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Adult Education and Entrepreneurial Sustainable Development in Nigeria: A study of Akwa Ibom State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (2007-2023)

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Abstract: Education is the key to human and national development in modern globalized and highly technological world of the 21st Century. Through education, information, communication, technology, innovation, entrepreneurial skills are developed and transferred across the globe for sustainable development. Adult education is one aspect of education introduced in Nigeria to tackle the problem of high rate of illiteracy particularly amongst the adults who could not afford formal education. Adult education is targeted at ensuring education for all by 2030. It involves basic literacy, post-literacy and vocational training programmes, which add values to entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The study identified its objective gaps in adult education programmes and its impact on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State, and provided remedial to the gaps. Descriptive and Survey methods were employed to administered 10 items questionnaire on the respondents from 9 selected centres, 3 from each senatorial district out of 888 adult education Centre's with sample size of 126 using stratified sampling technique. Simple percentage and tabular presentation were adopted for data presentation and analysis while secondary data analyzed contextually. The study among others revealed that Adult education have significant and direct impact on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State by building individual skills/knowledge for SMEs and self-empowerment, job creation/employment opportunities, and outlined its challenges/weaknesses to include: inadequate funding of the programmes, policy inconsistency at the implementation stage, lack of teachers' qualification, low learners enrollment, lack of learning materials and infrastructures etc. It concluded there is need to strengthen Adult and non-formal education for effective entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State and by extension Nigeria. It recommended proper funding of Adult education, training of teachers and facilitators, proper monitoring and evaluation of the programmes to prevent corruption, empowerment/employment opportunities should be offered to Adult learners by various level of governments.

Keywords: Adult Education, Development, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays significant role in entrepreneurship, infrastructures development, industrialization and socio-economic development of many countries. Obviously, education is the key to human development, measured in

terms of improved health care services, education and per capita income/ standard of living of the citizens (Ita, 2020; Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023). Adult education is necessary for skills acquisition, entrepreneurial development and establishment of businesses for self-sustenance and societal development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

According to Onyenemezu and Okanezi (2013 cited in Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023) the goal of education is to develop capabilities/potentialities for individual survival in the environment, and the overall development of the state. To this effect, Adult education also known as mass literacy was developed to address the problem of high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria especially among adult members of the state. Hence, adult education is one of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically goal 4 which targets at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education opportunities for all by 2030 (UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Therefore, the essence of adult education is to improve mass literacy and limit illiteracy in the society through teachings, mass literacy campaign and vocational training for increase self-reliance and improved economic productivity in the state.

On the other hand, entrepreneurial sustainable development is a process of acquiring skills and knowledge through education or vocational training for business startup in order to make profit, enhances self-sustenance and job creation to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The gap shows Akwa Ibom State still have problem of illiteracy and one of the top of the list of states in the country with the highest number of children out-of-school with about 581,800 (NBS, 2020; Federal Ministry of education, 2020 as cited Premium Times August 8, 2021). Therefore, building entrepreneurship through adult and non-formal education is one way to curb illiteracy, out-of-school children, youth restiveness, and criminalities such as armed robbery, fraud, prostitution and insecurity in the state. When the youths and adults are trained to acquire skills and empowered to meaningful business ventures, then the resultant effect will be reduction in crime rate, youth restiveness, poverty and unemployment in the society.

The National Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) was established in 1990 with responsibility of organizing, monitoring and evaluation of the adult and non-formal education to curb high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria. In addition, states government were also encouraged to establish Adult and Non-formal Education Agencies (ANFEA), and this gave birth to the establishment of Akwa Ibom State Agency for Adult and Non-formal Education to assist in developing programmes and policy guides for smooth implementation and management of Adult Education in Akwa Ibom State (Elebe and Ufot, 2023).

The main problem of ANFE programme in Akwa Ibom State is inadequate funding to meet up with the 26% budget baseline requirement for education as advocated by UNESCO, and this necessitated gaps in the state agency to include: poor teachers' salary, low teachers motivation, inadequate qualified teachers, low community mobilization, low leaners enrollment, lack of learning materials and infrastructures like functional libraries, workshops, laboratories, equipment and recreational facilities etc. In addition, past and present governments in the state have made several efforts in terms of policy reforms and financial budgeting to improve adult education and entrepreneurial development in the state, but the

result in terms of productivity is still below average. Hence, poor supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes by AKSAANFE has also contributes negatively to the performance of the agency in terms of service delivery. The study examines the impact of adult education on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Nigeria with specific reference to Akwa Ibom State Agency for Adult and Non-formal Education, Uyo.

Other specific objectives:

- i. To highlight the Strengths of adult education towards entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. To state the weaknesses of adult education towards entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. To provide remedial measures to fill the gaps observed as drawback to Adult education and entrepreneurial sustainable development in the State.

The following questions will guide the research:

- i. To what extent does adult education impact on entrepreneurial Sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. What are the strengths of adult education towards entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State?
- iii. What are the weaknesses of adult education towards entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State?
- iv. What are the possible solutions to the problems of Adult education and entrepreneurial sustainable development in the State?

