

# Factors motivating female adult learners enrolment in Nigeria tertiary institution: A study of Lagos State University, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

Education is the process of becoming critically aware of one's reality in a manner that leads to effective action upon it. The plight of women, in terms of education is further compounded by the negative attitude of parents toward female education. Some parents are usually reluctant to send their girl child for formal education especially to higher levels like their male counterpart. The writer examined factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in Nigeria tertiary institution. The purpose of the study was to examine the concept of tertiary education in Nigeria, assess women education, find out the rate of enrolment between male and female students and highlight the problems facing tertiary institutions considering enrolment of female adult learners in Nigeria. Research questions were formulated for the study and the instrument used for the study was questionnaire. One hundred respondents comprising of female adult learners were randomly selected from Lagos State University in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State for data collection. Data were analyzed using frequency tables, percentages and Chi-square. It was suggested in the paper that for optimal national development, women who are the first teachers in the family set up should be provided with adequate and functional education (or literacy). It was argued that provision of functional education to the women folk would enable them to make additional contributions towards public life, social, economic, and moral development of the family and by extension the nation.

**Keywords:** Motivation, female education, adult learners, enrolment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of becoming critically aware of one's reality in a manner that leads to effective action upon it. An educated man or woman understands his or her world well enough to deal with it effectively. Such men or women if they existed in sufficient numbers would not leave the absurdities of the present world unchanged. In the opinion of Edukugho (2002) cited in Imogie (2002), the prosperity of a country depends not on the abundance of its revenue, nor the strength of its fortifications, but on the number of its cultivated citizens, men and women of education, enlightenment and character.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument per excellence for effecting

national development (NPE, 1998). The implication is that government realizes the importance of education as a veritable tool for national development. Thus, the policy guidance of the NPE asserts that:

Education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plans, because education is the most important instrument of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (NPE, 1998:8).

Specifically, the national policy on women section 6.1.3 submits that:

For (the) Nigerian women to enjoy the full benefits of contemporary living, they require basic education to contribute meaningfully to the development of the country. Government shall in this regard increase girls and women's participation in education irrespective of their location and circumstances (p.17).

It can be said therefore that the main focus of government education agenda is to bring about optimal development of its human resources, which, put in another word, is a viable source of human capital. This investment however will not be complete without women education. According to James Aggrey cited by NCCE (1998), if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family, that is, a nation.

Women from time immemorial have been saddled with many family responsibilities and are traditionally assigned many roles including custody of children, maintenance of the home, feeding of the family, and preservation of family health. Consequent upon those traditional role expectations, they become a significant factor in socio-economic and political development of a country. Apart from roles earlier enumerated for the typical woman, the modern day woman, who is expected to be a wife, then a mother is, like her traditional counterpart, expected to play the role of a dutiful home keeper. In playing this role, she is expected to be capable of handling challenges of modern world of automation and computer. Another challenge before her is that imposed on her as the first and the last teacher of the child before and after school. This is especially pertinent because, she is expected to prepare the child to be able to cope with the challenges of the contemporary world. The simple implication of this reality is that the typical contemporary woman is not likely to play these roles efficiently unless she is fortified with adequate and functional education.

### **Need for women education**

Women empowerment can only be achieved through the provision of adequate and functional education to the women folk. This is crucial because no matter how rich or vast a nation is, without an effective, efficient, adequate and functional education for all its citizens (men and women) education which is relevant to its immediate needs, goals and objectives, such a nation would find it difficult to stand on its own. The brand of education being advocated is that type of education in which is embedded the spirit of self realization and all that are needed for the country's overall development like mass literacy, economic empowerment etc (Esere, 2001).

The need for women education is also informed by the fact that purposeful occupational achievement and satisfaction is ensured by deep self-awareness and understanding which can only be achieved through the

provision of effective and functional education or guidance and counseling. This, has been noted, is likely to guarantee women empowerment with its root based on women struggle to improve their status. The empowerment suggested is such that entails the process of challenging power relations and of gaining wider control over source of power. This, however, cannot be achieved without the provision of reasonable access to formal and functional education to the women folk. This is based on the premise that education has been adjudged to be a viable instrument of change in the positive direction.

