



## Evaluation of Government Policies on Adult Education for Skills Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

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### Abstract

*This study evaluated government policies on adult education for skills and workforce development in Nigeria, using Oyo State as a case study. Nigerian governments have introduced several policy frameworks, programmes, and institutional mechanisms aimed at promoting adult literacy, lifelong learning, skills acquisition, and sustainable national development. This article focused the administrative zones of Oyo State Agency for Adult and Non- Formal Education (Oyo AANFE), which oversees the implementation of adult education programmes relevant to vocational, technical, and non- formal skills acquisition. A descriptive survey design was adopted, involving 150 respondents comprising administrators, policy officers, and adult education facilitators. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed with descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that although government policies recognize the role of adult education in human capital and skills development, inadequate funding, limited instructional facilities, and insufficient capacity- building hinder effective implementation. Strengthening policy implementation is essential for enhancing adult education's contribution to industrial and technological development. Recommendations include increased investment, improved training, and stronger monitoring mechanisms.*

**Keywords:** Adult Education, Government Policy, Skills Development, Workforce Development, Non- Formal Education.

## 1. Introduction

Adult education is widely acknowledged as a strategic instrument for enhancing skills acquisition, workforce competence, and national productivity, particularly in developing economies such as Nigeria (Aderogba & Akinyemi, 2015). Through literacy, vocational, and technical programmes, adult education supports employability, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion, thereby contributing to sustainable socio-economic development (Ogundele & Opeifa, 2013). Consequently, government policies on adult and non-formal education are designed to strengthen human capital development and respond to labour market demands.

Despite the existence of comprehensive national and state-level policy frameworks, the implementation of adult education programmes in Nigeria continues to face persistent challenges. These challenges include inadequate funding, weak institutional capacity, limited instructional facilities, and insufficient alignment between training content and industrial skill requirements. In Oyo State, the Ministry of Education, through its Agency for Adult and Non- Formal Education (Oyo AANFE), is responsible for formulating and implementing policies aimed at equipping adult learners with vocational, technical, and entrepreneurial skills. Evaluating the effectiveness of these policies is therefore essential for determining their contribution to workforce development and industrial growth.

Although several studies have examined adult education in Nigeria, much of the existing literature emphasizes literacy provision and access, with limited focus on policy effectiveness in relation to industrial and technological skills development at the state level (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2017; Anyaoku & Udosen, 2020). This study addresses this gap by evaluating government policies on adult education in Oyo State, with particular attention to implementation strategies, resource allocation, and challenges affecting skills-oriented adult education programmes.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Adult education is globally recognized as a vital mechanism for promoting skills development, workforce preparedness, and industrial advancement, especially in developing countries. In Nigeria, successive governments have introduced policies on adult and non-formal education to improve literacy levels, enhance vocational competence, and strengthen human capital development. However, despite these policy initiatives, evidence suggests that the anticipated outcomes in terms of technical, vocational, and industrial skills acquisition among adult learners have not been fully realized.



The absence of systematic policy evaluation creates uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of adult education policies in addressing labour market needs and supporting technological and industrial growth. In Oyo State, where adult education is expected to contribute significantly to skills acquisition and economic productivity, there is insufficient empirical evidence assessing policy implementation processes, funding adequacy, and institutional capacity.

Existing studies on adult education in Nigeria have largely focused on thematic areas such as ICT integration, civic participation, and literacy expansion. For instance, Aminu (2022) examined infrastructural constraints affecting adult education delivery, while Oghenekohwo and Frank-Oputu (2022) investigated the role of adult education in promoting civic engagement. These studies provide valuable insights, however, they offer limited empirical evaluation of how government policies translate into concrete workforce and industrial skill development outcomes at the state level. Therefore this study seeks to evaluate government policies on adult education in Oyo State, identify implementation gaps, and provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening adult education as a driver of workforce and industrial development.