Furthermore, the study findings and recommendations will be of great significant to students/learners as it will equip them with theories and techniques of acquiring knowledge, skills, vocational training and entrepreneurial development for self-reliance, job creation and welfare promotion. It will also help government and policy makers to make vibrant policies that enhanced human development proxied by improved health, education and per capita income of the citizens. It will also provide the public with information on entrepreneurship education and empowerment programmes that can help to reduce illiteracy, poverty and unemployment rate in the state. The research will add to the existing literature in the field and also serve as reference material to future researchers. The study will further review related literature, provide theoretical framework of analysis, adopts descriptive and survey methods for data collection and analysis in order to arrive at findings, conclusion and recommendations.

2. Conceptual Review

(a) Concept of Adult Education

Adult education is defined in many ways according to scholars' perceptions. Inyang (2017) sees adult education as the type of education programme design to enable an adult

individual (men or women) to possess the ability to read, write and communicate in known languages as well as the ability to do basic mathematical computations far beyond basic literacy level. To him, adult and non-formal education is a tool that equip individuals with skills to improve and empower himself intellectually, economically, socially and politically in order to be relevant in the society.

According to UNESCO (1976) adult education is conceived as:

The entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. Adult education, however, must not be considered as an entity in itself, it is subdivision, and an integral part of, a global scheme for lifelong education and learning.

UNESCO (2007, as cited in Inyang, 2017), maintained that adult and non-formal education is more broaden term than the literacy or remedial education to 'fill the gap'. Omolewa (2015) sees adult education as "all forms of education providing for adult men and women, housewives and others who for one reason or the other are willing to improve the quality of their education in order to add to the socio-economic development of the nation". It is also called mass education which involves acquisition of reading and writing skills which is applied for self-reliance, community development, and such education programmes include basic literacy, post literacy and vocational training (FGN, 2008, cited in Elebe and Ufot, 2023).

(b) Concept of Development

Rodney (1969 in Okereke and Ekpe, 2002, as cited in Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023) sees development as multifaceted process. At individual level, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. At the state level, it refers to economic growth and socio-economic development of the state which is measured in Human Development Index (HDI), to include improved education, healthcare and per capita income/standard of living of the citizens. In the opinion of Umo (1989, as cited in Eminue, 2009), development is defined as "a process by which there exist a higher degree of self-reliant economic growth in a society, sustained over a long time and associated with substantial reduction in poverty, unemployment, inequality and external dependence". Thus, economic growth is at the heart of development, and growth must be generated in the economy. From the above definitions, it is clear that development centers on human,

because the fundamental aim of development is to extend the frontiers of human lives or advances the welfare of the people.

(c) Concept of Entrepreneurship

The word entrepreneurship and entrepreneur is often misconceived to mean the same thing among people, but there is disparity between the two concepts. An entrepreneur is any person who coordinates other factors of production and bears the risk of uncertainty as he invests his scarce resources in the business venture with the hope of making profit. Such a person is creative, confidence and innovative in starting business to give reality to his ideas. Entrepreneurship education is a form of education that focuses on inculcating in the learner's relevant business knowledge, creative ideas and entrepreneurial practices that will make them to be able to generate business ideas, identify business opportunities and take risks to invest in a business to make profit and become self-reliance (Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023; Elebe and Ufot, 2023).

In that same vein, United Nations report (1987, cited in Erinsakin, Erinsakin, and Olalekan, 2022) defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. The International Institute for Sustainable development (IISD), conceived it to mean activities or actions taken to improve the environment, economic and social well-being of persons for today and tomorrow to include such elements as equality between ages, gender, classes and races; social development, inclusiveness of everyone, human and environmental harmony that promotes environment's interdependency and transfer of technology; and cooperation among developing and developed countries (Erinsakin, Erinsakin, and Olalekan, 2022).

In order words, Entrepreneurial Sustainable Development (ESD) is a process of acquiring skills and knowledge through education or vocational training for micro, small and medium enterprises in order to make profit, and enhance self-sustenance and job creation to meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Adult education and vocational training system in modern world, is adopted as sustainable educational approach to learning, teaching and research so that the individuals graduating from such adult education programme can adopt sustainable business life styles for survival. To achieve the goal of adult education, the programmes of action should be geared towards educational approach for sustainable entrepreneurial development in Nigeria and particularly Akwa Ibom State.

3. Empirical Review

Umoinyang and Effiong (2018) examine the objectives of the Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education and its impact on family planning, national development and entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The study outlined its challenges to include poor programme implementation, inadequate teachers and lack of infrastructures, but

recommended the programme should use teaching and learning demonstration forms, provision of permanent structures for Adult learners; proper funding to meet up UN recommended 26% budgetary allocation to education. Wonah, Beshel and Uangbaode (2019) investigates corruption and governance in adult education in Nigeria with Cross River and Akwa Ibom States as areas of study. The study adopted ex-post facto research design with purposive and simple random sampling to sample 180 respondents out of 620 stakeholders that made up the population of the study. The revealed that literacy level was low because of corrupt officers mandated to manage continuing education issues mismanaged the fund meant for the purpose. It recommended that sanctions should be mated on corrupt officers who administer continuing education in the states,

Erinsakin, Erinsakin, and Olalekan (2022) examines impact of environmental analysis on planning of Entrepreneurial and Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes (EVSAP) in Niger-Delta, Nigeria (Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Imo Ondo, Abia). The study found out that cultural, environmental and government policies inconsistency affects EVSAP in Niger-Delta, Nigeria. It recommended that providers of EVSAP should consider cultural/environmental in planning for EVSAP in Niger-Delta, Nigeria.