In the spirit of Universal Basic Education (UBE), provision of formal and functional education is needed for the women folk, because:

- i) It would empower them to know and ask for their rights to education, health, shelter, food and clothing etc;
- ii) It would empower them to fight against every form of discrimination against their folk, assert themselves about their right to equal treatment with their men counterpart as bonafide citizens of this nation, Nigeria;
- iii) It would enable the women take decisions and accept responsibilities for taking such decisions concerning themselves;
- iv) It would give economic power to the women and there by enable them to contribute their quota to the economic growth of the nation;
- v) It would empower the women scientifically through exposure to science and technological education for the challenges of the present technological age and information computer technology break through unfolding worldwide;
- vi) It would help women to reduce maternal and infant mortality through improved nutrition, improved child rearing practice, health care and prevention against killer diseases;
- vii) It would avail women with the opportunity of participating keenly in the world of sophisticated politics and governance as enlightened citizens.

### **Problems facing women education**

The bane for women education in Nigeria is entrenched in the nation's new national policy on education which states inter-alia that:

With regards to women education special efforts will be made by ministries of education and local government authorities in conjunction with ministries of community development and social welfare and of information to encourage parents to send their daughters to school (FGN, 1998: 14).

The tacit reference made to women education in the national policy on education is contained in the primary

education section of the document. It must be observed here that no further reference was made to the provision of women education in this all important document on education. Nagees (1995) opined that the absence of a policy statement on women education as reflected in the National Policy on Education (NPE), makes the NPE fall short of women expectations and it amounts to a total disregard for that section of the population in this country.

The plight of women, in terms of education, is further compounded by the negative attitude of parents toward female education. Some parents are usually reluctant to send their girl child for formal education especially to higher levels like their male counterpart. Another problem closely related to this is the reluctance to acquire western education and misunderstanding on the part of the girls themselves about the values of the acquisition of formal education. In education, equity means equal access to good schooling. According to Ocholi (2002), geography (in term of location) and families' relative wealth have been discovered to also affect equity. For example, in Nigeria, in the last few years, the regression (toward male-female education in balance) in basic education is reflected in the fact that the net enrolment rate of girls in primary school is lower than the female literacy rate. Ocholi, noted that in 1995, 25.09 percent of girls who should have enrolled in school did not. It was equally observed that in 1995 the average primary school completion rates for boys and girls were 56.3 percent and 43.7 percent, respectively. Most girls leave school due to inability to pay cost, among other reasons.

It is however an open secret today that Nigeria women are educationally backward when compared with their male counterparts. According to the 1991 national population census, women alone constitute 49.7% of the overall population with 70% of this being illiterate. It has been discovered also that 70% of Nigerian women 35 years and above are illiterate (Amazigbo in Nagess, 1995). The level of illiteracy is said to be thrice as high in the rural areas when compared with the urban areas.

Three fundamental barriers have been identified by Awe (1990) to be responsible for low level of development and enhancement of women especially for educational advancement. These barriers are:

- i) Restricted access to education.
- ii) Reluctance to aspire.
- iii) Resistance to women advancement within a patriarchal system.

Restricted access to education by women in this country is profoundly rooted in history, religion, culture, the psychology of self, law, political institution and social attitudes which interact in several ways to limit women's access to formal education when compared with their male counterparts. For example, it has been observed that Nigerian women are lagging behind their counterparts in developed and some developing nations due to the late start in educating them. This is caused by

our traditions and culture which are hostile to women. This tradition reduces them to kitchen manageresses and producers of babies. Thus, their education ideally, is expected to end in kitchen a condition which ironically is detested by many parents thereby discouraging their investment in girl-child education.

Reluctance to aspire is another major problem against women education. This is the main manifestation of African wrong socialization which tends to impress upon the women folk the belief that certain subjects and professions are the exclusive preserve of men. Our socialization at the same time confines women to certain roles (e.g. cooking, baby making, baby nursing, home keeping etc). This state of affairs is definitely a negation of the scientific discovery that women are not intellectually inferior to men. This is because of the fact that both males and females have 42 chromosomes in their genes. Furthermore, science has revealed that there are no innate biological or psychological reasons why girls should not do as well as boys if given the opportunity and if provided with adequate motivation (Oniye, 1993; NCCE, 1998).

Resistance to women advancement within a patriarchal system is a further manifestation of our cultural practices which overtly and covertly interact to hinder women advancement especially from educational viewpoint. This resistance is further engendered by cultural impediments imposed on women by her traditional assigned roles of housewife, mother, baby sitter, member of inferior sex, stereotyped gender victim, among others. Thus, it is stated that the problem of resistance to women advancement are culture based and they include those brought about by homework conflict; ignorance on the part of many parents, erroneous belief that religion is against the provision of sound formal education to the girl child, gender stereotyping and stigmatization, socio-economic constraints and poor attitudes of some parent (NCCE, 1998).

