ADULT EDUCATION: STEPS TOWARDS CHARACTER BUILDING

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Abstract
This study examined adult education in the context of character building of citizens with a view to making them useful members of the community who will respect others’ opinion thereby making the community a better place to live in. Through the various programmes of adult education, behavior that is consistent with the core values of the community is entrenched in them. The study was carried out in Ado Ekiti Local government area of Ekiti State making use of 53 respondents. A self designed questionnaire tagged “Adult Education for Character Building” (ADEC) was used to elicit responses which were subjected to simple frequency counts and percentages. The study revealed that when people are exposed to adult education programmes, they grow in their capacity and commitment to do their best to affect others around them and to solve any problem besetting them in a cooperative manner. The study recommended that adult education should be embarked upon in every community so that individuals will import one or more positive character qualities to affect the lives of others thereby bringing peace to the entire community.

Key Words: community development, behavior, capacity building, education.

INTRODUCTION
Character education is as old as education itself. Character education is also associated with all forms of education whether formal or non formal. Character education refers to that education that imparts one or more positive character qualities. It is education that makes people moral, civil, good, well mannered, non bullying, healthy, critical, successful and socially acceptable. Character education involves concepts such as social and emotional learning, moral reasoning, cognitive development and life skill education. Character education is one that cuts across all fields of human endeavor and such education should take place everywhere and it should be adopted in schools and businesses especially via adult and non formal education so that everybody will live out with a measure of moral value fit for society. A person that exhibits personal qualities that fit those a society considers desirable might be considered to have a good character (Character education- 20/10/12). Adult and non-formal education is a good way to build the character of the community members through its various programmes.

Character as it relates to character education refers to how good a person is. That is a person who exhibits personal qualities that fit those a society considers desirable might be considered to have good character. In building up character of members of communities, education generally has an important role to play. It is in this light that adult education answers the call of being lifelong education. Education is the most powerful instrument that man has ever devised for his personal improvement and collective development. Education makes it possible
for one to be able to cope with constant changes in our environment and this is why education has to be lifelong and without limitations (Okedara and Abidoye 2001). Adult education which is hitherto called non formal education offers to its recipients lifelong experiences needed to meet their present individual and societal needs and also make them to think of a brighter future.

Adult education exposes its members to a wide range of learning opportunities which help them not only to solve the problem of today but which also guarantees a better and brighter tomorrow. Through the myriad programmes of adult and non formal education, individuals are exposed to limitless learning experiences which not only help them to cope with the emerging present problem but also expose them to societal needs (Obidiegwu and Agbionu 2010).

To Kleis (1973) in Obidiegwu and Agbionu (2010), non formal education is any intentional and systematic educational enterprise outside traditional schooling in which contents are adapted to the unique needs and situations of students in order to maximize learning and minimize other elements which often occupy formal school teachers such as taking roll call, enforcing discipline, writing reports and supervising study halls. Adult education concerns itself with man in his community, how he lives to solve various problems that confront him in cooperation with other people in the community. One can then subscribe to the view of Yahaya (2010) that adult and non formal education can be referred to as any organized, systematic educational activity outside the established formal system of education intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives principally for out of school youths and adults for the purpose of communicating ideas, developing skills, changing attitudes or modifying behavior related to the realization of goals and achievement of higher standard of living and better the lot of the people. Adult education in building up character for good living in community covers all educational activities or training outside the school system which aim at improving skills and attitudes of different groups of people and this does not centre on adults alone but also children.

Adult and non formal education refers to planned programmes of personal and social education for people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies outside the formal education curriculum. When talking of competencies and skills, adult education builds up people to face challenges and responsibilities in a complex community (Vink, 1999) thus enabling people to respect the views of other people in the community with the result that communities become peaceful. Adult education programmes give multiple opportunities to see how people’s behavior, actions and words affect others and help people to come together to think of ways to solve problems.

Adult education makes it possible for behavior that is consistent with the core values of the community to be entrenched in adult and this is what character education is all about. As people grow in character, they grow in their capacity and commitment to do their best, do the right thing and live a life of purpose. Character education leads people towards successful life outcomes (Batistich accessed 24-10-12).

Owoade, Ojo and Tijani (2005) see adult education as assisting people to identify goals, recognize change and make desired changes and adjusting to the changes so that on the long run, each person is able to satisfy his needs and discover his identity. This is a first step towards living in any society and such brings peace to the entire community. Some of the programmes of adult education that is responsible through their participatory approach to build character qualities that fit those which a society refers to as good include:
a. **Community Development** which is a democratic process and which emphasizes the principle of participation. Through this programme, people are taught the spirit of tolerance, cooperation, endurance, selflessness and team spirit all of which lead to upgrading the moral standard of the community.