Elebe and Ufot (2023) investigates vocational and entrepreneurial skills development for rural youths and its implications for grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted correlational survey using questionnaire and stratified random sampling technique to select 180 respondents from Uyo. Ikot Ekpene and Eket senatorial districts. Simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were used to analyze data. Findings revealed among other: The level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State was very poor; there were various types of vocational and entrepreneurial skills engaged by youths in AKS but with low level of operation due to poor power supply. It concluded there is significant relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skills development and grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State in dwindling direction, and recommended that government should make gainful vocational and entrepreneurial skills development for youths in AKS.

4. Adult Education and Entrepreneurial Sustainable Development in Akwa Ibom State

Adult education is managed and coordinated by AKSAANFE in collaboration with National Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC), department of Social Development, Education, Information, Sports and Culture (SDEISC) in the 31 LGAs in the state, NGOs and Centre Basic Management Committee comprises of the centre coordinators, facilitators, the village head or representative, representatives of the youth, men and market women in the community. They help in creating awareness for enrolment and assist in driving the adult education and vocational trainings by carrying out needs assessment, design short or long term programmes to attain such needs. For example,

adult learner who is interested in knowing how to read and write in order to obtain certificate for further studies may enroll in long term programmes such as basic literacy and post literacy while those interesting in acquiring specific skills such as how to send text messages, soap making, catering, paint making etc. may enroll in short term training for 3 to 6 months to acquire skills for self-empowerment. However, adult learners are more often interested in short term programmes that can easily enhance their well-being such as soap making, catering, sewing, craft work, hair dressing, barbing etc. The categories of adult learners in Akwa Ibom State include: adult (men and women) of age 18 above who had no opportunity of attaining formal education due to poor financial background, loss of parents, early child birth, and it is also open to young persons who are less privilege, particularly the disadvantage groups such as disabled, women, orphans, destitute and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) etc.

According to AKSAANFE blueprint, adult education is for everyone, and programmes of adult education in Akwa Ibom State include: Functional literacy education which involves skills acquisition such as soap making, sewing, hair dressing, catering, craft work, paint making, ICT and Agriculture etc; Literacy education which involves the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic; Non-Formal education design to take care of the less privileges, destitute and disadvantage persons to restore their hope and dignity in the society; Workers' education to enable workers to update their skills and knowledge for better performance on the job; Extension education based on the social needs of the communities aim at improving individual and community life; Liberal education targeted at update of skills, knowledge, values, and ideas about new development, for instance learning how to make used of phone to send texts messages and internet banking; Life-Long education/learning process for adult learners who desire to advance in formal education (NMEC, 2014 cited in Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023).

Adult education goal is to boost both the formal and informal sectors of the state economy. It serves as an instrument for eradication of illiteracy as well as provision of functional literacy programmes to include: adult basic literacy, literacy by radio, girls child education, out of school youth education, women vocational education and workers' education and host of other programmes designed to eradicate illiteracy and empower the citizens for increase productivity and sustainable entrepreneurial development in the state in terms of self-employment, empowerment and job creation. Other important role played by the agency are: recruitment of instructors, facilitators and other personnel and organizing training programmes such as seminars, workshop and conferences to boost their skills and competence; sensitization campaign for enrolment of adult learners into adult education programme for self-development; provision of teaching aids and other facilities for learning (Umoinyang and Effiong, 2018, Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023).

Furthermore, the NMEC state coordinator for Akwa Ibom State, Mr. Charles Onwuchekwa during our interaction in Uyo, opine that adult and non-formal education in modern

time is geared towards entrepreneurial sustainable development, and it equip learners with skills that enables them to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), thereby boosting job creation and increase per capita income for individuals and GDP of the state. He also maintained that adult education helps to curb youth restiveness, criminalities such as armed robbery, prostitution and insecurity, and at the same time reinstitute juvenile children in the street to become meaningfully engage in vocational training to acquire skills for self-development in the state. He recommended proper funding of adult education programme in order to limit the numerous challenges of the programme. He called for proper monitoring and evaluation of the programme to ensure that the goal is achieved while also advocating for availability of credit facilities and empowerment programmes for the adult learners to provide them with the needed equipment such as hair dressing and sewing machines, barbing clippers, generators and shops etc. to make practical entrepreneurship possible.

5. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Structural Functional and New Public Management (NPM) theories as theoretical framework of analysis. Structural Functional Theory (SFT) was popularized by Emile Durkheim (1917), Robert K. Merton (1968), Gabriel Almond (1960) and Talcott Parson (1979). It was first adopted to analyse political systems and processes, and subsequently applied in management of organization. Its basic tenets include: seeing organization as a living organism made up of component parts which function interdependently for the survival of the whole system. It stipulates the performance of specific functions as requisite to the maintenance of the whole system (Eminue, 2001 cited in Ekpo and Umoh, 2022).