It is pertinent to note at this juncture that the greater access of men in Nigeria to education more than their women counterparts have very negative consequences on the latter. In fact, it has been observed that this unwholesome situation is the principal factor that is responsible for the preponderance of women in lower positions in work organizations and less paid jobs. For instance, it has been noted by Oladunni (1999) that Nigerian women are found predominantly in such occupations as teaching, nursing services, agriculture, small scale food processing, secretariat duties, clerical duties note counting in banks, cleaners and middle level professional occupations. Consequently, it has been opined that majority of them are therefore poor, impoverished and susceptible to attack by a number of debilitating diseases such as Vesto Virginal Fistula (VVF) etc.

Other problems against women education include the familiar problems in Nigerian education like lack of funds, inadequate facilities, inadequate manpower, sexual

harassment, conflicting societal role expectations, government policies and lack of political will power to implement the entire educational programme.

The inferiority complex observable in Nigerian women can be attributed to the influence of environmental manipulation. For example, through the traditional socialization process of the typical African society, women are made to accept negative self-fulfilling prophecy, stereotyping and stigmatization that they are members of a weaker sex. At present, the forces which combine to hamper women education and development in Nigeria could be viewed broadly to include denial of access to education, early marriage, confinement to solitary living, subjugation by culture to accept choices forced on them, discrimination and harassment at work, political disenfranchisement from elective and political appointment and exposure to cruel mourning rites upon the death of their husband (Oniye, 2000).

### **Some factors motivating Female Adults enrolment in tertiary Institution programmes**

- i) Psychological
- ii) Safety, stability and security
- iii) Belongingness (social affiliation love)
- iv) Self esteem
- v) Self – actualization

The aforementioned factors make us understand the reason why female adult learners enrolled for tertiary institution programmes in Nigeria. For instance female adult learner who lacks social and economic rewards tends to participate in tertiary institution programmes so as to improve these needs for growth and development of self. The tension and problems learner encounter in her environment or working place will motivate her to learn more so as to find a solution to the tension and problems. She participates in tertiary institution programmes so as to improve safety, security for herself, whether in her job or environment. The learning needs of adult learners vary according to their social role. Female adults who newly arrive at working age will be obsessed with learning how to make a living; a woman with young learning how to make a living; a woman with young children will be interested in domestic matters and in the children's education. So also a member of a church choir will be interested in learning music better. The individual as an adult learner has a need that is sometimes termed self-fulfillment or self actualization. Some female adult learners may wish to develop skills in their work which will enable them excel or in other skills from which they may derive satisfaction and recognition such as in sports or in domestic practice like sewing or cooking. Some may wish to enhance their social standing cultivate new social relationships and feel the need for learning how to achieve such needs. There are some female adult learners which may have lacked educational

opportunities in the past may feel incomplete as persons unless they fill what they see as gaps in their knowledge and education. The behavior of female adult learners in a given environment is aimed at fulfilling basic wants or needs which vary at a given time. The need to improve on one's job, further knowledge or education, to improve social status, for socialization, mental improvement psychological capability, political orientation, religious improvement, awareness etc will motivate female adult learners to enroll for further higher studies. If these needs that motivate them to enroll for tertiary institution studies are met, they can be satisfied in the aspect of growth and development for themselves and the society in which they lived. The attitudes of the adult educators can also motivate adult learners to enroll for tertiary studies. Availability of the facilities in the environment where it is located can also encourage learners to participate in tertiary studies because adult learners are motivated by what they see, how they are treated thereby causing growth and development.

### **Statement of the problem**

There has been a rapid increase in the participation of female adult learners in tertiary institution in Nigeria in recent years. This is evident in the high rate of female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institution programmes in Lagos metropolis taking advantage of centres offering such programmes. In spite of the various tasks which adult learners who participate addles with, they still avail themselves with these learning and activities or opportunities what then could be the motivating factors. To what extent do these factors serve as determinants of female adult learners' participation in tertiary institution programmes? The focus of this study is to determine the factors which motivate adult learners' participation in tertiary institution in Lagos State.

### **Purpose of the study**

This study seeks to find out the factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institution in Lagos State. It is to seek the factors enhancing or propelling female adult learners to enroll for tertiary institution programmes. Factors like psychological, economic, education, political and basic human factors or needs motivate the adult learners to take part. They take part to seek improvement for what they feel is not fully actualized, until it is fully actualized.

The study is also to know the needs that the adult educators can be well equipped and prepared on how to teach the adult learners, cope with them in any situation they might have motivate and help them find solutions to their problems. Thereby bringing about growth, change in behavior of the learners and the society to which they belong.

