

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL COHESION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Investment in education in general and adult education in particular are major ways of developing the capacities of individuals to contribute to national cohesion and sustainable development. This paper examined Federal Government investments in adult and non-formal education for national cohesion and sustainable development in Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted in the study, using ex-post facto approach. Records of Federal government's appropriations and disbursements from 2012 to 2017 were collected from the office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, Federal Ministry of Finance. The data were analyzed using percentages. The findings of the study revealed that within the year under review, adult and non-formal education received only an average appropriation of N651066,023.00 representing 1.19 percent of the total capital appropriation to education. The Federal government disbursed an average of 45.28 Percent of the meagre appropriations to adult and non-formal education between 2012 and 201 among others. To ensure that the sub-sector contributes to national cohesion and achievement of SDG goal, the study recommended that the Federal government should increase the appropriation to adult education to a minimum of three percent of the total capital allocation to education and it should ensure that it achieves a minimum of 80 percent disbursement of capital appropriations to the subsector.

Key Words: Investment, Adult and Non-formal Education, Cohesion and Sustainable Development

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Introduction

Investment in the productive capacities of human beings stems out of human capital theory in America which began in 1960. Investments in education in general and adult education in particular are the major ways of human capital development for effective contribution for national cohesion and sustainable development. Investment in education paves way for access and equity to quality education in line with the provisions of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) four; which is “To provide an inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all”.

The world commitment and efforts in ensuring access to educational opportunity for all predates SDG, in 1993, nine developing countries; Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan formed a forum, the e-9 countries. The countries were considered to have the largest proportion of adult illiterates, the group created the E-9 Initiative on education. This initiative was taken up with the aim of strengthening national efforts to ensure access to quality basic education in the nine most populous developing countries, where the scale of the challenge of adult illiterates was the greatest. At the inception of the E-9 Initiative, the countries focused on the common features of their high population and the large numbers of adult non-literates within their borders (Robinson, 2014).

The initiative was to achieve the UNESCO 2015 deadline of Education For All (EFA) initiative. Goal four of the initiative focused on achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. Although, the E-9 initiative created a noticeable rise in literacy rates in the e-9 nations, However, Galguera (2015) observed that only 25 percent of countries reached this goal; 32 percent, including Nigeria, lingered very far from it. While globally, the percentage of illiterate adults fell from 18 per cent in 2000 to 14 per cent in 2015; half of Nigerian adults, 51 per cent are illiterate. In 2015 the population of the absolute number of non-literate adults in Nigeria was projected to have remained as high as 43,127,000 adults, also EFA global monitoring of 2013/2014 reports showed that Nigeria recorded only 0.67 reduction in the non-literate adult (EFA- Global Monitoring Report. 2014). Political will in investing and funding education were major identified obstacles for achieving the EFA goals at all levels. Investing to increase access to functional educational opportunities to teaming youth and adult is no longer an option but a priority to Nigeria to a point of declaring a state of emergency for the education sector of the economy.

The problem

Investment in education in Nigeria has remained low. UNESCO (2010) admitted that government priority in most countries is relatively low and most resources for adult learning come from the private and voluntary sectors. The vulnerability of the uneducated adults and sustainable development calls for the need to invest and fund adult education. Adults who are now parents had no opportunity to go to school when they were young. For the adults to understand the value of education for their own children, it is important that governments invest in their learning.

The deep-rooted insecurity threatening corporate national existence, poverty coupled with hunger, cultural, religious, ethnic, gender and class segregation that do not encourage national cohesion and sustainable development could be tackled through concerted efforts in investing in adult education. Global Education Monitoring Report (2017) observed that only 20 percent of adults had completed primary education but only 0.5 percent have enrolled in the formal education, most adults in the low income

countries do not have basic computer skills and the number of youths with no literacy skills has fallen since 2000, although more than 100 million people still cannot read. This trend calls for concern on the state of adult education worldwide and in Nigeria in particular.

