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### Original article

## Adult education and change of attitudes towards modern agricultural practices

**B.Z. Abubakar<sup>a,\*</sup>, A.A. Barau<sup>a</sup>, M.M. Makinta<sup>b</sup>, A.I. Jega<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

<sup>b</sup>Agriculture and Natural Resources Department, Damboa Local Government Area of Borno State, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding author; Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria.

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#### ABSTRACT

The research was conducted on whether Adult Education programme contributed to change of farmers' attitudes towards modern Agricultural practices in Jega Local Government Area of Kebbi state, Nigeria. A total of 60 respondents were interviewed using structural questionnaire. The sampled farmers were drawn from three districts namely; Jega, Dangamaji and Kimba. Two villages were randomly selected from each of the districts and ten respondents were chosen from each of the villages. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages were used in analyzing the data. The results on the socio-economic analysis revealed, majority (45%) of the respondents fall between age range of 31-45 years with 68.3 are married and most (66.7%) attended Adult Education Programme. On the effectiveness of the programme, most of (65%) of the respondents agreed, thus, the programme was effective which lead 50% of the respondents were able to read and write most (83.3%) believed that, the programme has produced a positive change in their attitudes towards modern agricultural practices. It has been recommended that, the government has been solicited a concerted efforts from the and other stakeholders such as traditional, and religious leaders as well as community development organizations and non-governmental organizations to render maximum support for the success of the programme.

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## **1. Introduction**

Adults constitute the greater percentage of farmers in every parts of the world. Adolescence and children that are mostly found in forming activities are either helping their parents or working as laborers. In Nigeria, agricultural practices have been the main activity of the people, employing about 70% (Nweke 1991). Widespread nature of illiteracy among our rural farmers is still remained one of the greatest challenges in the agricultural sector, hindering the success of the country's journey towards sustainable food production.

Considering our competitive environment with rapidly changing job assignments and technological developments, adult education in agriculture should require multi-dimensional, comprehensive, cross-cultural content and system approaches to guarantee increased food production (Patrick EE 2012). A literate farmer always has a better chance of adopting new and improved agricultural technologies, including knowledge and skills necessary to run his farm-business. Managerial skills have therefore become overwhelmingly important to modern farming, which is no longer a matter of manual labour and skill alone. Even a man who owns but a few acres must function as an entrepreneur. He must be able to plan several steps ahead of the next harvest and beyond (Awolola 1991). The use of new implements to replace the traditional is the first thing to be considered. In this way the farmer can increase the output of work in each day from both his family and from his labour (Okedra 1981).

Every adult needs to know rights and obligations as a citizen of his country. If better modern agriculture for rural farmers is to be achieved, adult education is necessary for any rural development programme, when they obtained the necessary knowledge and skills through adult education, they can equally undertake projects related to other fields like health on account of hygienic living condition, good drinking water among other. The adult education experts or instructors and modern agricultural specialists can help rural dwellers in improving their agricultural skills and methods (Fafunwa 1974). According to Okedara (1971), prominent in mass education campaign must be attack on illiteracy, but mass education for modern agricultural development is something more than this, it is an attack on poverty, diseases and isolation on all difficulties which hinders the progress of a community. If the talents and abilities of the adult population are to be developed, mobilized and optimally utilized in national development, there must be comprehensive education and training opportunities for adults (Reginald Nnazor 2005).

In order to know the significance of the role of adult education in modern agriculture, there is need to lay emphasis on education. Education aimed at the development of the whole individual, that is, all-round development of a person, physically, morally, economically, culturally, politically and socially so as to enable him become self-reliant as well as functioning member of the society to which he belongs to. In order to achieve these for the rural farmers, an effective adult education programme is the answer.

The general objective of the study is to find out whether adult education programme in the area has contributed towards change of attitudes of the people in modern agriculture.

## **2. Materials and methods**

The data were obtained through a structural questionnaire that was administered to the sampled farmers. Primary data was collected on socio-economic and institutional variables such as age, marital status, level of education, occupation, participation in adult education programme, reasons for non-participation, methods used to improve farming activities etc. secondary information was obtained from journals, article and textbooks.

