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70 Years

OF ADULT EDUCATION AT IBADAN (1949-2019)

Edited by:

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Ibadan

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70 Years of Adult Education Researches @ Ibadan

K.O., Kester, Stella I. Odiaka and Funmilola E. Akinyooye

Introduction

It was on record that little attention was paid to adult education researches globally in the 1950s and 1960s (Rubenson, 1989), and not until late 1960s and early 1970s that we began to have growing interest in this field (Kester, Ogidan, Oke and Oni, 2016). Available evidence shows that, at foundation, the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Ibadan as it was known then started its activities on assessment of extra-mural needs and areas where centres could be sited across the cities of Nigeria. Specifically, Akinpelu (2002) avers that, even ten years after the establishment of Adult Education Department in Ibadan, there were no serious academic studies or research going on. The main focus of the Department then was the preparation of Nigerians for administrative services and self-governance after the independence, creating well informed and discerning Nigerian public (Akinpelu and Osuji, 1989).

However, this trend changed slightly between 1967 and 1971, when Adult Education Department in the University of Ibadan became involved in UNESCO and federal government sponsored work-oriented functional literacy projects among Oyo North Tobacco growers (Braithwaite, Adeola and Adekanbi, 1989). This paradigm shift became more intense in 1978 with the introduction of the restructured one-year master (M.Ed) and doctoral degree programmes. Over 10 years after, Omolewa (1989), projecting a future for the Department during its 40 years anniversary, submitted thus:

It is hoped that, the emphasis of the department in the area of teaching and research will shift to concentrate on high quality research invest(ing) time and resources in providing research ... that will make a permanent impact on adult education work in the country....

At the moment, hardly anyone is keen to fund research in adult education in most of the developing countries where research is regarded as luxury which can thus wait until the people have been well-fed and well-clothed. Yet unless there is considerable investment in research, knowledge can hardly grow (Pp 157-158).

This prediction above made by Omolewa (1989) about the future of adult education researches in Ibadan and Nigeria in general, raises a serious concern and interest in the state of adult education researches almost 30 years after. It is even more salient now that, the Department is celebrating 70 years of its establishment and service to humanity. Besides, it is essential to assess the state (quantity and quality) of such adult education researches now that research in the field of adult education is becoming of vital global interest to a wider group of people apart from the traditional adult education scholars (Ruberson and Elfert, 2015; Kester, Gbenro and Ogidan, 2019). It is with this hindsight that this chapter critically examines the trend in research activities in the Department in the last 70 years.

For easy assessment, the trend will be classified into five phases: the early beginning (period before 1967); 1967-1989; 1990-1999; 2000-2009 and 2010 to date. This classification negates that of Ruberson and Elfert (2015) that have three distinctive phases (1920-1963; 1964-1991; 1991 and beyond) because the pattern of development of adult education as a field of study in America and Europe differs from what obtains in Nigeria and other African countries.

Phase I: The Early Beginning (Before 1967)

At the early beginning, the Department was more of a public face of the University College, disseminating knowledge and helping to create an informed public opinion among Nigerians, through its country-wide lecture tours. According to Akinpelu and Osuji (1989), the focus of the department then was to:

- i. Create a well informed and discriminating public that would be able to form considered judgments on issues of public policy as basis for democratic government,

- ii. Run courses to consolidate and improve Nigeria's administrative services at all levels, through making public servants more efficient by exposing them to professional refresher courses;
- iii. Promote the nation's economic development through conducting training programmes and refresher courses for agriculture extension workers, preparing manuals for their use, and organizing short as well as more sustained seminars on industrial relations for the fledgling labour and industrial unions;
- iv. Promote cultural renaissance in Nigeria, by getting Nigerians to appreciate their own cultural heritage; and
- v. Help Nigerians to relate to the outside world through the provision of courses on world affairs.