This subsector of education appears to have suffered neglect in favour of other education subsectors; despite the key role the education of these groups in addressing national and global challenges of integration, peace and human right, preservation of unity in national diversity. Therefore, investing in the sub-sector becomes critical. The problem of this study is what was the percentage of federal government's investment into adult education in Nigeria between and 2017?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to analyze the federal government investments in the Adult education for national cohesion and sustainable development in Nigeria. The following specific objectives guided the study:

1. To ascertain Federal government capital appropriation to adult education in Nigeria from 2012 to 2017
2. To examine Federal government capital appropriation and release to adult education from 2012 to 2017.
3. To find out Federal government recurrent disbursement to adult education from 2012- 2017.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What was the federal government's capital appropriation to adult education in Nigeria from 2012 to 2017?
2. What was the federal government's capital appropriation and release for adult education from 2012 to 2017?
3. What was the percentage of federal government recurrent disbursement for adult education from 2012- 2017?

Literature Review

Investment in adult education transcends economic returns to greater municipal and community benefits. Friedman (Agabi,2002) admitted that the gains of educating a child does not end with the child or to his parents but also to other members of the society. It contributes to other people's welfare by promoting a stable and democratic society. According to him education has a significant "neighbourhood effect". Extending energy of investing into adult education therefore goes beyond the economic benefits of the recipients to social cohesion. Burrup (Agabi, 2002) added that both the invested funds and their increases are returned to supporting society. In a sense, education merely borrows funds for use until the resources flow system returns them with interest to the people.

Inequality in many respects has remained a challenge in the developing nations. This has continued to threaten the coexistence of the communities and nations. International Institute of Educational Planning- IIEP and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO (2010) reported that educational in equity is an important contributor to income inequity. More equitable access to educational opportunities, therefore, could play significant role in reducing income inequities and combating poverty. According to them, there is evidences that greater inequity leads to poorer economic growth rates, while growth rates are positively correlated with greater equity.

Educational so contributes indirectly to higher economic growth rates through its impact on reducing inequity of income distribution. Inequality in a nation is most likely the commonest cause of class distinctions and isolation in a social system and consequently leading to insecurity in a society. Deliberate attempt to invest in adult education can help bridge the gap between other inequities such as the urban-rural divides, linguistic and cultural divides. Working through these mechanisms, educating adult member of the society could contribute to greater social cohesion.

In realization of the role of education to societal cohesion, the world gathered in the Jomtien conference to consider the agenda on Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015. The World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 expressed its goals for educational development among others to include ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes; and achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults (UNESCO,2010).

The National Blueprint for Adult and Non-formal Education in Nigeria see adult education as the main component of mass education. Federal Republic of Nigeria -FRN (1990) described adult education as any learning or educational activity that occurs outside the formal school system and is undertaken by people who are considered to be adults in their society. It includes all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system, such as functional literacy, remedial and vocational education. Non-formal adult education on the other hand, is a learning activity organized outside the established framework of the formal school system. It is education meant for out of school adults. It is very wide in scope as it covers training of various types e.g. training of food vendors for better food preparation, learning carpentry or the art of sewing. This programme of mass education is closely related to literacy which involves the ability to read, write and compete for informed and organized competence meant to aid the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihood. This programme extends to functional literacy, which emphasizes the skill of reading, writing and computing failure towards one's occupation for better economic productivity.

UNESCO (Obasi, 2014) saw adult education as the entire body of organized process whatever the content, level or method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as apprenticeship. It is a form of education whereby persons regarded as adults develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspectives of full personal development. It is the education that redresses the imbalance between education received when one is young and that of later life (Adedokun & Adeyemo, 2013).

Nzeneri (Onyishi. 2010) conceptualizes adult education as the form of education which places emphasis on lifelong learning, a process and agent of liberation adjustment, self and national development, cultural awareness and integration, conscientization and group dynamism. Heated that, adult education is any education given to adults based on their social, political and cultural and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust fully to changes and challenges in their lives and society. Adult education is an empowerment strategy through which adults can uplift themselves socially and economically to enable them to participate fully in the development of their communities. According to Seya (Muhmmad, 2013) it is transmission process of general, technical or

vocational knowledge as well as skills, values and attitudes, which take place out of the formal education system with a view of remedy in gearly education in adequacies of mature people or equipping them with knowledge and cultural elements required for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies.

Ayodele and Adedokun (2014) opined that adult education is a learning activity organized outside the established framework of the formal school system. The programme extends into functional literacy, which emphasizes the skill of reading, writing and computing failure towards one's occupation for better economic productivity. Included in functional literacy also are technological and computer literacy. The scope of adult education programme underscores the need for conscious and determined purposeful investment to have result based evidence in the progamme.