## Research questions

With the importance of university education for women discussed above, this research aimed at answering the following questions:

- i) What are the economic factors motivating adult women's enrolment in tertiary institutions?
- ii) What are the education factors motivating adult women's enrolment in tertiary institutions?
- iii) What are the psychological factors motivating adult women's enrolment in tertiary institutions?
- iv) What are the political factors motivating adult women's enrolment in tertiary institutions?

## Significance of the study

The study's findings is to help policy makers both public and private institutions in providing appropriate functional continuing education programmes for adult learners to enable them keep abreast of social, economic political, psychological and educational changes. It is the adult educator's missions in helping adult learners learn what will gratify their needs at whatever level they may be struggling. Therefore, if adults are hungry, they should be helped to learn what will give them food, if they are well-fed, safe, loved and esteemed, they must be helped to explore undeveloped capabilities and become fully equipped.

Therefore, the federal government of Nigeria realizing that the only way to transform every area in the country into an advance state and to eradicate illiteracy, empower citizens is to direct its policy towards equal and adequate educational opportunities for all citizens by creating continuing education centres that will promote functional literacy programmes for growth and development.

It is therefore very important to determine the factors that motivate female adult learners' enrolment into tertiary institutions.

## Scope of the study

The study is limited to the geographical area of Lagos State. It covers specifically female adult learners of Lagos State University in Ojo Local Government Area of the State.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The researcher therefore considered this design appropriate since the study involves determination of the factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institution in Lagos State.

### Area of study

The study was conducted in Ojo Local Government Area, Lagos State. There are six autonomous communities that make up the local government area. Geographically, Ojo Local Government Area has an area of 158 km<sup>2</sup> with administrative capital in Ojo town and a population of 598,071.

### Population of the study

The population for the study was 100 admitted adult female students selected from various departments in the Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo Local Government Area.

### Sample and sampling technique

A simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents.

### Instrument for data collection

The instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire. It was designed and constructed by the researcher. The instrument was titled *Factors Motivating adult female learners enrolment in tertiary institution*. It consists of 15 items that grouped in four clusters based on the research questions formulated for the study. It is meant to elicit information on the factors motivating adult female learners' enrolment in tertiary institution in Lagos State. A 4-point Likert -type rating scale was used to describe the opinions of the respondents.

### Validity and reliability of instrument

Validity of the research instrument was established by giving the instrument to three experts from the Faculty of Education, Lagos State University. Their criticisms and corrections led to the modification of the instrument before it was finally distributed to the respondents.

Reliability of the instrument was done by administered the questionnaire to twenty female learners in Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Otto-Ijanikin, Otto-Awori Local Council Development Area, Lagos State. The co-efficient of internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha method. It gave the following reliability co-efficient: 0.93, 0.72, 0.82 and 0.93 for clusters 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively. The grand reliability co-efficient is 0.76 which shows that the instrument is very reliable.

### Data analysis

The study employed both the descriptive and the inferential statistical methods. In this, the simple percentages and frequency table were used for descriptive inferences.

## RESULTS

Analyses to the bio-data of the respondents are shown in Tables 1 to 3. From Table 1, the analyses revealed that majority of the respondents were married. From Table 2, majority of the respondents were within the age of 41 to 50 years. Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution of the respondents by marital status.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Single	15	15
Married	80	80
Divorced	5	5
Total	100	100

**Table 2.** Frequency distribution of the respondents by age.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
30-40 years	32	32
41-50 years	49	49
50 years and above	19	19
Total	100	100

**Table 3.** Frequency distribution of the respondents by occupation.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Self- employed	18	18
Government employed	43	43
Private sectors	39	39
Total	100	100

**Table 4.** Analysis of Economic factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institutions.

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	df	Cal X <sup>2</sup>	Table X <sup>2</sup>	Decision
Earning an improved income motivates you to enroll for tertiary education	52	37	9	2	100				
Gaining an employment motivates you to Enroll for tertiary education	45	32	21	2	100	6	11.148	12.592	Accept
Having a better standard of living motivates you to enroll for further studies	62	26	12	-	100				
Total	159	95	42	4	300				

were government employers.

### Testing of research questions

**Question 1:** What are the economic factors motivating adult women's enrolment in tertiary institutions. (Tables 4 to 7)

### DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that gaining an employment, earning an improved income, and having a better standard of living were accepted as the economic factors motivating female adult learners to enroll for tertiary education. This is in line with the assertion of Obeta et al. (2003) who maintained that women participate in those activities which they feel will bring increased income, which they could use to supplement

whatever is available or brought in by the breadwinners of the family.