Multi-stage sampling technique was employed. A total of 60 respondents had constituted the sample for the study. The sampled farmers were drawn from three districts namely; Jega, Dangamaji and Kimba. Two villages were chosen from each of the districts, and ten respondents were chosen from each of these villages, making a total of 20 respondents from each of the districts. Simple descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages were used in analyzing the data.

## **3. Results and discussion**

Results in Table 1 reveal that majority of the respondents are relatively young and still in their active age. The implication is that, younger farmers are likely to adopt new innovation faster than the older ones. The finding is in agreement with Sani et al., (2007) that majority of farmers within the age range of 41 to 50 years are still in their active age and more receptive to innovation. On the marital status, about 70% of the respondents were married.

**Table 1**  
Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18-30	10	16.7
31-45	27	45
46-60	10	16.7
60 and above	13	21.6
<b>Marital-status</b>		
Married	41	68.3
Single	13	21.7
Divorced	06	10
<b>Type of education attended</b>		
Formal education	08	13.3
Islamic/Arabic education	12	20
Adult education	40	66.7
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farming	42	70
Trading	09	15
Artisan	04	6.7
Others	05	8.3

**Table 2**  
Shows the institutional variables of the respondents based on the Adult Education Programme.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>How the programme was organized?</b>		
Well organized	30	50
Fairly organized	21	35
Poorly organized	09	15
<b>How effective was the programme</b>		
Very effective	12	20
Effective	39	65
Ineffective	09	15
<b>What kind of benefit did you derive from the programme</b>		
Able to read and write	33	55
Able to read only	12	20
Able to write only	11	18.3
Non of the above	04	6.7
<b>Does the programme induce positive change in your attitude?</b>		
Yes	50	83.3
No	10	16.7
<b>Does the programme help you in improving your farm practices?</b>		
Yes	52	86.7
No	08	13.3

This shows that, they are responsible individuals and can easily make useful decision on their development issues. These findings support the result of Jatto A. N. (2012) that, married farmers are responsible according to the societal standard and therefore are likely to have some experience of life. The table further indicated that,

almost all the respondents were educated in one way or the other with the majority (66.7%) attended adult education programme. It is expected that the level of education will contribute significantly to decision making of a farmer. This coincided with Obinne (1991), Alabi and Arun (2006) and Ndahitsa (2008), as cited in Jatto A. N. (2012) that, level of education determines the quality of skills of farmers, their allocative abilities and how well informed they are to the innovations and technologies around them. The table also indicated that the occupation of the respondents was farming as 70% of them indicated that they were farmers. This finding was affirmed by Nweke (1991) that, in Nigeria Agricultural practices have been the main activity of the people, employing about 70% of the populace.

Table 2 reveals that 50% of the respondents were of the view that, the programme was well-organized in the area, 35% and 15% of the respondents choosing fairly organized and poorly organized respectively. This shows that, the level at which the programme was organized was impressive. On the effectiveness of the programme, 65% of the respondents agreed that the programme was effective. As a result of the programme's intervention, over 50% of the respondents were able to read and write. The effectiveness of the programme has also been reiterated as over 80% of the respondents confirmed that the programmed has produced a positive change in their attitudes. This finding has coincided with the view of Ewuzie (2012) that, the objective of the processes of adult education and national development is to get the adults, either as individuals or as group to learn and through learning to change their attitude and behaviour. The table further shows that, majority (86.7%) of the respondents justified that the programme has helped them in improving their farm practices. This is similar to Awolola (1991) that, Agricultural development involves a sequence of innovations and adjustments which increasingly demand a more sophisticated and hence better educated community.

#### 4. Conclusion

With education, an adult is likely to be better producer of goods, he is likely to be ready to accept changes, he is likely to be more intelligent user of modern agricultural facilities and social amenities (Fafunwa 1974). The role of adult literacy education in Nigeria and indeed all the developing nations where the large percentage of the people are non-literate cannot be ruled out. This is because; most of the people that are engaged in the production of food are rural dwellers and could not read and write. Hence, it has been recommended that, the government should pay more attention to the adult education programme in order to reach farmers in every parts of the country and address the disease of ignorance among the rural people. Traditional and religious leaders have to exercise their vital role in complementing the government's efforts. And equally, Community Development Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations are to be encouraged in order to give their maximum support to the programme.

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