cluster of the 2011 report of integrated household survey in Ondo State (Ondo State Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Simple random sampling technique was used as the next stage to select one urban and one rural cluster in each of the selected local governments in the senatorial district. Then accidental sampling technique was used to select women who are willing to participate in the study from each cluster area in variation of 43 and 44 to account for 87 participants from each local government. This is summarized in table 1.

A close ended questionnaire with two sections containing 30 items was used as an instrument for the study. The items elicited information pertaining to the research questions with modified Likert responses format. The responses were analysed for

each research questions using frequency, and mean. Any item with mean score below 2.50 was regarded as low, 2.50 – 3.49 was regarded as moderate, while 3.50 and above was regarded as high.

Result and discussion of findings

Research question 1: To what extent do women utilize common mobile device?

Table 2

Women's extent of using common mobile devices

S/N	Items	VGE		GE		LE		VLE		X	Decision
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
1	I can use a laptop for browsing to get information	47	13.5	103	29.6	95	27.3	103	29.6	2.41	Low
2	I own and use a functional laptop	67	19.3	65	18.7	108	31.0	76	21.8	2.42	Low
3	I own and use an internet enabled mobile phone	94	27.0	112	32.2	83	23.9	59	17.0	3.15	Moderate
4	I use my mobile devices for watching movies only	48	13.8	68	19.9	160	46	72	20.7	3.58	High
5	I use my mobile phone to interact on social media	118	33.9	107	30.8	71	20.4	52	14.9	3.25	Moderate
6	I make calls and send SMS with my cell phone	125	35.9	128	36.8	53	15.2	42	12.1	3.28	Moderate

7	I can use a mobile phone for browsing to get information	101	29.0	85	24.4	75	21.6	87	25.0	2.85	Moderate
8	I can use a mobile phone to send information through the internet	94	27.0	155	44.5	62	17.8	37	10.6	2.99	Moderate
9	I can use a laptop to send information through the internet	45	12.9	68	19.5	131	37.6	104	29.9	1.89	Low

Grand mean **2.87** **Moderate**

Key: VGE - Very great extent; GE–Great extent; LE – Low extent; VLE – Very low extent; No – Frequency; % - Percentage; X - Mean

Table 2 depicted that participants responds positively to all the statements (with a mean above 2.50) except for three statements with low mean. Hence, it showed that women own and use common mobile devices such as mobile phones and laptops adequately for watching movies, receiving calls, interacting on social media and sending SMS. This finding collaborates the findings of Balasubramanian, et.al (2010) who noted that majority of women own mobile phones and this afforded the opportunity to domesticate the use of technology and also utilize it for sharing information with others. Also majority of participants noted that they can use phones for browsing but cannot use laptop adequately for browsing. This collaborates the findings of GSMA (2020) that women are still eight percent less likely to own mobile devices when

Table 3

compared to men, and those who own are 20 percent less likely to use the internet on a mobile devices. This depict that in this mobile age, we have 300million women who are likely not to use mobile internet when compared to men.

With a grand mean of 2.87, it can be said that women knows the functions of some common mobile device and use them moderately. It affirms Kukulska-Hulme et.al. (2011) noted that people use mobile devices mainly for learning, social interaction, entertainment, and work. It also collaborate Garg (2021) view that since women are by tradition and culture caregivers and caretakers of the household, they now utilize the mobile phone to help them accomplish these roles.

Research question 2: What are the benefits of family life education towards national development?

Benefits of family life education towards national development

S/N	Items	SA		A		D		SD		X	Decision
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
1	Societal norms and ethics are transmitted	180	51.7	84	24.1	59	17.0	25	7.2	3.41	Moderate

	through family life education for national development											
2	Adequate political information can be received within family life education	169	48.6	105	30.2	43	12.4	31	8.9	3.69	High	
3	Teachings from the family life education enhances entrepreneurial skills for personal development	140	40.2	107	30.8	52	14.9	49	14.1	3.48	Moderate	
4	Good training from the family results in peace loving citizens	119	34.2	134	38.5	51	14.7	44	12.6	3.50	High	
5	Teaching of cultural languages and acceptable behaviours within the family is important for national development	180	51.7	84	24.1	59	17.0	25	7.2	3.41	Moderate	
6	With family life education, gender discrimination and other discriminations can be minimized within the society	118	34.0	88	25.3	38	10.9	34	9.8	3.99	High	
7	Security consciousness can be built in people through contents of family life education and its good for the nation	180	51.7	84	24.1	59	17.0	25	7.2	3.41	Moderate	
Grand mean		3.56									High	