On the other hand, NPM theory is attributed to the works of Pollitt (1990); Hood (1991); Pollitt & Bouckaert (2004), and it is a paradigm shift from the traditional approaches of Webber's bureaucratic model (1946), Wilson's politics and administration dichotomy (1887), and Taylor's scientific management model (1911) which emphasizes formal rules and procedures, to a modern public administration model that is result-oriented and based on efficiency in performance of public servants. Basic tenets of the theory are: It sees citizens as customers who deserve best services, while public servants are managers of public businesses and call on them to be accountability for job results. It emphasizes result-oriented public sector which is based on effectiveness, efficiency, economy, increase productivity, performance and the devolution of management control with improved reporting and monitoring mechanisms (Bale and Dale, 1998, cited in Dike, 2019). Therefore, adopting NPM approach enables the study to evaluate the performance and efficiency of the state agency. NPM demands for proper transparency and accountability in public expenditure, good governance, technological innovation and democratization as watch words for effective service delivery. Obviously, the AKSAANFE is still faced with challenges of bureaucratic bottleneck, corruption and environmental problems resulting in low performance of the agency.

In applying both theories to the management of AKSAANFE, it is clear that every system including AKSAANFE has structures that involve people performing certain functions, with the power to effect actions/policies that can affect the adult education in Akwa Ibom State. While functions connote duties and responsibilities, structures refer to organs. The structural functionalism and NPM theory were adopted because they offer the best explanation of the ways the various structures perform their functions aiming at effective service delivery to the populace. AKSAANFE as a system is made up of interrelated roles, structures and functions which must be performed to satisfy the needs of the people in the state. The question is, does the management and facilitators of adult education in the state conform to the tenets of structural functional and New Public Management theories? The answer is yes, because they know their functions and perform same but not efficiently. Managers/facilitators of the programme in Akwa Ibom seem not to be result-oriented but rather tends to be inconsistent in services delivery to the masses, and this manifest in lackadaisical nature of service delivery (Erinsakin, Erinsakin, and Olalekan 2022; Elebe and Ufot, 2023). Survey revealed that many centres in the state are only functional on paper but not in reality. Thus, the theories help us to understand who initiates and implements education policies and for whose interest. Hence, to attain the goal of adult education for sustainable entrepreneurial development by AKSAANFE, there is need to adhere to the tenets of structural functional and NPM theories.

6. Method and Materials

The study adopts descriptive and survey research methods in order to achieve its objectives. survey questionnaire was used to elicit primary data from the projected population of the study estimated at about 35,220 people (State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education, Uyo as at November, 2022), comprises of Adult learners, facilitators and other staff of AKSAANFE. Survey of 9 selected centres, 3 from each senatorial district out of 888 adult education centres in the 31LGAs, with sample size of 126, and stratified random sampling techniques employed to administered 10 items questionnaire on the respondents. Simple percentage and tabular presentation were adopted as method of data analysis. Secondary data gotten from textbooks, Government publications, Journals and internet materials etc. were analyzed contextually.

7. Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, data obtained from literature (secondary) and survey (primary) methods are presented in tables, and the analysis based on the percentage and tabular presentation were adopted as method of data analysis. Secondary data gotten from textbooks, Government publications, Journals and internet materials etc. were analyzed contextually.

| Local Government Area | Number of Centers/Year | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2007/2008 | 2008/2009 | 2009/2010 | 2010/2011 | 2011/2012 | 2015/2016 | 2020/2021 | 2021/2022 |
| Abak | 22 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 29 | 32 | 29 | 29 |
| Eastern Obolo | 12 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Eket | 23 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 29 | 31 | 29 | 29 |
| Esit Eket | 15 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| Essien Udim | 42 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 7 | 27 | 27 |
| Etim Ekpo | 29 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| Etinan | 36 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 |
| Ibena | 5 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Ibesikpo Asutan | 27 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 38 | 38 | 34 | 34 |
| Ibiono Ibom | 25 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 38 | 38 | 38 | 38 |
| Ika | 20 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 |
| Ikono | 32 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| UrueOffong/Oruko | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| Ikot Abasi | 32 | 30 | 30 | 44 | 43 | 43 | 40 | 40 |
| Ikot Ekpene | 23 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 28 |
| Ini | 30 | 30 | 30 | 36 | 29 | 31 | 29 | 29 |
| Iru | 20 | 20 | 20 | 30 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| Mbo | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 15 |
| Mkpat Enin | 39 | 39 | 39 | 39 | 62 | 62 | 57 | 57 |
| Nsit Ani | 20 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Nsit Ibom | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| Nsit Ubiom | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| Obot Akara | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| Okobo | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| Onna | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 31 | 33 | 31 | 30 |
| Oron | 18 | 18 | 18 | 13 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Oruk Anam | 37 | 37 | 37 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 37 | 37 |
| Udung Uko | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 8 |
| Ukanafun | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 44 | 44 | 40 | 40 |
| Uruan | 25 | 25 | 25 | 40 | 36 | 36 | 34 | 36 |
| Uyo | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Total | 785 | 776 | 776 | 816 | 864 | 888 | 886 | 888 |

Table 1. Number of Adult and Non-Formal Education Centres in Akwa Ibom State by Local Government Area 2007/2008 – 2021/2022

Source: Researcher computation using data from Akwa Ibom State Agency for Adult and Non- Formal Education, Uyo.

