

Community Based Learning And Outreach For Development: Factors Influencing The Urbanite Woman Learner Participation In Mass Literacy Programme, Accra, Ghana

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INTRODUCTION

Adult learner participation is indispensable to the overall access and success of a community based learning and outreach for development programme. The University of Ghana, by policy, is promoting the formal, informal and the non-formal community based learning programmes. It collaborates with the Social Welfare and Ministry of Education's Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) especially in the non-formal programme. Most of these community-based programmes are located in urban areas as the one in this study. In some communities, patronage of the programme is very high, while in some areas patronage is low. NFED is referred to as the Functional Literacy Agency (FLA) in this study.

This exploratory study, focusing on the non-formal programme, has for its objectives to capture and evaluate the internal and external factors that influence the Urbanite Woman Learner Participation (UWLP) in Mass Literacy Programmes (MASSLIP) run by NFED, further, use factors to create models for enhancing UWLP.

Hypothesis of study

H₀: There is no significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of learners, learner perception of the functional literacy programme, the design and delivery of the programme and the influence of community on one hand, and the learners' participation in literacy programmes on the other hand.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed survey method recommended by Gosling (1995: 172) for sociological studies to collect quantitative and qualitative information. The interview guide was on socio-demographic characteristics of learners, learner perception of the functional literacy programme, the design and delivery of the programme and the influence of community.

The study was conducted on learners of MASSLIP community-based learning centres at Nima and Accra New Town, both located in the East Ayawaso Sub-District in the Accra Metropolitan District. The major languages represented are Ga, Twi, Frafra and Hausa. Six centres were selected; five in Nima and one in Accra New Town, based on convenience; they were close together and were very active, with learners able to complete their first year learning units and advancing to the second year learning units.

A simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from all the six centres. Respondents were randomly selected from each of the six centres to make a sample size of one hundred and sixteen respondents.

Data were collected using interview guide, and the analysis was done using both descriptive and non descriptive statistics. The data were presented in tables, and models generated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is the presentation of findings and discussion of results of study.

Background of Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents including age, marital status, level of education, and occupation.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
AGE (YRS.)		
10-19	13	11.21
20-29	15	12.93

30-39	32	27.59
40-49	33	28.45
50-59	17	14.66
60-69	4	3.44
70+	2	1.72
Total	116	100.00

MARITAL STATUS

Married	78	67.24
Never Married	20	17.24
Single	18	15.52
Total	116	100.00

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

No Formal Education	71	61.21
Primary School	20	17.24
Middle School	16	13.79
Junior High School	8	6.89
Vocation School	1	0.86
Total	116	100.00

OCCUPATION

Unemployed	10	8.62
Petty Traders	74	63.79
Tradeswomen	18	15.52
Housewives	4	3.45
Apprentices	4	3.45
Students	6	5.17
Total	116	100.00

The female on whom the study focused formed 83.6% of the literacy class size showing that majority of participants in urban areas were female. And 67.24% were married and those aged 30s-40s formed 56.04% of respondents. Those with no formal education were 61.24% of respondents. For primary occupation the largest percentage (63.72%) was petty trading.

Perception of the literacy programme

This related to the ability of learners to conceptualize the value of the innovation of Functional Literacy. Their degree of acceptance of the programme or being willing to enroll for functional literacy programme depends on their perception of it. Sixty-two (53.45%) perceived the innovation to be functional literacy. Fifty-four (46.55%) had perception of programme as non-functional literacy.

Table 2: Perception of Programme

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Traditional literacy	54	46.55
Functional literacy	62	53.45
Total	116	100.00

Kidd (1973) says regarding how adults learn, "A learner's perception is important and differential as opposed to the view that all of adulthood was identical, that it progressed at the same pace, in the same direction, on the same plane". To him what he describes as the *Adult Experience* is a contributing factor in adult learning, and it is the comparatively richer experience of the adults that is made use of in their learning transaction. Adults have more experiences. Adults have different kinds of experiences, and adult experiences are organized differently even if they were exposed to the same stimulus at the same time and environment. He explains that the personality structure of the learner proposes a concept of perception in learning which when highlighted provides the basis for what role perception plays in the learner for learning.