Key: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; D - Disagree; SD – Strongly disagree; No – Frequency; % - Percentage; X - Mean

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Table 3 depicted that participants responded positively (with mean which are moderate and high) to all the statements which linked family life education to national development. Specifically participants noted that the family and its education plays a vital role in teaching native knowledge, transmission of social norms, values and culture. This supports Bamigbose (2022) that promoting culture through inculcating of values, norms, languages and others across the different cultures in Nigeria can develop empathy and national consciousness among the citizens. Furthermore, it noted that political knowledge, entrepreneurship and security consciousness skills are built for national development through family life education. It was noted that gender discrimination among other forms of discrimination can be minimized through family life education. All these findings go in line with the United Nation's generic set of objectives for family life education, which includes but not limited to Table 4

The use of mobile learning to improve family life education for national development

S/N	Items	SA		A		D		SD		X	Decision
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
1	Through the use of mobile devices, there can be increased association among family members and others for national unity	131	37.6	123	35.3	53	15.2	41	11.8	3.51	High
2	The teaching and maintenance of native language for national social development can be achieved through the interaction on mobile	121	34.8	113	32.5	59	17.0	55	15.8	3.58	High

helping to establish and maintain satisfying relationships with everyone citizens come in contact with; helping to understand and cope with changes in one's life and the society; and helping to realize the roles of individual's civic roles and duties to the community, nation and humanity (United Nation, 2015).

Relatively with a grand mean of 3.56 it can be stated affirmatively that Family Life Education (FLE) is highly beneficial for national development from the perspective of women. This affirms the view of Adeboye (2015) which stated that family life education is to prepare citizens to work towards achieving wellness, development and sustainability in all dimensions.

Research question 3: What is the perception towards the use of mobile learning to improve family life education for national development?

This is analysed in table 4

devices

3	With mobile devices and educational contents, economic development of family members can be increased	144	41.4	99	28.5	61	17.5	44	12.6	3.48	Moderate
4	Cultural values and norms are easier transmitted to the younger generation through the use of mobile devices	146	42.0	109	31.3	51	14.7	43	12.4	3.99	High
5	The use of mobile devices for learning skills provides opportunity to overcome discrimination in access to employment and income	119	35.2	134	38.5	51	14.7	44	12.6	2.87	Moderate
6	Women are less capable of understanding and developing content on mobile devices to transmit family education contents	20	5.7	43	12.4	89	26.6	195	56.0	2.19	Low
7	Providing information on national security and politics by family members is easier through the use of mobile devices for learning	105	30.2	109	31.3	75	21.6	59	17	3.1	Moderate

8	Communication on mobile devices is not a form of learning that can aid family life learning and national development	61	64	103	120	1.92	Low
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Grand mean **3.08** **Moderate**

Key: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; D - Disagree; SD – Strongly disagree; No – Frequency; % - Percentage; X - Mean

From table 4, it can be seen that women acknowledge that the use of mobile devices and mobile learning aid increase access to information on unity, social development, economic development, national value and norm transmission, equality in employment and income, realisation of security for lives and properties with a mean above 2.5 for all items related to these. This supports the view of Dinghi (2010) that mobile devices has direct impact on the way young people access information. However, findings on table 4 showed that participants were against the opinion that women are less capable of developing content for mobile learning; and that communication on mobile devices do not aid FLE and national development. This mean that women are capable of using mobile devices for FLE and national development is low. This affirms the findings from Hilbert (2011) research on women and ICT for employment, education and income, that women are more active users of ICT for development than men if they are given the opportunity and not culturally inhibited from doing

Table 5

Ways of enhancing mobile learning for improve family life education and national development

S/N	Items	SA		A		D		SD		X	Decision
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
1	Public sensitization about the use of mobile messages on	120	34.5	128	36.8	51	14.7	49	14.1	3.3	Moderate

so. This is also in line with the opinion of Wright (2015) that mobile learning will be more effective when woman are actively involved and the trend of discussion and content are related to their everyday lives. In addition, women's opinion is that communication on mobile devices is a form of learning that can aid family life learning and national development.