Table 1 above showed the LGAs with the least establishment of adult education centres are Ibena with only 4 centres, followed by Udung Uko with 8 centres and Eastern Obolo with 12 centres respectively. On the other hand, LGAs with highest centres were Mkpat Enin with 57, 2nd position with 40 include: Ikot Abasi, Ukanafun, Ikono, Etim Ekpo; while 3rd highest is Ibiono Ibom with 38 centres. This implies that there is need to establish more centres across villages especially in those LGAs with the least number of Adult educations centres in order to achieve the goal 4 of sustainable development goal by ensuring education for all by 2030 in Akwa Ibom State.

| Year | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2007/2008 | 12,040 (39.75%) | 18,246 (60.25%) | 30,286 (12.08%) |
| 2008/2009 | 11,460 (40.40%) | 16,905 (59.60%) | 28,365 (11.32%) |
| 2009/2010 | 11,460 (40.40%) | 16,905 (59.60%) | 28,365 (11.32%) |
| 2010/2011 | 10,452 (40.84%) | 15,138 (59.16%) | 25,590 (10.21%) |
| 2011/2012 | 17,245 (34.60%) | 32,593 (65.40%) | 49,838 (19.88%) |
| 2015/2016 | 13,520 (46.99%) | 15,254 (53.01%) | 28,774 (11.48%) |
| 2020/2021 | 14,112 (48.27%) | 15,123 (51.73%) | 29,235 (11.66%) |
| 2021/2022 | 14,109 (46.69%) | 16,111 (53.31%) | 30,220 (12.05%) |
| Total | 104,398 (41.65%) | 146,275 (58.35%) | 250,673 (100%) |

Table 2. Enrolment of Learners by sex and number in Adult and Non- Formal Education in Akwa Ibom State 2007 – 2022

Source: Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education, Uyo, Ministry of Education, Uyo

Table 2 illustrate enrolment of Learners by sex and number in Adult and Non- Formal Education programme in Akwa Ibom State from 2007 to 2022. Data revealed that the highest enrolment (1st) position in the table above was 2011/2012 session which recorded 49,838 adult learners, thereby constituting 19.88% of the total enrolment, followed by 2007/2008 session (2nd) position with 30,365 learners making up 12.08% while 2021/2022 was ranked 3rd position with 30,220 learners thereby constituting 12.05% of total adult learners of 250,673 enrolled in the programme

Due to the available data. The session with least enrolment were 2008/2009; 2009/2010 and 2015/2016 with 11.32%, 11.32% and 11.48% respectively. However, years that the study could not have information about the numbers of adult learners' enrolment are not included in the study. The study observed serious decline in enrolment for the programme from 19.88% in 2011/2012 session to 11.48% in 2015/2016, before a slide improvement in adult learners' enrolment in 2021/2022 session to 12.05%. The implication is that much is still needed to be in terms of community enlightenment and sensitization of people for improve enrolment, and to reduce illiteracy rate among adult citizens in the Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3. Respondents' perception of Adult education on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State.

| S/N | Questions | Responses/Percentage (%) | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|-------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| 1 | ANFE is a tool for ESD in Akwa Ibom State? | 121 (96.03%) | 5 (3.97%) |
| 2 | AEP of AKSAANFE encourages MSMEs startup? | 94 (74.60%) | 32 (25.40%) |
| 3 | Are you satisfied with AE and VT of AKSAANFE in AKS? | 73 (57.94%) | 53 (42.06%) |
| 4 | ANFE reduces illiteracy, poverty and unemployment through ESD in AKS? | 109 (86.51%) | 17 (13.49%) |
| 5 | 50% and above of adult learners in your centre also acquire vocational skills for self-reliance and MSMEs startup? | 115 (91.27%) | 11 (8.73%) |
| 6 | 50% and above of the teachers and facilitators in your centre obtained minimum qualification | 57 (45.24%) | 69 (54.76%) |

| | of NCE and above? | | |
|----|--|--------------|-------------|
| 7 | Poor salary of teachers and non-payment of facilitators, and other staff of ANFE hinders ESD of Adult learners in AKS? | 113 (89.68%) | 13 (10.32%) |
| 8 | Low enrolment of Adult learners in AEP in AKS is due to low community sensitization and literacy campaign? | 89 (70.63%) | 37 (29.37%) |
| 9 | Inadequate funding of adult education and lack of credit facilities to the entrepreneurs hinders ESD in the State? | 119 (94.44%) | 7 (5.56%) |
| 10 | Lack of teaching facilities, industries and infrastructures impact negatively on learners' skills acquisition for ESD? | 123 (97.62%) | 3 (2.38%) |

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Moreover, to achieve the objectives of the study relevant questions were asked, and survey method adopted to gather data for analysis.

Research Question One

To what extent does adult education impact on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 3 contain the perception of respondents to Q1, 2 & 3 provides answer to extend to which adult education impact on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State, as 121 respondents which constitutes 96.03 % agreed that Adult and Non-Formal education is a tool for entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State while 5 respondents, representing 3.97% disagreed. In the same vein, 94 respondents which represented 74.60 % agreed that Adult education programmes of AKSAANFE encourages micro, small and medium businesses startup while 32 respondents, representing 25.40 % disagreed. To determine the level of satisfaction with adult education and vocational training of AKSAANFE in Akwa Ibom State, 73 respondents which constitutes 57.94% shows satisfaction while 53 respondents which represented 42.06% expressed dissatisfaction with performance of AKSAANFE. Data above revealed that adult education have significant and direct impact on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question Two

What are the strengths of adult education towards entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State?