Aderinoye (2007) stated that Non-Formal Education (NFE) Programmes of National Mass Education Commission (NMEC) in the quest to drastically reduce the high level of illiteracy in Nigeria and make basic education accessible to all the citizenry, the Nigerian government through the National Commission for Mass Literacy and Adult Education introduced a variety of non-formal education programmes as a complementary option to take care of disadvantaged, marginalized and hard to reach children, youth and adults. The non-formal education programmes are supposed to offer a flexible opportunity of receiving basic education to disadvantaged children, youths and adults who could not participate in formal schooling either due to poverty, cultural or other social barriers. The non-formal education approach permits mainstreaming of learners into the formal system at different levels. The cohesion of the non-formal education as a component of the basic education system therefore requires that quality standards must be maintained at all levels of the literacy programmes to mainstreaming of learners possible.

Investing in adult education could stabilize national democracy as citizens are educated on democratic culture and are well informed on their rights and responsibilities. Education of the can improve active participation in political and democratic process at local, national and global levels. One of grave consequences of non-investment on adult education According to Garuba (Obasi 2014) is of different dimensions but no one presents greater threats to global peace and stability than the present upsurge of international terrorism.

However, most governments in Africa allocate meager financial resources annually to adult education organizations. Adult education is, according to Afrik (2000), the poorest partner in education in terms of the allocation of financial resources. Subsequently, very little funds are available for the management of the organizations. The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) and the Mid-term Conference argued for a minimum of 3 percent of the education budget to be channeled to adult learning. Despite this argument, a survey in 2005 by the Action Aid and Global Campaign for Education (GCE) discovered that even this small amount was rarely achieved; only Namibia had tried to allocate close to 3 percent of its education budget to adult education (Archer, 2006). Adult education organizations continue to be inadequately financed in comparison to other sectors of the economy and to other areas of the education system. As an example of where underfunding occurs, we need look no further than those adult education organizations engaged in literacy programmes. As Archer (2006) maintains, 'in recent years it has become all too invisible as people have refused to make this sound investment. Funds have been channeled into primary education but very little has gone into adult literacy even though there are strong returns and the investment seems to make good financial sense'. The need to fund adult education

organizations is crucial when we consider that many African adults who are now parents had no opportunity to go to school when they were young. For these adults to understand the value of education for their own children, it is important that governments invest in their learning.

According to UNESCO (2010), the challenge of providing adult learning is also very daunting as it competes with primary and other formal education sectors for limited educational funds. It has a relatively low government priority in almost all countries and most resources for adult learning come from the private and voluntary sectors. There are several reasons for the low priority accorded by governments:

- The learning needs of children, which are seen as a high priority, are themselves unmet by the limited budgets.
- The adult learning sector does not have a voice at the political level, as it is not an important issue for the class that runs governments.
- The potential of adult learning for enhancing productivity, employment and innovation in local settings has not been assessed through substantive analysis.
- The empowerment that adult learning could bring may even be seen as threatening to many governments.

Sociologists have recognized social inequality as a bane for class struggle that breeds divides along different lines. The role of education has become greater as its wider social benefits gain recognition. Research has shown that *educational inequity* is an important contributor to *income inequity*. More equitable access to educational opportunities, therefore, can play a role in reducing income inequities and combating poverty. There is now some evidence that greater inequity leads to poorer economic growth rates, while growth rates are positively correlated with greater equity. Thus, education can also contribute indirectly to higher economic growth rates through its impact on reducing inequity of income distribution. Education policies can help bridge the gap between other inequities such as the urban- rural divide, and linguistic and cultural divides. Gender equity is also an important social goal and is also sustainable development goals which can be influenced through education. By working through these mechanisms, adult education can contribute to greater social cohesion (UNESC and IIEP, 2010). It is in the realization of this that FGN (2014pg 19) posited that in order to eradicate illiteracy at the shortest possible time there shall be nation-wide mass literacy campaign based various strategies that of “each-one-teach-one “or “fund-the- teaching-of-one”.... The achievement of this strategy depends to a large extent on the funds available in terms of federal Governments allocation to the programme.