By 1962/63, the focus of the Department changed a little from pure public face to academic department when there was a fusion of the Faculty of Education with the Department to become what was known then as "The Faculty of Education and Extra-Mural Studies". However, "the year 1965 marked a turning point in the orientation of the Department" (Akinpelu and Osuji, 1989:15); when the first batch of 26 students started their adult education diploma course in October. By 1967, when the students (22 of them) were graduating, the Department with all intents and purposes had become a full academic department. A cursory look at the activities of the Department during this period would show that, there were no serious academic research activities within the Department, except for few personal researches of the resident academic staff. According to Braimoh, Adeola and Adekanmbi (1989):

....Professor S.H.O Tomori...opened the way for these research activities with his production of an experimental literacy primer in Yoruba in 1966.... the first set of action researches, involving staff and diploma when students in their various classrooms the field began (p123).

As little as these researches were then, they were the impetus that led to the establishment of the Institute of African Adult Education in the University of Ibadan in 1960s. According to Ogunshye (1967), the

Institute was set up jointly by the UNESCO, the Federal Government of Nigeria and the University of Ibadan as a sub-regional centre serving the countries of West Africa. The main functions of the Institute was research and experimentation into teaching methods in functional literacy, production of reading materials, and the use of communication media in adult education. Specifically, this the beginning of literacy primer designing and was development in Nigeria and other West African countries. These primers were developed for the purpose of improving the economic output of the adult learners with particular operations in tobacco growing. Ahmed (1967) opined that, the reading materials were designed to develop fluency in reading, the habit of reading for meaning, the understanding of visual symbolism, the arithmetical skills and the knowledge of basic biological principles needed in tobacco growing.

Phase II: 1967 to 1989

According to Majasan (1989), the invaluable service rendered by the Ibadan Adult Education and the excellence in its academic activities were laid during this period. The Department was reconstituted for core academic activities; developed close relationship with UNESCO which led to the establishment of the Institute of African Adult Education. This subsequently brought about external aid for research and intensive literacy work, particularly among tobacco growers in Oyo North.

This second phase witnessed the introduction of more academic programmes into the Department. A one-year certificate course in Trade Unionism and Industrial Relation was introduced in October, 1970; the Bachelor degree in Education (B.Ed) in October 1971 and a 2 year M.Ed degree was also introduced in 1975/76. This was later restructured into one-year M.Ed programme in 1978 and the M.phil and PhD were added in 1977 to make full complements of the university academic programmes. Enrolment across the programmes could still be regarded as substantially low. Within this phase, there were about 170 master degree (M.Ed) projects, M.phil dissertations and 15 PhD theses (Akinpelu and Osuji, 1989; Omole & Sarumi, 2003). The first Nigerian doctoral degree in Adult Education was awarded to Dr. Sydney Osuji who was supervised by the duo of Akinpelu and Omolewa in 1981.

Apart from the dissertation and the theses, the M.Ed projects with little supports from funding agencies could not be regarded as having full complements and rigour of an academic research. Apart from the thesis by Abiodun Okediran in 1988, that adopted the quasi experimental design, other theses within this period were survey-oriented, historical or philosophical in nature. The researches from the academic staff during this period enjoyed supports from the University, national and international agencies. Succinctly, researches in the Department within this period were more of qualitative than quantitative in nature, tilting more towards the participatory research approach. Nevertheless, as noted by Knox (1989), the choice of the research titles are influenced by students' and supervisors' interest, and are limited to themes of adult education.

It was on record that, furtherance to the collaboration programme with UNESCO and the Federal Government of Nigeria that started in the first phase, the Department through the Institute of African Adult Education decided to expand its functional literacy experimentations by establishing cooperation with the Nigerian Tobacco Company (NTC) and the government of Western Nigeria. This new collaboration conducted experimental researches in Iseyin area of Western Nigeria to demonstrate that, literacy programmes linked with productive activities could enhance tobacco farmers' productivity and increase their incomes, while at the same time the farmers were acquiring new knowledge and skills. Besides, a number of ancillary researches were carried out simultaneously (Ogunsheye, 1967). Ahmed (1967) therefore submits that, this led to 12 job oriented reading materials that were designed to give functional literacy to the learners. The tobacco literacy project led to the urban literacy projects across many cities in Nigeria (Ogun, Cross- Rivers, Kaduna and Kano states) (Majasan, 1989).