On education factors, the findings of the study showed that factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institution which include obtaining certificate for a better job, ability to take decision on developmental processes and improvement on communicative skills were accepted. This was supported by Okpoko (2002) who agreed with the above view that when provided with adequate non-formal education programme, rural women will demonstrate a substantial improvement in their skills – domestic tasks, food production, healthcare and reproduction. Similarly, Obetta (2004) stated that education is the foundation for the promotion and improvement of the status of women. It is the basic tool which equips women to fulfill their duties as wives, mothers and partners in development. Education mobilizes the untapped resourcefulness of women in order for them to contribute most effectively to their surrounding society.

**Table 5.** Analysis of education factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institutions.

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	df	Cal $\chi^2$	Table $\chi^2$	Decision
Obtaining certificate for a better job motivates you to enroll for tertiary education.	54	39	6	1	100				
Improvement on communicative skills motivates you to enroll for further studies	47	34	17	2	100	6	12.345	12.592	Accept
Ability to take decisions on developmental processes motivates you to enroll for tertiary studies	64	28	7	1	100				
Total	165	101	30	4	300				

**Table 6.** Analysis of psychological factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institutions.

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	df	Cal $\chi^2$	Table $\chi^2$	Decision
Overcoming inferiority complex motivates you to enroll for tertiary education	50	35	12	3	100				
Occupying higher positions of authority in the society motivates you to enroll for further studies	42	32	21	5	100	6	9.876	12.592	Accept
Having control over your personal lives motivates you to enroll for tertiary education	60	27	11	2	100				
Total	152	94	49	10	300				

**Table 7.** Analysis of political factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institutions.

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	df	Cal $\chi^2$	Table $\chi^2$	Decision
Recognition of your rights in the society motivates you to enroll for tertiary education	50	35	12	3	100				
Consulting you in political matters in the community motivates you to enroll for tertiary education	42	32	21	5	100	6	9.876	12.592	Accept
Participating actively in decision-making in the community motivates you to enroll for tertiary education	60	27	11	2	100				
Total	152	94	49	10	300				

From the findings, it was revealed that factors such as overcoming inferiority complex, occupying higher positions and having a total control over personal lives were accepted as the psychological factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institutions. This was supported by Ugwoegbu (1992) stated that participation in a learning programme depends more on psychological factors that are constantly stressed. The

resultant effect is its motivation on the person's desire to participate in an educational activity.

The findings of the study further showed that recognition of one's right in the society, consultations in political matters in the community and participating actively in decision making in the community were accepted as the political factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institutions. Supporting

these findings, Afigbo (1991) noted that educated women have achieved a lot in the leadership role in Africa. One of these women, Queen Dauranana, figured prominently in the Central Sudan in the early history of the Hausa Communities. She was the ruler of the state of Daura at the time of the last series of invasion that led to the emergence of the seven Hausa states.

## Conclusion

It is clear from the submission of this paper that Nigerian women are educationally disadvantaged in terms of accessibility to formal education, participation in policy formulation and policy implementation especially in the education sector. It could also be deduced that owing to our traditional socialization process Nigerian women have been misled into believing that aspiring for higher educational attainment is insignificant. After all, women education ends in the kitchen. The problems against women education are many but they could be summarized under three major headings namely; restricted access to education, reluctance to aspire and resistance to women advancement within a patriarchal system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

If education must serve the society, it must produce people who carry much more than certificates. It must produce people, both normal and exceptional ones, with the right types of knowledge, ability and attitude to put them to work for the good of the society. It is therefore imperative that in order to improve the educational base of the typical Nigerian woman and by extension her socio-political and economic status, government, community leaders, parents, professional guidance counsellors and other stakeholders should take cognizance of the following recommendations:

1. All stakeholders in women affairs and development should focus on the provision of formal education to women as well as improve their working conditions while at the same time facilitating their access to resources like land, credit and technology as a way of reducing unemployment/ underemployment among women.
2. The government and other stakeholders in women affairs and development should strive to create conducive enabling, socio-political and economic conditions which will discourage early marriage, societal preference for male children and the traditional belief that the position of a woman is in the kitchen.
3. Parents and opinion leaders should encourage the members of the female sex to be more enterprising in their educational pursuit as a way of contributing meaningfully to national development.
4. Government should be more forthcoming in terms of women empowerment policy formulation and

implementation especially in term of legislating against obnoxious customs and practices which are detrimental to women's optimal functionality and wellbeing, like legislating against harmful widowhood practices.

5. Government should fund counselling centers at all levels of Nigerian education system adequately to enable counsellors provide all round functional guidance and counselling to parents and other stakeholders. This is imperative if all concerned must be assisted to see the female child first as a human being with all assets capable of immeasurable achievements.

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