Theoretical Base of the Study

This study is based on human capital theory first developed by Schultz (1961) who argued that increase in the value of observed total output in relation to increases in existing factors of production could be attributed to investment in human capital. This investment comes in the form of education where people invest in themselves to become more productive members of the society. This theory sees humans to possess some inert abilities developed through education that is needed in production. Investing in the human capital bring returns that is both economic and non-economic returns.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted in this study, using ex-post facto approach. This seeks to describe events, conditions and occurrences as they are without any manipulation of what caused the events (Ali, 2006). This study was concerned with the collation of existing data on federal government’s allocation to adult education in Nigeria within the period under review. There was no sampling in this study and secondary data was used. Data on federal government allocation to adult education were harvested from the Federal Ministry of Education. Percentage was used to answer the research questions.

Results, Interpretations and Discussions

Data generated on records were analysed and presented on tables 1-3 to answer the three research questions that guided the study.

1. What was the federal government's capital appropriation to adult education in Nigeria from 2012 to 2017?

Data retrieved from achieves were analysed and presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Total capital appropriation for adult education in Nigeria from 2012 to 2017

Date	Total Education appropriation	Adult Education appropriation	Percentage
2012	66,833,018,506.00	472,214,000.00	0.71
2013	71,230,438,355.00	240,600,000.00	0.34
2014	51,281,035,231.00	306,924,825.00	0.60
2015	23,520,000,000.00	370,000,000.00	1.57
2016	35,995,592,156.00	1,375,828,657.00	3.82
2017	78,879,636,914.00	1,140,828,656.00	1.45
Sectional Mean	54,623,286,860.33	651,066,023.00	1.19

Source: office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, Federal Min. of Finance. Summary of capital releases to FME and its parastatals.

Table 1 presents the capital appropriation to adult as percentage from the total allocation appropriated to education in Nigeria from 2012 to 2017. The result showed that within the year under review, adult education received an average appropriation of N651,066, 023.00 representing 1.19 percent of the total appropriation to education. The highest appropriation of N1, 375,828,657.00 (3.82 percent) was received in 2016. In 2015, the appropriation was 1.57 percent and later nose dive to 1.45 percent in 2017. Between 2012 and 2014 the appropriation to adult education from the total appropriation to education fell between 0.34 and 0.71, this was less than 1 percent of the total appropriation to education.

2. What was the federal government's capital appropriation and release to adult education from 2012 to 2017?

Data retrieved from achieves were analysed and presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Capital appropriation and releases to adult education from 2012 to 2017

Date	Capital appropriation	Releases	Percentage
2012	472,214,000.00	307,767,584.00	65.18
2013	240,600,000.00	109,667,746.00	45.58
2014	306,924,825.00	180,224,073.00	58.72
2015	370,000,000.00	185,000,000.00	50.00
2016	1,375,828,657.00	493,886,998.00	35.90
2017	1,140,828,656.00	570,414,328.00	50.00
Total	651,066,023.00	307,826,788.17	47.28

Source: office of Accountant-General of the Federation, Federal Min. of Finance.

Summary of capital releases to FME and its parastatals

Table 2 presents the federal government's capital appropriation and release for adult education from 2012 to 2017. In the years under review N651, 066,023.00 were appropriated and only N307, 826,788.17 was disbursed representing 47 percent of the total appropriation. The highest disbursement of capital allocation was recorded in 2012 and 2014, which were as high as 65.18 and 58.72 respectively of the total capital allocation disbursed. In 2015 only, 50 percent was disbursed with the disbursement of the capital allocation falling as low as 35.90 and 45.58 percent in 2016 and 2013 respectively.

3. What was the percentage of federal government recurrent disbursement to adult education from 2012- 2017?

Data retrieved from achieves were analyzed and presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Recurrent Disbursements to Adult Education from 2012- 2017

Year	Total Disbursement	Personnel	Percentage	Overhead	Percentage
2012	711,782,225.11	562,060,258.11	78.97	149,721,967.00	21.03
2013	681,802,227.27	617,036,230.27	90.50	64,765,997.00	9.50
2014	226,027,192.00	166,507,048.00	73.67	59,520,144.00	26.33
2015	742,203,355.79	705,708,197.71	95.08	36,495,158.08	4.92
2016	694,749,688.01	659,837,175.14	94.97	34,912,512.87	5.03
2017	887,623,694.43	852,532,964.62	96.05	35,090,729.81	3.95
	57,364,730.44	593,946,978.98	90.35	63,417,751.46	9.65

Source: office of Accountant-General of the Federation, Federal Min. of Finance. Summary of capital releases to FME and its parastatals.