Also, during this phase, the Department, while collaborating with the African Regional Health Education Centre, Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan embarked on research into social and behavioural aspects of tropical diseases, focusing on the adult education component. This project was financed by the UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for

Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (Okedara, Okedara and Adeniyi, 1982).

In addition, the 3-Year Experimental Literacy Circle Project, headed by Dr J. T. Okedara was a major research in West Africa as at that time, that projected the contribution of the Department qualitative literacy research in Africa, and West Africa in particular. This project that adopted quantitative research method led to the publications of "The Impact of Literacy Education in Ibadan, Nigeria, and "Concepts as well as Measurements of Literacy, Semi Literacy and Illiteracy". These two publications projected the image and the activities of the Department greatly in the 1980s. Succinctly, the research activities of the Department during this phase also led to series of Special training programmes on literacy and adult and non-formal education which eventually cumulated into the establishment of the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE) and an adult education unit in the Federal Ministry of Education in 1974. Besides, it also led to the establishment of National Commission for Mass Education (NMEC) in 1980. Further, the Market Women and Experimental literacy projects of the Department served as rural laboratory for testing some of the theoretical postulations of the Department.

A research team drawn from the Department (Omolewa, Adeola, Adekanmbi, Avoseh and Braimoh) won the Inaugural Honourable Mention of Literacy Research Award by UNESCO Institute for Education in 1982 (Omolewa, 1999). Mention must be made of the fact that, the research activities of all the academic staff, particularly that of Omolewa and Okedara, during this period led to the links programme made between the Departments in collaboration with other international agencies (such as UNDP and International Foundation for Education and Self-Help - IFESH) and the UNESCO International Literacy Institute, Philadelphia, USA, where a hand full of academic staff, participated in the UNESCO summer programme. This accounted for the UNSCEO International Reading Association Literacy Prize in 1989. The dissemination of such research outcomes was made possible only through journals floated outside the Department and even the Faculty, because there were no journal publication opportunities from within. The common and visible journal around the Department then was the

students' journal called 'The Adult Educator', which ceased to exist around early 1990s, though, the establishment of the NNCAE in 1971 by league of adult education practitioners and scholars came with research outcomes publication opportunity (Adult Education in Nigeria).

Phase III: 1990-1999

This period was associated with expanding importance and practice of adult education; serving wider range of individuals and societal needs in Nigeria (Kester, Ogidan and Oke, 2018). The existing collaborations were strengthened and new ones were being established. Maintaining its flagship of adult education researches in West Africa and Africa in general. The Department was invited by the UNESCO Institute for Education to participate in a world trend analysis on educational research in adult education across the five developing regions in 1993. This therefore led to a collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office of Education in Africa (BREDA), based in Dakar, Senegal, in organising a seminar/conference in December, 1993 on the examination of the state of adult education research in Africa with a view to ensuring that, research in adult education are injected into developmental processes across Africa (Oduaran, 2000). The decision to entrust this important task to the Department must have been informed by the long tradition of the Department in adult education research, and its award of the UNSCEO International Reading Association Literacy Prize in 1989 (Omolewa, 1999). And this led to the preparation of a report titled "Research Trends in Adult Education- Regional African Study", by the Department that was published in the "World Trends in Adult Education Research", by UNESCO Institute for Education in 1999. According to the African report, there is the need to inaugurate a purely research outfit in Africa that should be named African Adult Education Research Association (AAERA) housed in Ibadan, undertake the publication of the Journal of Adult Education Research in Africa (JAERA), and an Adult Education Index that will contain all available publications within Africa, and on Africa from the outside world. In addition, there was the recommendation of an Annotated African Regional Directory of Adult Education Dissertations and Theses (Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, 1999). All these cumulated into the award of

UNESCO Chair in the application of ICT to literacy promotion to the Department in 1998.