Perception is personal and psychological, so literacy class facilitators must always try to understand how the individual views the learning situation. When the learner perceives Adult Functional Literacy as social expressions of adulthood making up for the deficiencies in resources of adulthood for coping with new demands in their situation, they want to participate in the programme (Tozer et al, 1993). Therefore, there is a link of learners' perception of Adult Literacy to learning transaction and participation in the literacy programme.

Participation in class attendance

Table 3 shows that almost all participants (94.9%), attended class three times or more monthly.

Table 3: Class attendance

Variable	Frequency (a month)	Percentage (%)
Non	0	0.0
Once	2	1.7
Twice	4	3.4
Thrice	51	44.0
Four times	59	50.9
Total	116	100.00

According to Rogers (1989), adults would usually 'vote with their feet', hence attendance to classes was used to measure their participation in the programme. This indicates that the adult learners were eager to participate and were taking the classes serious. This may be due to the benefits they are going to derive from the programme. According to Beder and Valentine (1990), adults participate in such programmes due to the following factors: self-improvement, family responsibilities, diversion, literacy development, community/church involvement, job advancement, launching, economic need, educational advancement and urging of others.

These may be true for our group under study because, from Table 1, it would be seen that most of them (61.21%) had no formal education and also were petty traders. Thus they needed the functional literacy programme, which relates directly to community development and to teaching applicable or useful life skills.

The design and delivery of the programme

Table 4 shows responses to questions regarding variables of FLA's communication, design and delivery of programme.

Table 4: Agency's communication, design and delivery of programme

Variables	Question	Yes		Unsure		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Goal	Was goal of functional literacy programme you attend stated?	60	51.7	26	22.4	30	25.9
Timing (urgency of the programme)	Did facilitators state that literacy programme was urgent and timely for adults in achieving UN and Government goal of lifelong education and irradiation of illiteracy by year 2015?	56	48.2	25	21.6	35	30.2
Relative Advantages	Did facilitators or agency state relative advantages of being literate and undergoing the literacy programme?	52	45.7	22	19.0	42	36.2
Impact on Social Relations	Did agency state impact of literacy programme on our social relationship -- institutions in family and community?	53	45.7	3	2.6	60	51.7
Divisibility	Did facilitator state how often communities or individuals succeeded in accomplishing literacy programme?	71	61.2	11	9.5	34	29.3
Complexity (less complex)	Did you understand how simple it is to understand and use literacy for improving self-image and community life?	52	44.8	42	36.2	26	19.0
Compatibility	Did facilitator state that literacy programme was consistent with existing psychological, social and cultural conditions for achieving progress?	40	34.5	32	27.6	44	37.9
Explanation/Verbal in local language	Did facilitators use the local language to explain issues?	56	48.3	31	26.7	29	25.0
Timing of the Communication	Were goals and objectives communicated to you before you enrolled?	59	50.9	23	19.8	34	29.3
Animation	Did facilitators use animation to explain the importance of literacy programme for your community?	20	17.3	5	4.3	91	78.4
Role Play	Did facilitators use role-play to explain the	52	44.8	42	36.2	22	19.0

	importance of literacy programme for your community?						
Catalyst role of the facilitator in facilitating personalized programme	When you do not understand a lesson does your facilitator take interest in helping you to understand?	79	68.1	26	22.4	11	9.5

The philosophy and practice of adult education and functional literacy, and approaches used in the delivery of functional literacy in NFED programmes are very crucial to the way the individual learner will receive the programme. An inappropriate approach will only serve to frustrate the learning process of the individuals and thwart their participation. Table 4 indicates the results from certain questions posed to learners as to the approach used by the agency.

On the goals of the programme, 51.7% indicated that they were aware of the goals of the programme; while 25.9% said they were not aware. This may be because they enrolled late, as the goals were explained to those who started on the onset of the programme.