### 3. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. evaluate the effectiveness of government policies on adult education in promoting skills and workforce development in Oyo State;
2. examine the implementation strategies of adult education policies by the Oyo State Ministry of Education;
3. assess the adequacy of funding, instructional resources, and facilitator capacity for skill\_ oriented adult education programmes;
4. identify challenges affecting the implementation of adult education policies for industrial and technological skills acquisition; and

### 4. Research Questions

The following questions are raised to guide the study:

1. How effective are government policies on adult education in promoting skills and workforce development in Oyo State?
2. What strategies are employed by the Oyo State Ministry of Education to implement adult education policies for skills acquisition?
3. To what extent are funding, instructional resources, and facilitator capacity adequate for effective adult education delivery?
4. What challenges hinder the implementation of adult education policies for industrial and technological skill development?

### 5. Scope of the Study

This study focused on the evaluation of government policies on adult education for skills development in Nigeria, specifically within Oyo State. The research was limited to Ibadan Areas multiples zones/LGAs of the Oyo State Agency for Adult and Non\_ Formal Education (Oyo AANFE), where adult education policies are formulated, implemented, and monitored. The research examined policy objectives, implementation strategies, funding, instructional resources, facilitator capacity, and challenges affecting effective policy execution. It did not cover private or non-governmental adult educations programmes or directly involve adult learners.

### 6. Literature Review

#### Concept of Adult Education

Adult education has been recognised as a vital component of educational systems worldwide, particularly in the context of lifelong learning and socio-economic development. The literature consistently defines adult education as organised learning activities designed to meet the educational needs of adults who are beyond the age of formal schooling. It encompasses formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning aimed at personal, professional and social development.

A dominant theoretical foundation of adult education is andragogy, a concept popularised by Malcolm Knowles. Knowles argued that adult learners differ significantly from children in their learning characteristics. According to this theory, adults are self-directed, internally motivated, and bring accumulated life experiences that serve as a valuable resource for learning. Consequently, adult education emphasises learner autonomy, relevance of content and the practical application of knowledge.

#### History and Development of Adult Education in Nigeria

Adult education in Nigeria dates back to colonial times but became formalized after independence in 1960. The National Policy on Education (NPE) emphasized adult and non-formal education as a means to eradicate illiteracy and improve quality of life. Programmes like the Mass Literacy Campaign (1991), Literacy-by-Radio, and the establishment of NMEC (1990) have shaped Nigeria's adult education landscape.

#### Key Government Policies on Adult Education

- National Policy on Education (NPE) – Sections 5 and 8 emphasize adult and non-formal education as a lifelong process.
- Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act, 2004 – Includes adult and non-formal education as a key component.
- Education for All (EFA) Goals – Targeted reducing adult illiteracy by 50% by 2015.
- National Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Framework (2010–2020) – A strategic plan by NMEC for literacy improvement.

However, these policies aim to empower adults through literacy, but their implementation has been inconsistent due to political, economic, and social challenges.



### Implementation Challenges

- Studies (Aderinoye, 2002; Okech, 2014) have identified major challenges such as:
- Inadequate funding from federal and state governments.
- Shortage of qualified facilitators and poorly motivated staff.
- Low enrollment and retention of adult learners.
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Urban-rural disparities in program access and delivery.

### Impact of Adult Education Policies

- Empirical findings (UNESCO, 2017; NMEC Reports) show some progress:
- Improved literacy rates in urban areas.
- Women's participation in literacy and skills programs has increased. However, the overall national literacy rate for adults remains around 59% (UNESCO UIS, 2024), indicating gaps in policy effectiveness.

## 7. Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, suitable for evaluating policy effectiveness and implementation processes based on the perceptions of relevant stakeholders (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### Population

The population comprised personnel of Ibadan Areas multiples zones/LGAs of the Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (Oyo AANFE), including administrators, policy officers, and facilitators who were directly engaged in the planning, implementation, and delivery of adult education programmes, with a specific focus on skills acquisition initiatives.

### Sample

A total of 150 respondents were purposively selected for the study. Purposive sampling was adopted to ensure that participants possessed relevant knowledge and practical experience necessary to provide informed responses to the study objectives.