Besides, the collaborative researches between Okedara, Dr Ojesina and Prof. Louis P. Shoemaker of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA brought about the renewed interest in social work contents into the programmes of the Department in the 1990/1991 academic session and the eventual establishment of the Social Work Department in the University in 1999. In addition, the continuous research activities with the British Council and some non-government organisations in literacy activities in Nigeria brought about the links programme between the Department and the University of Nottingham, UK, between 1995 and 1998. This collaboration led to a number of inter-institutional researches between academic staff in Ibadan and Nottingham, which produced different publications in international outlets.

Apart from this, a collaborative study by Omolewa, Ihebuzor and Aderinoye in 1997 in partnership with UNICEF on the applicability of Real Literacy Material (RLM) or Learner Generated Material (LGM) in Nigeria led to the development of a facilitator manual that was popularized in Africa by the Department of International Development (DID), United Kingdom and the British Council (Aderinoye, 2018). Also, during this phase, the duo of Alan Rogers and Aderinoye, adopted the literacy shop approach in teaching and mobilizing sellers and buyers towards literacy acquisition at the Bodija market. The various researches of the University Village Association (UNIVA) of the Department (comprising Omolewa, Aderinoye, Fadeyi, Egunyomi, Sarumi and others) during this period led to the development and publication of different post-literacy materials for neo-literates across many states of the federation.

While more structures such as State Agencies for Mass Education (SAMEs); National Adult Education Centre, Kano; Nomadic Education Commission; NMEC and Nigerian National Council for Adult Education; NNCAE for adult education practice and promotion were being empowered and institutionalised, enrolments into the various adult education programmes were also increasing. According to Kester,

Ogidan, Oke and Oni (2016), there was increase in master degree (M.Ed) and doctoral degree programmes in Ibadan and all over Nigeria for the purpose of human capital acquisition in the profession and practice. During this phase, 31 doctoral researches or thereabout were conducted and concluded.

The number of Ph.D researches during this phase doubled that of the second phase. However, it is also on record that, there were no supports for such researches from the funding agencies; neither did we have publication opportunities during this phase to disseminate the outcomes of the researches until around the second half of the phase. Specifically, the first two journals in the Department; The African Journal of Labour Studies, and the Nigerian Journal of Industrial Education and Labour Relations came in 1995, and they were solely for the Industrial Education unit of the Department. A cursory look at the early editions of these two journals revealed that, 98% of the publications were from the academic staff, meaning there was not much impetus for publications of doctoral researches outcomes. In the light of the above, one wonders where the founding fathers of the Department must have been publishing their research outcomes. Anecdotal evidences showed that, these academic giants must have been using the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE), international journal outlets, as well as outlets from sister faculties and institutes.

It is very pertinent to state that, this phase witnessed very highly mature, dedicated and committed doctoral degree students who stuck strictly to the core ethics of research. In addition, the second half of this phase also witnessed the immense contributions of the then Drs M. A. L. Omole and M. O. Akintayo (in particular) to research activities in the Department. The dexterity of Professor Akintayo reflected in the quality of research outputs in the Department: his experiences at the Faculty and the Postgraduate School Board were brought to bear on the Departmental research activities.

Phase IV: 2000 - 2009

This particular phase which could be regarded as the third generation of doctoral degree researches in Adult Education Department in Ibadan and all over Nigeria witnessed a phenomenal increase in doctoral

admissions. This arose as a result of the growing recognition for more doctoral earnings in the field of adult education among the pool of existing and potential personnel (Kester, Ogidan, Oke and Oni, 2016). There was increasing doctoral degree enrolment and attainment; 80 doctoral degrees were awarded during this period in the Department compared to the 31 in the third phase (Akinpelu & Osuji, 1989; Omole & Sarumi, 2003; Popoola, Olorunnisola, Babalola & Azeez, 2011; Olorunnisola, Babalola & Alarape, 2013).