On the question of timing, 48.2% agreed that it was properly timed while 30.2% indicated that the timing was not adequate; 21.6% were not sure of the timing. The relative advantages of the programme were made known to the participants, as indicated by 44.8%. However, the impact on the social relations was not made known to the participants as 51.7% indicated that they were not aware of the impact as they were not informed.

The participants were informed of the accomplishment of those who have taken part in the programme before. This was indicated by 61.2% of the participants, and this encouraged them to attend classes regularly. Much as they were not informed of the social implications, they were also not informed about the compatibility of the programme with existing psychological, social and cultural conditions for achieving progress.

The local language was used to explain issues and this made understanding very simple and easy. Furthermore, the facilitators used role play to explain the importance of the programme to the community and this encouraged the participants in their work.

The facilitators, according to 68.1% of the participants, have time for the participants and help them to understand any issue which comes up.

The influence of community

Table 5 shows the responses given on the influence of the community on the programme. On the location of the centre, 64.7% indicated that the centres are located in their community, while 26.7% said the centres are not located in their community. On the philosophy for literacy based on human as well as community development, 62.1% indicated that the programme is based on human and community development while 28.4% said it was not based on human and community development.

Considering participation of people, that is, the larger population of the community, 37.9% were of the view that there is participation at all levels of the community, 31.9% were not sure of the level of participation while 30.2% were of the view that there is low participation. The low participation level may be due to the fact that some view the programme as traditional education and therefore do not see the need to participate. Regarding management of the classes at the local level, 29.3% said it is the responsibility of the community to organize the classes, while 70.7% were of the view that it is not the responsibility of the community to see to the management of the classes at the local level.

On the question relating to community capacity building through empowering, organisation, mobilization, evaluation and training, the following responses were recorded: 45.7% responded that there is massive empowering, organization and mobilization of resources and recruiting of members of the community; 29.3% were of the view that no such thing is done while 25% were not sure whether the community does something like that.

Table 5: Influence of the community

Variable	Question	Yes		Unsure		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Location of the centre	Is the centre located in your community?	75	64.7	10	8.6	31	26.7

Philosophy for literacy based on principles of social transformation	Is the programme using the philosophical foundation based on human as well as community development?	72	62.1	11	9.5	33	28.4
Participation of the People i.e., the larger Population	Is participation at all levels of your community?	44	37.9	37	31.9	35	30.2
Massive community empowering, organization, mobilization,	Is there a massive empowering, organization and mobilization resources and recruiting of your community?	53	45.7	29	25.0	34	29.3
Management of literacy classes at local level	Is the literacy class seen as a community responsibility?	34	29.3	0	0.0	82	70.7

The impacts of community-based and personalized programmes or “indigenized curriculum” on learner-participation do take into consideration very important ingredients of function, such as recipient characteristics, the place and the content. Ballara (1991) suggests that in tackling illiteracy some successful programmes have had political priorities and community support. Integrated approach, literacy and post-literacy training as one educational process were also included. Development projects meeting women’s needs and concerns; and women themselves participating in not only the learning but also the organizing, managing, planning and delivering the service.

Test of Hypothesis

Table 6 shows the chi-square analysis of the influence of socio-demographic characteristics of learners, learner perception of the functional literacy programme, the design and delivery of the programme and the influence of the community on one hand, on the learners’ participation in literacy programmes.

Table 6: Chi-square analysis of participation and the factors

Variable	Value	df	Assym. Sig.	Conclusion
Socio-demographic characteristics of learners	21.33	3	7.81	Significant
Design and delivery of the programme	8.866	11	19.68	Not Significant
Community’s influence	7.33	3	7.81	Not Significant

($p = 0.05$)

From the above table, it can be deduced that there is significant difference between socio-demographic characteristics and learners’ participation in the literacy programmes. However, there is no significant difference between learner perception, design and delivery of the programme and the influence of the community on one hand and the participation of the learners in the literacy programme.