The perception of respondents to Q 4 & 5 provide answer to the strengths of adult education towards entrepreneurial

sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State, 109 respondents which represented 86.51% agreed that Adult education reduces illiteracy, poverty and unemployment through entrepreneurial development in Akwa Ibom State while 17 respondents which made up 13.49% disagreed. In line with this, 115 respondents which made up 91.27% agreed that 50% and above of adult learners in their centres also acquire vocational skills for self-reliance and micro, small and medium business startup while 11 respondents which represented 8.73% disagreed. Data revealed that adult education for entrepreneurial sustainable development helps to reduce the high level of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment in the state, and enhances skills for businesses startup for self-reliance, job creation and employment opportunities, which in turn improve the standard of living of the citizens and per capita income/GDP of the state.

Research Question Three

What are the weaknesses of adult education towards entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State?

The perception of respondents to Q6 to 10 were adopted to assess the weaknesses of entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State. Concerning issues of minimum qualification for teachers and facilitators, 57 respondents which made up 45.24% maintained that 50% and above of the teachers/facilitators in their centre obtained minimum qualification of National Certificate of Education (NCE) and above while 69 respondents which constitutes 54.76% disagreed, thereby, indicating that about 54.76% and above teachers/facilitators in AKS do not possess minimum qualification of NCE for adult education as stipulated by National policy on education. 113 respondents which constitutes 89.68% opine that poor salary of teachers and non-payment of facilitators, and other staff of Adult education hinders entrepreneurial development of Adult learners in Akwa Ibom while 13 respondents representing 10.32% did not agree. The implication is that the high percent of 89.68% is enough to proof that poor salary of teachers and non-payment of facilitators, and other staff of Adult education hinders entrepreneurial development of Adult learners in Akwa Ibom State. In addition, 89 respondents which represented 70.63% agreed that low enrolment of adult learners in adult education programme in Akwa Ibom State is due to low community sensitization and mass literacy campaign while 37 respondents which represented 29.37% did not agree. The result showed 70.63% agreement which revealed that there is a link between low enrolment in adult education and low community sensitization and campaign for mass literacy in the state. Moreover, 119 respondents which made up 94.44% agreed that inadequate funding of adult education and lack of credit facilities to the entrepreneurs hinders entrepreneurial development in the State, whereas 7 respondents which constitute 5.56% disagreed. The high percent of 94.44% shows that inadequate funding is a major challenge to the implementation of adult and non-formal education in the state, and lack of access to credit facilities by learners who want to become entrepreneur hinders entrepreneurial development in the state. Lastly, 123 respondents which represent 97.62%

opine that lack of teaching facilities, industries and infrastructures impact negatively on learners' skills acquisition for entrepreneurial development while 3 respondents which constituted 2.38% did not agree. The implication is that high percent of 97.62% shows that lack of teaching facilities, industries and infrastructures impact negatively on the learners' skills acquisition/entrepreneurial development in Akwa Ibom State.

8. Findings of the Study

- i. Adult education has significant and direct impact on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. Adult education for entrepreneurial sustainable development contributes towards reduction in poverty illiteracy and unemployment rate in the state which can be counted as strength but at minimal level.
- iii. Adult education in Akwa Ibom State lacks funding, basic teaching facilities, teachers and infrastructures and these act as weaknesses to learners' skills acquisition/entrepreneurial development.

9. Discussion of Findings

Adult education for entrepreneurship development is the new way/strategy adopted by many states towards human and national development, since adult citizens are the major productive force of the economy. Hence, training of over 250,673 adult learners from 2007 to 2022 in order to acquire skills and knowledge for self-reliance, startup of MSMSE, has been recorded as strength for AKSAANFE and indeed Akwa Ibom State. In the year 2022, Akwa Ibom State government in collaboration with AKSAANFE successfully trained over 40,000 adult (men and women) and youths in various skills including ICT, solar installation, agro-based ventures and SMEs (Explore Akwa Ibom, 2022). Akwa Ibom State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education (AKSAANFE) in collaboration with the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) has help to establish 888 Adult education centres and develop programmes of Adult education to address entrepreneurial sustainable development such as sewing, soap making, craft work, carpentry, clothes waiving, agriculture etc in the state with the goal to achieve global standard of education as encapsulated in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 which is targeted at ensuring education for all in the state. The conversion of the former technical college Ikot Ada Idem to a state of the art entrepreneurial and skills acquisition centre, and the establishment of high profile, well equip and modern adult education centre in Udo Udoma Avenue in Uyo to provide vocational training for adult learners shows the importance of Adult education for entrepreneurial development in the state. Also, the enrolment and training of 30220 adult learners (Males 14109 and females 16,111) as reported in 2022 in basic literacy, post literacy and vocational training to acquire skills for small business startup is seen as strength and this is supported by (Explore Akwa Ibom, 2022, Elebe and Ufot. 2023).