Although, the number of researches from the Department increased significantly during this period, largely due to the increase in the doctoral researches, there was still no financial support for such researches. Unlike in the last phase, there were opportunities at the time in question for dissemination of research outcomes. In addition to the first two journals, two additional journals were instituted in the Department in year 2000, namely, International Journal of Literacy; Education and International Journal of Continuing and Non - Formal Education. In the same year, the Ibadan Journal of Educational Studies was also instituted at the faculty level. These and other journals around provided easy opportunities for dissemination of adult education researches in Ibadan. Essentially, doctoral degree students were encouraged to publish their research outcomes, thus increasing the visibility of adult education researches the more. However, towards the last quarter of this phase, the first two journals (The African Journal of Labour Studies, and the Nigerian Journal of Industrial Education and Labour Relations) were rested circumstantially.

In the same vein, the high quality of both students' and academic staff researches attained in the last phase began to drop drastically from the second half of this phase. Though the scope and topics were becoming wider and interesting, robust statistics were adopted, yet the procedures involved were becoming less rigorous. This affected the quality of research outputs from the Department as well as the image of the Department generally within the University. The central research coordination in the Department became weak and loosened, though, few academic staff at individual level was still engaging in qualitative research, upholding the essential ethics of conducting research.

Besides, there were evidences that, the degree completion rates were becoming not too encouraging; the length of time to complete degree programmes was on the increase, while the attrition rate of doctoral degree students who enrolled for doctoral programme and failed to complete the programme for whatever reason also increased (Kester, Ogidan, Oke and Oni, 2016). From their study, Kester, Ogidan, Oke and Oni (2016) showed that, the average doctoral time-to degree completion in the Department for those who were admitted between 1999 and 2011 was 8 years, while the average completion time for male and female doctoral degree students within this period was 8 and 7 years respectively. Also, the study revealed that, the attrition rate among the male doctoral degree students (64.3%) is higher than among the females (35.7%). This implies that, more males withdrew from their doctoral degree programmes than the females.

The reasons for this trend were classified into two broad dimensions: lecturers' and students' related factors. Lecturers' related factors include: the general attitude and disposition of their supervisors to doctoral degree students, non-completion of course works and not having conversion examinations at the appropriate time. The students' related factors were students' inability to cope effectively with the demands of doctoral degree programme, study-family-work conflicts, procrastination and financial challenges among others. According to literature, this was, therefore, a sign of poor institutional quality, waste of students' energy, hope and financial resources, and the unproductive dissipation of faculty and department time and efforts with significant social costs (Berelson, 1960; American Council of Graduate School, 1991; Kluever, 1995; Kester, Ogidan, Oke and Oni, 2016).

Phase V: 2010 – To date

While the number of doctoral degree enrolment and attainment is increasing, the dwindling quality of the researches as witnessed in the previous phase is further being experienced. In fact -most of those who had their research completed during this phase those who gained were admission either in the last quarter of the third phase or early/mid fourth phase. And this is evident from the continuation of the lengthy time to research completion that started in the fourth phase due to failure on the part of the students to show commitment and dedication.

There are total of 101 doctoral researches within this phase which almost equal the combination of the doctoral researches in both the third and fourth phases. However, the general attitude and disposition of both the academic staff and students toward ethical research could be improved upon.

Conclusion

Adult education researches in Ibadan which began in the mid-1960s underwent five different phases; from little or no serious academic research activities to high intense research activities in the 1990s and early 2000s. The researches covered both the academic researches of the academic staff and the doctoral students. Nevertheless, there room for improvement in the area of conducting research for a greater impact.

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