Table 3 presents the recurrent disbursements to adult education between 2012 and 2017. The result showed that an average disbursement of N57, 364,730.44 comprising 90.35 percent personnel and 9.65 overhead costs. The result showed that the percentage of disbursement of personnel cost in the year under review fluctuate between 78.97 and 96.05 percent with the capital overhead cost oscillating between 3.95 and 26.33 percent.

Discussion of the findings

The findings of the study has revealed that within the year under review, adult education received only an average capital appropriation of N651,066, 023.00 representing 1.19 percent of the total appropriation to education. This is an indication of low government priority for the development sub-sector in terms of resource distribution in the educational sector; considering the large proportion of the adult illiterate in Nigeria. The percentage appears insignificant to effect the desired change in the direction of SDG. This finding is corroborated by Nafukho Wawire, and Lam (2010) where they observed that adult education organizations in Africa have limited financial resources available to them. Adedokun and Adeyemo (2013) added that the result of this is low quality adult education; an offshoot of poorly equipped centres for conducive learning and low staff motivation

Investing in adult education is critical giving the role it plays in the achievement of sustainable development. According to CONFINEAV (Onyishi, 2010) adult education is a

powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development for democracy, justices, gender equity, scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflicts is replaced by dialogue and culture of peace based on justice. Adult education can shape identity and give meaning to life. It develops the autonomy and the sense of responsibility of people and communities to reinforce the capacity to deal with the transformations taking place in the economy, in culture and in society as a whole, and to promote co-existence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in their communities to take control of their destiny and society in order to face the challenges ahead.

The finding of the study among others revealed low disbursement from the meager appropriation to adult education between 2012 and 2017. This finding is corroborated in Afrik (2000) who observed that African countries allocate meager financial resources annually to adult education organizations; leaving very little funds available for the management of the organizations to achieve its mandate. A survey in 2005 by the Action Aid and Global Campaign for Education (GCE) discovered that only Namibia had tried to allocate close to 3 percent to its education budget to adult education (Archer, 2006). The finding revealed that federal government investment in adult education has not achieved the recommendation of the Fifth CONFINTEA and the Mid-term Conference that argued for a minimum of 3 percent of the education budget to be channeled to adult learning. In view of the population of the adult illiterates in Nigeria, the annual budgetary allocation of less than 3 percent to adult education appears not significant for the achievement of the goals of .empowering the adults to enable them to demand and assert their basic rights for national cohesion and sustainable development.

The finding of the study showed a wide margin in the disbursements of recurrent expenditure; personnel and overhead costs. The disbursements of personnel far exceed overhead expenditures to adult education in Nigeria. The bulk of the total disbursements went to personnel and overhead cost. In addition, the funds disbursed to recurrent expenditure are higher than the capital. This possibly explains dare that there are facility deficit for adult education; a phenomenon that could account for slow pacing in the actualization of the goal of mass literacy programme for the vulnerable members of the society. The implication of this finding is that the development of physical facilities in the subsector becomes difficult. In this situation, Alexander, Matsuura and O'Rourke (1990) advised that with limited education budgets, governments must make difficult decisions on how to invest their resources. Every sum invested in one particular purpose is money that cannot be invested in any other purpose. For instance where government decides investing more on personnel and overhead cost; less money will be available for teaching materials, teacher training or school building within the same budget in which case the quality of teaching may suffer. This suggests the need for equitable disbursement and distribution of the little resources in the subsector.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

Federal government annual budgetary allocation to adult and non-formal education from the total allocation to education sector has remained relatively low. The meager allocation is a cog for Nigeria to achieve the desired national cohesion and the Sustainable Development Goals considering the chunk of adult illiterates in the nation. Unless there is deliberate paradigm shift from the status quo in financial arrangement in the investment in this sub-sector, the chain of vicious cycle of adult illiteracy, poverty and class distinctions; these do not support national cohesion and the achievement of sustainable development would be difficult.

Arising from the conclusion of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should increase the appropriation to the education sector and by extension to adult education with a minimum of 3 percent from the total appropriation to education.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria should ensure it achieves a maximum disbursement of the fund appropriated of capital expenditure for infrastructural development.
3. The Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning should ensure a balance in the disbursements between capital and recurrent expenditure since all are necessary for access, quality and functional adult education.
4. The Federal Government of Nigeria should set less than one percent of Value Added Tax (VAT) to fund adult education. In this way access to quality adult education would increase leading to increase productive capacity, earning, reduction in inequality and better national cohesion.

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