ADOPTION OF SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADULT LEARNERS IN LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN ANAMBRA STATE

Madu Catherine Omeriyang PhD; Okechukwu Uzoamaka Deborah M.Ed
Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
O8153121333 08138390905

Abstract

This study aimed at determining the extent of adoption of self-regulated learning strategies for improving academic performance in literacy programmes in Anambra State with particular focus on self-monitoring and self- evaluation strategies. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. A total of 44,403 which comprised 18,330 male and 26,073 female adult learners in 286 literacy centres in 2020/2021 academic session in Anambra State were used as the population of the study. A sample size of 888 (366 males and 522 females) was drawn from the population using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the study. The internal consistency of the instrument yielded an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.88. The instrument was validated by three experts. Mean statistics and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that adult learners adopt self-monitoring and self-evaluation strategies to a high extent. The findings on the hypotheses showed that there was no significant difference on the adoption of self-monitoring and self-evaluation strategies. The researchers recommend that adult educators or facilitators should emphasis the teaching of self-regulated learning strategies to enable adult learners acquire self-regulated learning skills. This will enable them adopt other self-regulated learning strategies like goal setting and planning for better performance in literacy programmes, among others.

Keywords*: Adoption, Self- regulated Learning Strategies, Academic Performance, adult learners, Literacy Programmes.*

Introduction

Self-regulated learning refers to learning that is guided by thinking, planning, monitoring, and evaluating personal progress against a standard, and motivation to learn. Self-regulated learning is an active and constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behaviour, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment. Zimmerman (2008) refers to self-regulated learning as a self-directed process which enables learners to acquire academic skills such as setting goals, selecting strategies, and self-monitoring. A self-regulated learner monitors, directs, and regulates actions towards goal attainment and self-improvement.

Andrea (2016) stressed that self-regulated learners are cognizant of their academic strengths and weakness as they have a repertoire of strategies, they appropriately apply to tackle the day-to-day challenges of academic tasks. Self-regulated learners approach academic tasks with confidence and diligence, proactively seek out the information needed and find successful ways to overcome obstacles. Adult learners may not be different. An adult learner is a person who engages in any form of learning for self-enhancement. An adult learner could be considered as someone who has some felt needs which requires attention and because of these needs, he or she enrolled in different adult learning programmes for training to get knowledge and acquire skills to fulfil such needs or meet his or her life goals. Nzeneri (2010) defined an adult learner as any mature person who consciously or unconsciously engages himself or

herself in any learning programme. The importance of self-regulated learning lies in providing adult learners with the necessary learning strategies to enhance their academic performance and promote their self-regulated learning ability (Becker, 2017).

In their effort to use self-regulated learning strategies to improve academic performance, adult learners set learning goals, monitor and self-evaluate themselves. Self-regulated or monitoring activities include understanding the content of the study, judging learning difficulties, accessing progress, and predicting the learning outcome. Self-regulated learning strategies are techniques which help learners monitor and manage their learning skills. In the context of this paper, self- regulated learning strategy is a plan of action designed to assist learners achieve their goals. Such strategies provide educators with time to work with some groups or one and one with learners who require extra instruction. By adopting self- regulated learning strategies, adult learners can monitor their learning progress or become independent and responsible for their own learning.

Adoption is a process of making full use of a new idea or strategy as the best course of action available. Adoption of self-regulated learning strategies by adult learners in literacy programmes will help them become self-directed and as a result will improve their academic performance. Researchers such as Pressley, Hilden and Shankland (2016) noted that many learners who have practiced self-regulated learning had their academic performance better than before. Hadwin and Hilden (2019) listed the self-regulated learning strategies to include; goal-setting, planning, self-monitoring, self-

evaluation, organization and transformation, records keeping, monitoring, rehearsing and memorizing, reviewing records, self-reinforcement, among others. This paper focused on the adoption of self- monitoring and self- evaluation strategies for improving academic performance of adult learners in literacy programmes. The choice of these strategies is because, self- monitoring and self- evaluation are considered by the researchers as major drivers in adult learning. When an adult learner self- evaluate himself or herself, as well as monitor his or her learning process, the academic performance is likely to improve.

Self-monitoring is an important strategy in adult learning. Coleman and Webber (2017) viewed self-monitoring as a process of having individual record data regarding their own behavior for the purpose of changing its rate. It allows adult learners to measure their behavioral outcome against a set standard. In addition, it is the process of observing one's behavior and evaluating it in relation to goals. Shunk (2021) revealed that self-monitoring strategy is used to evaluate academic performance, to identify and improve weaknesses.

Self-monitoring strategy focuses on the way adult learners monitor their presentation of self on a construct referring to individual differences to manage their behaviors and emotions (Schempp and Websten, 2018). The authors further found that skilled learners believed they had to learn more while less skilled learners believed they knew everything they needed to learn. This effort to identify and improve strengths and weaknesses is a form of self-monitoring. Self-monitoring is important because it is the method in which learners individually monitor their own skills and behaviours to

become more successful learners in their field of study (Sebesta and Speth, 2017). The authors added that some learners need to incorporate self-monitoring strategies into their behaviors and learning processes.