b. **Literacy** which equips people with the skills of reading, writing and numeracy. With literacy people will impact their family life as literacy will make them acquire relevant information that will help them to make informed decision, literacy will help make people more civil and help them become enlightened members of the community (Adedokun, 2008). Tomori in Anyanwu (1981) explained that the recipient of literacy, if enlightened will be in a position to take mature independent decisions about many of the intellectual and social affairs of his community. Literacy impacts the character of the people in that it makes for wider participation in the community.

c. **Remedial Education**. It is a programme of Adult Education that gives people the opportunity to develop skills which they can use to pursue better education and career goals. Having further education will impact the way people behave in the society.

d. **Extension Education**. This is an applied behavioral science, the knowledge of which is applied to bring about desirable changes in the behaviors of human beings. Some of its principles which can lead to character building are principles of participation, adaptability and organization. Agricultural extension education makes a farmer to have positive change in attitude towards farming thereby bringing about socio economic revolutions and health extension will entrench behaviours that promote health, prevent illness and treat diseases thereby ensuring a wholesome community. (Adedokun, 2008).

Other programmes of adult education that help in building character include civic education which hinges on the cultivation of virtues, knowledge and skills necessary for political participation. It involves educating the people with the hope of raising their consciousness, making them responsible adults in the society. Liberal education is another programme of adult education that builds man’s character by setting him free from the hold of ignorance. All these and others are there to build characters of individuals, making him to live well in the community in which he finds himself.

**Statement of the problem**

The paper was set out to answer the question, what is the impact of adult education on character building?

**Research questions**

1. Will adult education impact character building?
2. Will the programmes of adult education contribute to character building in the community?

The purpose of the study was to examine what contributions the various programmes of adult education would have on character building.

**Methodology**

The study made use of survey design making use of 53 respondents from Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State for the study.

A self designed questionnaire tagged Adult Education for character Building (ADECB) was used to elicit responses from the subjects of the study. The collected data were analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation.
Results and data analysis

**Question 1**: What is the importance of Adult Education in Character Building?

**Table 1**: Importance of Adult Education in Character Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>SA 4</th>
<th>A 3</th>
<th>D 2</th>
<th>SD 1</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adult Education is only the education of the Adult</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.9306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult Education helps people to exude desirable qualities in communities.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>98.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adult education prepares both young and old for Future life challenges.</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.7238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adult Education is geared towards learning to live in the diversified world with the aim of bringing understanding among people and bring improvement to living</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.7238</td>
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<td>64.0%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
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<td>8.0%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted Average = 3.07

Table 1 shows that the items listed recorded a high mean score with the total weighted average of 3.07 out of maximum of 4. This shows that adult education is important in character building.

**Research question 2**: What programmes of Adult Education would impact on character building?

**Table 2**: Programmes of adult Education impacting on character building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>SA 4</th>
<th>A 3</th>
<th>D 2</th>
<th>SD 1</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Community Development Community Education</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.9364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literacy/Remedial Education/Extensional Civil Education</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.9876</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>These programmes bring about positive attitudinal and psychological changes in people</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.9398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted average = 2.78

Table 2 above revealed that the listed items recorded a high mean score with the total weighted average of 2.77 out of maximum of 4. This reveals that programmes of adult education go a long way in shaping characters of people thereby bringing about better relationships in communities.

**Discussion**

The above analysis reveals that Adult and non-formal Education is very important in building the character of people in community. Vink (1999) is of the opinion that Adult and Non-formal Education is highly motivating because it involves tangible learning which results in concrete outcome, and high degree of commitment. Adult and non-formal education has same values as those embedded in character education.

The various programmes of Adult Education emphasize values such as honesty, stewardship, freedom, Justice, quality and respect (Wikipedia.org). The study revealed that the ultimate goal of Adult Education is good character development which is the real purpose of
educational programme and accommodating living in any community. Character development fosters community development as each person would have learnt to respect the opinions of others within such community.

It is discovered that when people are exposed to various programmes of Adult Education, it leads to growth in character both attitudinal and psychological dimensions, they are also able to grow in their capacity and commitment to do the right thing and at the right time thereby helping to live a purposeful life.

It is discovered that the development of critical thinking which is germane to problem solving can be imported to people through Adult /Non-formal Educational (Okeke, 2010).

It is also revealed that Adult Education will imbue in one, life skills which include problem solving abilities, communication skills, leadership skills, self management and relationship management. All these skills developed by Adult and non-formal Education are important for character building. It is thus discovered that Adult/non-formal Education is education for sustainable development and it is a lifelong process (Alnabus, 2009).

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study examined the impact of adult education on character building with the end result that individuals function in their best capacity to move the society/community forward when they are exposed to various programmes of adult education. The following recommendations are made that:

- Policy-makers should formulate policies that will encourage the advancement of Adult Education.
- Adult/non-formal education should entrench character building in people through participatory approach.
- Everybody should participate in one programme of adult education or the other and the value in each should be made use of in the community.
- Adult educators should expose their learners to the important values of each programme of adult education that would lead to character building.
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