On the other hands, adult education was established in order to achieve the goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals targeted at ensuring education for all by 2030 in Akwa Ibom State. Despite the implementation of adult education programmes by AKSAANFE in the state, the illiteracy rate is still high, Unemployment rate of 67.69%, making Akwa Ibom to be ranked 1st in unemployment amongst south-south states, followed by Rivers State 2nd with 63.50% while Delta became 3rd with 60.40%. (NBS, 2021, cited in BudgIT, 2021). In poverty rating, Akwa Ibom recorded 26.82%, and ranked 2nd highest in poverty rate in south-south after Cross River which was ranked 1st with 36.90% as reported by (BudgIT, 2021), it shows that these factors also act as drawback to entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State. Nevertheless, Adult education through AKSAANFE assist to equips the learners with the skills needed to startup businesses such as: retail trade, transport, repair services, restaurants, local financial services like Osusu and private money lenders, craft works, domestic works, farming, sewing, carpentry, clothes making and waiving, barbing and hair dressing, traditional medicine and Traditional Birth Attendance (TBA) etc. (Akwa Ibom Impact, 2022, Explore Akwa Ibom, 2022).

In addition, entrepreneurial sustainable development is a concept in line with goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing sustainable development of industry, innovation and infrastructures. The study point of reference is from section 9.3 of SDG, targeted at increasing the small-scale industries and other enterprise mostly in developing countries to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chain and markets (UN Department for Economic and Social Services, 2015). The study observed that although MSMEs are encouraged through government policies and programmes of AKSAANFE in regards to adult education and vocational training for entrepreneurship, but lack of adequate funds, empowerment programmes and inaccessibility to credit facilities such as loan, subsidies and grants for adult learners is a major setback to entrepreneurial sustainable development in the State. Data revealed that where the loans are made available, the high interest rate discouraged the adult learners from taking the loans. Consequently, absent of viable industries to support Adult learners who ventured into small businesses by providing markets for them to sale their products is also a major challenged, as the study observed that Akwa Ibom State is a civil service state, and the effort of the government to industrialized the state is yet to meet the standard of the SDGs target aimed at 2030, this findings correspond to study by (Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023; Elebe and Ufot. 2023).

9.1. The strengths of Adult Education on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State.

Adult education is important tool for entrepreneurial sustainable development in the state in the sense that it equips adult learners with skills and knowledge aimed at development of adult person's potentials for productive venture in the economy such as agriculture, sewing, carpentry, catering, ICT, soap making etc. these activities constitutes part of entrepreneurship and helps to improve per capita income of

persons as well as living standard of people in the society. Sustainable development emphasizes the development of the entire human being to include the physical, intellectual, skills, emotional, behavioural patterns and ideas needed to solve individuals or societal problems without causing any harm to the present or future generations. Sustainable development and entrepreneurship are integral parts of education; therefore, innovation, creativity and technology can be enhanced in individuals through adult education and use in effecting environmental changes that add values to lives, improve adult learners' participation and exploration of development processes towards human and national development in Nigeria. Adult education is necessary tool for skills acquisition and decision making to limit risk and encourage success in business venture. An entrepreneur is concerned with the establishment of business for profit making and job creation, therefore, improving entrepreneurial development through adult and non-formal education would add values to the citizens' lives in the society in the following ways:

Job creation and employment generation for adult citizens in the state: In 2022, about 3500 adult learners engaged in Agriculture for self-help and to boost food sufficiency in the state, about 50 youth were trained in carpentry/furniture work in partnership with private firm in Eket while 2000 women adult learners were linked to skills acquisition in hair dressing, fashion design, make up, decoration, Gele tying, soap marking, craft work etc (Akwa Ibom Impact, 2022, Field Survey, 2023).

It helps in extension of education opportunities to the disadvantage groups such as disabled, women, orphans, destitute and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). For instance, establishment of special education centres to cater for the blind, deaf and dumb and mentally retarded persons, helps to give meaning to their lives and make them more useful in the state. It also increases the rate of literacy while decreasing illiteracy rate in the state. Education avails us with knowledge and skills for effective harnessing of resources and taking informed actions/decisions for innovative and creative business ventures for profit maximization (Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023; Elebe and Ufot, 2023).

It encourages empowerment programmes in the sense that at the end of the vocational training, some learners are empowered by NMEC and AKSAANFE with equipment such as sewing and hairdressing machines, generators, clippers etc. to start up small businesses.

It acts as a medium of advancing infrastructures: The siting of adult education centres in the communities propels the provision of facilities such as electricity supply, potable water, access road and transportation, hospitals, etc. whereby an entrepreneur can also benefit from in the course of his business.

It improves standard of living and per capita income by using acquired skills to start micro and small businesses for purpose of self-development and profit making (Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023; Elebe and Ufot, 2023).

9.2. Constraints/Weaknesses of adult education and entrepreneurship development in Akwa Ibom State

They include:

i. Policy inconsistency: It is observed that a well-developed programme of actions by AKSAANFE often failed at the implementation stage (Elebe and Ufot, 2023). The failure of the programme in most centres and LGAs is attributed to lack of leadership with vision and political good will to deliver services to the people, poor funding of the programme by LGAs as a result of the State-Local Government Joint Account which constrains LGAs' ability to access funds to deliver on the assigned responsibilities is a drawback. Also, inadequate supervision, monitoring and evaluation of adult education programmes by State Agency, SDEISC department at local government level and CBMC in the communities.

ii. Shortage of professional and trained facilitators and teachers with the acceptable minimum national qualification of NCE, as most facilitators and teachers lack basic qualifications, competency on special education and poor communication skills to teach the physically challenged persons in the state.