### Instrument

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the writer to elicit information on policy objectives, implementation strategies, funding adequacy, availability of instructional resources, facilitator capacity, and challenges affecting policy execution. The questionnaire items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5). This scale enabled respondents to express the degree of their agreement with each statement and facilitated the quantitative analysis of perceptions and attitudes.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha method to assess internal consistency. A pilot test was conducted, and the responses were subjected to reliability analysis. The results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 and above, indicating that the instrument was reliable and suitable for the study.

### Procedure for Data Collection

Permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education, Oyo State, before administering questionnaires. Respondents were informed of the study purpose, and confidentiality was ensured. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness before analysis.

### Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, to summarize respondents' perceptions regarding policy effectiveness, policy implementation strategies, funding, and challenges.

## 8. Results

### Table 1

*Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Demographic Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Role		
Facilitators	90	60
Policy Officers	38	25
Administrators	22	15



Years of Experience	150	100
1–5 years	52	35
6–10 years	68	45
Above 10 years	30	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table, of the 150 respondents, 60% were adult education facilitators, 25% were policy officers, and 15% were administrators. A majority (65%) had more than five years of experience in Adult Education.

**Table 2**  
*Evaluation of Policy Effectiveness*

Item	SA	A	N	DA	SD	Mean(M)
Policies recognize the importance of skills development	48	56	26	12	8	3.83
Policies achieve objectives in technical skills acquisition	42	51	32	15	10	3.67
Policies improve workforce readiness	46	54	28	14	8	3.77
Policies align training programs with industry needs	40	55	30	15	10	3.67
Policies enhance employability through practical skills training	44	52	29	15	10	3.70
Policies provide adequate resources for skills development initiatives	38	50	34	18	10	3.59

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, DA = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

Table 2 presents respondents' perceptions of policy effectiveness with respect to skills development and technical skills acquisition. The results indicate a generally positive assessment of both policy dimensions among the 150 respondents. The item "Policies recognize the importance of skills development" recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.83), suggesting that respondents largely agree that existing policies adequately acknowledge the importance of skills development. This reflects strong policy awareness and prioritization of skill enhancement. Similarly, the item "Policies achieve objectives in technical skills acquisition" obtained a mean score of 3.67, indicating a moderate to high level of agreement. While respondents perceive policies as effective in achieving technical skills acquisition, the slightly lower mean score suggests that improvements may be needed in implementation or outcomes.

**Table 3**  
*Policy Implementation Strategies*

Implementation Strategy	Regularly Implemented	Sometimes Implemented	Rarely Implemented	Not Implemented
Structured training programmes	50	65	25	10
Workshops and seminars	60	55	20	15
Monitoring and evaluation	20	35	50	45
Industrial/technical collaborations	15	25	60	50

Table 3 revealed that the structured training programmes and workshops/seminars are relatively well implemented, as most respondents report that these strategies are carried out either regularly or sometimes. This suggests that capacity-building efforts are recognized as important and are more feasible to implement within existing institutional frameworks. In contrast, monitoring and evaluation, as well as industrial and technical collaborations, are poorly implemented. A large proportion of respondents indicate that these strategies are rarely or not implemented at all, highlighting significant gaps in tracking policy outcomes and fostering external partnerships. The weak emphasis on monitoring and evaluation suggests limited mechanisms for assessing effectiveness and ensuring continuous improvement, while the low level of collaboration points to missed opportunities for practical engagement, innovation, and skills transfer.

**Table 4**  
*Funding, Resources, and Facilitator Capacity*

Variable	Adequate	Partially Adequate	Inadequate	Total
Funding	42	0	108	150
Instructional resources	48	0	102	150
Facilitator capacity	60	0	90	150

The table presents respondents' assessments of funding, instructional resources, and facilitator capacity in terms of adequacy. The results show notable differences across the three variables. Funding appears to be a major challenge, as only



42 respondents consider it adequate, while a large majority (108 out of 150) rate it as inadequate. This indicates that financial constraints significantly limit effective implementation and sustainability of programmes.