Models from the study

Model 1: The study of the University of Ghana revealed a strategy that currently delivers formal (workers’ college, and distance learning), non-formal (MASSLIP) and informal (Annual New Year School) learning for development which researchers named LeGON Strategy providing a *Learn edge* Group Outreach Network by which the university system provided a transformational leadership that is very much felt in the developmental ideas that get translated into national policies for development.

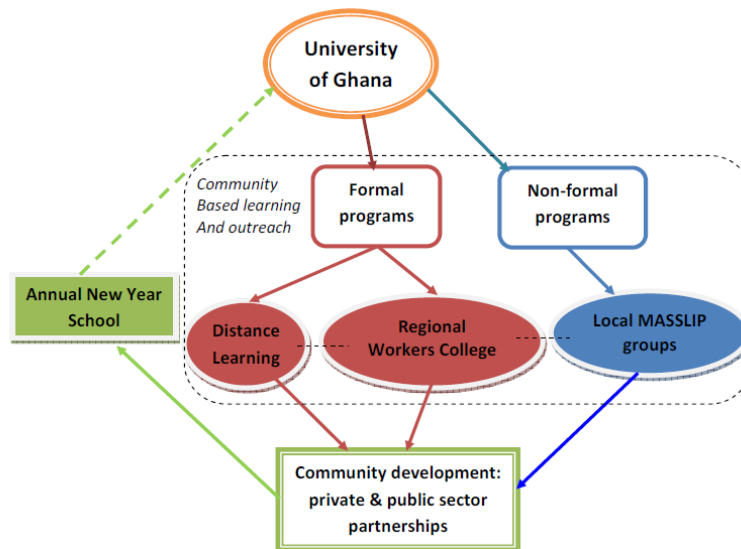


Figure 1: the LeGON Strategy Model

Model 2: Another model shown Figure 2 was the 5-stage Community-based Learning Access and Success (CbLAS) model. It was designed based on the factors of influence in the tables above for the non-formal education. The Learner, Community and the FLA, and the University System are very much involved at each of the stages as partners.

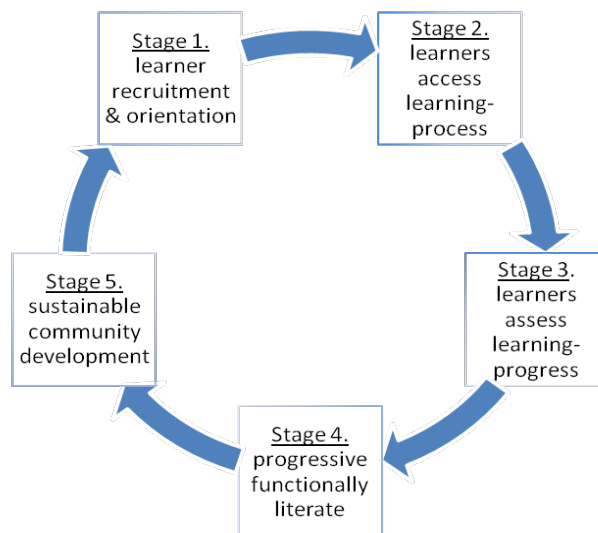


Figure 2: the 5-stage Community-based Learning Access and Success (CbLAS) model

This model's first stage constitutes the learners' recruitment and orientation process, based on their bio psychosocial characteristics. The stage 2 emphasises learner accessing learning process facilitated by the FLA. The third stage involves learners assessing their learning progress. This result in the stage four which sees the learner becomes progressive functionally literate individual in the community. In the final and fifth stage, there emerges sustainable community development with the now urbanite woman functional literate getting involved in recruiting potential learners as well as embarking on other developmental activities.

Conclusion

The result of study showed that community based learning outreach of the University of Ghana system is not only reaching the formal and informal learners, but also non-formal learners in the community based on the LeGON strategy. Internal factors (Learner characteristics) have significant influence on adult learner participation. The access and success of urbanite woman learner participation in MASSLIP depends on the 5-stage Community-based Learning Access and Success (CbLAS) model.

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