iii. Poor enrolment, attitudes of facilitators and awareness campaign for mass literacy: The decrease in the number of adult learners that enrolled in the programme in year 2022 were attributed to so many factors ranging from lack of interest on the part of learners, withdrawal of services by facilitators due to backlog of unpaid stipend, low community mobilization, sensitization and enlightenment campaign about the programme as the study observed that many whom the programme was designed for, are not even aware of the existence of the adult education centres and programmes in their communities. Lack of teaching aids and facilities, non-payment/irregular payment of facilitators contributes to poor motivation to work, lack of interest, low attendance to work, poor performances and in severe cases withdrawal of learners and facilitators from the programme. It was observed that facilitators in all the LGAs visited were owed stipend ranging from 2 to 4 years, this act as a drawback to the programme implementation in the state. This situation caused many to withdraw their services from the programme, thereby making the purpose of the programme to be defeated (Field Survey, 2023).

iv. Lack of empowerment as most of the adult learners who obtained skills in various areas such as catering, fashion and design, soap and paint making etc. needs to be empowered with equipment needed to deliver the job such as sewing machines for those in fashion designers, hair dressing machines for the saloon stylists, clippers for the barbers. The lack of these machines makes entrepreneurial sustainable development by adult learners difficult. It was also observed that the few available machines in the various centres were not properly put to use and many were abandoned (Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023; Elebe and Ufot, 2023).

v. Inadequate capital/credit facilities: poor funding is the main drawback to the implementation of adult education for entrepreneurial development in the state. Entrepreneurship is very capital intensive and required huge funds. Making available loans, grants and subsidies investment in order to revamp micro and small-scale businesses is necessary. The lack of money to run MSMEs is main challenge of business, and at times lead to the collapse many businesses. A situation whereby learners with business venture lack access to loans and another facilities/ enabling environment is a setback. Most cases where loans are available, the high interest rate discourage them, while multiple tax system also affects entrepreneurial development in the state and this correspond to findings in (Erinsakin, Erinsakin, and Olalekan, 2022).

vi. Corruption: High rate of corruption recorded in our public service is a major constraint to effective implementation of ANFE for entrepreneurial sustainability in Akwa Ibom State. Corruption can be defined as illegal use of public office to advanced personal gains at the detriment of the public interest and this correspond with the views (Wonah, Beshel and Uangbaode, 2019). In the views of Claude Ake, corruption is the bane of African society. Corruption in public sector manifest itself in many forms such as misappropriation, mismanagement, embezzlement, bribery, Nepotism, favouritism, Godfatherism, sadism, contract inflation etc.

vii. Lack of industries and infrastructures: Inadequate medium and large-scale industries that can provide market for entrepreneurs to sale their product in the state is also a setback while lack of infrastructures such as constant electricity supply, potable water, good roads and transportation, hospitals, schools, banks to borrow money for business also constraint entrepreneurial development in the state as confirmed in (Ekpo, Umoh and Utok, 2023; Elebe and Ufot, 2023).

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Adult and non-formal education is an instrument for human capacity development, socio-economic and political development and entrepreneurial sustainable development in the state. The study set out to examine the impact of Adult education on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State. It revealed that Adult education have significant and direct impact on entrepreneurial sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State; Adult education for entrepreneurial sustainable development also contributes to reduction in poverty, illiteracy and unemployment rate in the state which can be counted as strength but at minimal level; Adult education in Akwa Ibom State lacks funding, basic teaching facilities, teachers and infrastructures and these act as weaknesses/drawback to learners' skills acquisition programmes and entrepreneurial development in the state.

Finally, the role of adult education in advancing entrepreneurial development can never be underestimated since adult citizens formed majority of the productive force of the economy, building their skills through vocational training is the one way of unlocking their potentials and securing

entrepreneurial skills for a better future and sustainable development. Based on the study findings the followings were recommended:

1. Government should design and implement policies that promote entrepreneurship development programmes for learners in adult education centres in the state in order to acquire practical skills such as fashion design, craft work, ICT and farming etc and knowledge for SMEs for self-reliance, job creation and community development. This requires:

- i. proper coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes by the Centre Based Management Committee (CBMC), department of Social Development, Education, Information, Sports and Culture (SDEISC), and the State Agency to ensure that adult education programme meets the goal of mass literacy, skills acquisition and empowerment of the adult learners to be more productive and self-dependent in the society.

- ii. Adequately budgeting for adult education, infrastructures and credit facilities to train and empowerment of adult learners to become entrepreneurs to curb unemployment, youth restiveness, limit prostitution, insurgency and other criminal activities in the state.

2. There is a need for training and re-training of teachers and facilitators to meet the minimum national qualification requirement of NCE, and also facilitators and volunteers should be regularly exposed to seminars, workshops and conferences in order to develop practical skills needed for teaching entrepreneurship education in adult schools.

3. There is need for adequate infrastructures such as provision of permanent building for adult schools, teaching material, facilities and equipment, electricity supply, potable water, health care services and banks to enable learners who acquire skills for entrepreneurship to access soft loans and grants for their businesses.

4. There is need to be establish more centres in various communities for purpose of nearness, especially the drop-in-centres in market squares to help market men and women easy access, and at the same time volunteers such as youth corps members, retired teachers who may still want to teach, NMEC and AKSAANFE staff and LGAs education officers who are not engaged should be posted to assist in teaching in the centres.

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