In general, for research question 3, a grand mean of 3.08 showed that participants feel that mobile learning is relatively important for FLE vis-à-vis national development. This is related to the findings of Barbosa et.al. (2016) that people perceive the use of technology to be of great extent in non-formal education as part of culture. Also this study collaborate the findings of Criollo-C et.al. (2021) that mobile learning expands daily activities to include constant acquisition of knowledge and skills through mobile devices.

Research question 4: What are the ways of enhancing mobile learning for improved family life education vis-à-vis national development?

	national development through chat sites should be encouraged among family members											
2	Functional literacy skills such as media literacy should be channelled through messages on mobile devices	168	48.3	86	24.7	52	14.9	42	12.1	3.21	Moderate	
3	Mobile applications specifically for contents of family life education should be disseminated and shared among citizens	148	42.5	95	27.3	66	19.0	39	11.2	3.18	Moderate	
4	The government should subsidise internet services to increase access to mobile learning facilities for family life education and national development	184	52.9	126	36.2	24	6.9	14	4.0	4.05	High	
5	Utilizing mobile learning with ways to give feedback will encourage its impact on family life education and national development	94	27.0	155	44.5	62	17.8	37	10.6	2.99	Moderate	
6	Training programmes on content production for family life education should be organized for women	91	26.2	95	27.3	75	21.6	87	25.0	2.75	Moderate	
Grand mean		3.25									High	

Key: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; D - Disagree; SD – Strongly disagree; No – Frequency; % - Percentage; X - Mean

From table 5, it can be observed that public sensitization, provision of functional literacy skills such as media literacy and other empowerment skills channelled through mobile devices are ways to enhance mobile learning for national development. This is in line with Ogu (2019) which stated that media literacy is a vital requirement for national development. Also from the findings, the development of mobile applications for FLE and provision of feedback mechanisms are part of the ways to enhance FLE for national development. In addition government's ability to subsidise internet services had the highest mean (4.01) for this research question. This affirms the observation of GSMA (2010) that due to the large population of people living in the rural areas of China, Ericsson collaborated with the Ministry of Education in providing and managing the distribution of interactive learning content via low cost basic mobile phones and subsidised internet services increased human capacity development in china. A grand mean of 3.5 showed that all suggested ways can enhance the use of mobile learning for FLE vis-à-vis national development.

Conclusion and recommendation

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that indeed there cannot be national development without citizens having positive disposition being adequately involved. In ensuring citizens are adequately involved, the family and the knowledge passed from generation to generation is vital. Family life education is key to national development and women are also key stakeholder in ensuring its actualization. However, in this dispensation of modernization, technology has taken the lead and it can be judiciously utilized for family life education in all forms of education. Moreover women are not less capable of understanding and developing ICT

content, so if the negative view of women and technology is changed and they are assisted to utilize it better. Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion arrived at, it was recommended that:

1. Women should be empowered more to have access to and utilize mobile devices especially the common ones such as internet enabled mobile phones and laptops to enhance their participation in FLE and national development;
2. Government should partner with network providers to review and subsidise the cost of internet subscription;
3. Females should be sensitized through government and non-governmental organizations including the media to enable them use the mobile devices in a right way for learning not just for non-beneficial interactions on social media;
4. Mobile applications should be developed wherein families can create, learn and disseminate national development issue contents;
5. Training programmes on content production for family life education should be organised for all and sundry;
6. The older family members should continuously relate with the younger ones via mobile devices and provide information for their personal and national development; and
7. The young members of the family should be open to change and be willing to learn the elders

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