Instructional resources show a slightly better situation, with 48 respondents reporting adequacy; however, most respondents (102) still perceive these resources as inadequate. This suggests that although some materials may be available, they are insufficient in quantity or quality to fully support effective instruction.

In contrast, facilitator capacity is rated most positively. Sixty respondents consider facilitator capacity adequate, and none rate it as partially adequate, though 90 respondents still view it as inadequate. This implies that while there is a stronger human capacity base compared to funding and resources, gaps remain in skills, training, or numbers of facilitators.

**Table 5**

*Challenges Affecting Policy Implementation*

Challenge	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean(M)
Inadequate financial resources hinder effective policy implementation	60	50	20	12	8	3.95
Lack of trained or qualified personnel affects policy implementation	55	52	18	15	10	3.85
Political interference and leadership instability obstruct policy implementation	62	48	17	13	10	3.93
Poor communication and coordination among stakeholders affect policy outcomes	58	54	16	12	10	3.92

*Note.* SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, DA = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

This table shows the challenges affecting policy implementation, most respondents (110 out of 150) either strongly agree or agree that inadequate financial resources hinder effective policy implementation, suggesting that funding remains a major constraint. The item "a large proportion of respondents (107 out of 150) acknowledge that the lack of trained or qualified personnel negatively impacts policy implementation, highlighting human resource capacity as a critical issue.

Similarly, the item "political interference and leadership instability were also identified as major obstacles, with 110 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This implies that governance and political factors play a significant role in determining policy outcomes. Item that poor communication and coordination among stakeholders affect policy implementation, as 112 respondents expressed agreement. This emphasizes the importance of effective collaboration and information flow among implementing agencies.

## 9. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that while government policies on adult education in Oyo State clearly articulate objectives related to skills acquisition and workforce development, significant gaps exist in implementation, funding, and monitoring mechanisms. This aligns with previous studies which reported that policy formulation alone does not guarantee effective outcomes without adequate resources and institutional capacity (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2017; Okoye & Nwankwo, 2021).

Inadequate instructional facilities and limited access to modern training equipment constrain the ability of adult education programmes to deliver relevant industrial and technological skills. Similar challenges have been reported in other Nigerian states, where insufficient funding and weak stakeholder engagement undermined programme effectiveness (Anyaku & Udosen, 2020; Ibrahim & Orodho, 2014). Furthermore, the limited opportunities for continuous professional development among facilitators reduce instructional quality and innovation in adult learning delivery.

Effective implementation of adult education policies therefore requires sustained investment, systematic monitoring, and stronger collaboration between government agencies, industries, and vocational institutions. Strengthening these areas would enhance the relevance of adult education programmes and improve their contribution to workforce readiness and industrial development in Oyo State.

## 10. Conclusion

Government policies on adult education in Oyo State are well intentioned, with clear frameworks for skills acquisition and workforce development. However, ineffective implementation, insufficient funding, inadequate resources, and limited facilitator training hinder their realization. Addressing these gaps is crucial for adult education to contribute meaningfully to industrial and technological development in Oyo State.

## 11. Recommendations

- Increase Government Funding and Support: Government should allocate adequate and consistent funding to adult and non-formal education programmes, with a specific focus on skills-oriented training.
- Strengthen Policy Implementation Structures: Institutions responsible for adult education policy implementation should be empowered through improved supervision, accountability, and administrative support.
- Enhance Facilitator Capacity: Regular training in andragogical methods, curriculum innovation, and technology-based instruction should be provided for adult education facilitators.
- Improve Learning Facilities and Resources: Adult education centres should be equipped with modern instructional materials, vocational tools, and technological infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.
- Promote Stakeholder Collaboration: Partnerships with industries, vocational institutions, and community organizations should be encouraged to align training programmes with labour market needs.
- Establish Robust Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: Continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be instituted to assess programme outcomes and guide policy adjustments.



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