More so, self-monitoring has been associated with superior performance of learners and relevant literature has also discussed the importance of implementing self-monitoring in learners. Belford and Browder (2000) conducted a study and found that the adoption of self-monitoring strategy increase adult learners' outcome. The study further indicated that self-monitoring strategy increases accuracy of decisions made by adult learners and improved progress for them. The authors concluded that there was a functional relationship between the adoption of self-monitoring strategy and improved adult learners' performance. Similarly, to become strategic learners, the learners must assume ownership for their learning and achievement outcomes. Self-regulated learners take on this responsibility by self-monitoring their progress towards learning goals. In order for adult learners to self-monitor their progress, they must set their own learning goals, plan ahead, independently motivate themselves to meet their goals, focus their attention on the task at hand, and use learning strategies to facilitate their understanding of material (Zimmerman, 2018). Educators can encourage self-monitoring by having adult learners keep a record of the number of times they worked on particular learning tasks, the strategies they used, and the amount of time they spent working. This practice allows them to visualize their progress and make changes as needed.

In addition, Mooney (2017) stated that flexible strategy can be used to increase the occurrence of desired behaviors or to decrease inappropriate behaviors of adult learners in any learning process. Hence, self-monitoring can be used virtually in any instructional setting be it general education classrooms or vocational programmes to address adult learners needs and promote greater independence.

Another, type of self-regulated learning strategy is self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is an act of self-assessment. Self-evaluation enables adult learners to evaluate their learning strategies and make adjustment for similar tasks in their future (Chatzistamatiou&Dermitzaki, 2018). Adult learners can promote self- evaluation in their studies by monitoring learning goals and strategies used and make changes to those goals and strategies based on learning outcomes. In the process of self-evaluation, an adult learner becomes responsible for examining and improving his or her learning. Adult learners are more likely to become self-regulated learners when they are able to evaluate their own learning, independent of educator-issued summative assessment (Winne & Hadwin, 2019). This practice enables them to evaluate their learning strategies and make adjustment for similar tasks in the future. Educators can promote self-evaluation in literacy programmes by helping learners monitor their goals and strategy used so that they can make changes to those goals and strategies based upon learning outcomes. Obidiegwu (2013) noted that adult learners need constructive feedback, they need to know how well they are performing through self-evaluation questionnaire. Shunk (2019) maintained that self-evaluation influenced self-efficacy, skills, persistence, ego, orientation and increase in

performance. Shunk also defined self-evaluation as a process comprising self-judgment of present performance and self-reactions to these judgments. Research carried out by Kremer-Hayon (2021) supported the hypothesis that effective self-regulated learning depends on one's capabilities and progress in learning because these beliefs help sustain motivation for learning.

This study seeks to find out the extent of adoption of self- monitoring and self-evaluation strategies for improving adult learners' academic performance The respondents of this study are male and female adult learners who may differ in their opinion on the extent of adoption of self- monitoring and self- evaluation strategies for improving their academic performance. This is because different gender has different perspectives on issues of learning. The researchers observed that little attention is paid to adult learning by the government in Nigeria and Anambra state in particular, hence, dearth of available information on adult learners and the adoption of self-regulated learning strategies for improving their academic performance. Since self- regulated learning strategies are techniques that enable adult learners to acquire academic skills for improvement, it is in doubt to know the extent adult learners in Anambra State adopt these strategies in literacy programmes. Hence, the researchers deem it necessary to carry out this study to determine the extent of adoption of self-regulated learning strategies by adult learners for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study determined the extent of adoption of:

1.self- monitoring strategy by adult learners for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes.

2.self- evaluation strategy by adult learners for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do adult learners adopt self- monitoring as a strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes?
2. To what extent do adult learners adopt self- evaluation as a strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on the adoption of self- monitoring as a strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on the adoption of self- evaluation as a strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes.

Materials and Method

The design for this study was the descriptive survey research design. The area of the study is Anambra state. The population of the study consisted of 44,403 male and female adult learners in 286 literacy centres in 2020/2021 academic session in Anambra state. A sample size of 888 was drawn from the population using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was a researcher made questionnaire titled: Extent of adoption of self- monitoring and self- evaluation as strategies for improving academic performance of adult learners in literacy programmes in Anambra State. The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability and establish the internal consistency which yielded an overall reliability of 0.88 and was considered appropriate for the study. Mean statistics and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t- test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Nworgu (2015) affirmed the use of t-test to test hypothesis about the difference between two population means. Therefore, the use of t-test for this study was appropriate. The decision rule for research questions were determined using real limits of numbers in a four-point rating scale on the premise that any mean score of 2.50 and above was taken as high extent while any below 2.50 was regarded as low extent. A null hypothesis was accepted when the calculated t was more than the t-critical at 0.05 level of significance while a null hypothesis was rejected when the t-cal was less than the t-critical at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do adult learners adopt self- monitoring as a strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes**?**

Table 1: Mean ratings on the extent adult learners adopt self- monitoring strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes

N =876

Extent of Adoption of Self-monitoring as a Strategy	Mean	SD	Remark
1. I make sure that my learning progress is in relation to each learning activity	3.09	.59	HE
2. I assume responsibilities for learning to enhance my performance	3.02	.65	HE
3. I identify learning problems so as to solve them	3.10	.57	HE
4. I reflect on my academic performances to make needed adjustment	3.10	.53	HE
5. I check my academic behaviors so as not to deviate from the goals I have set for myself	3.20	.63	HE
6. I keep record of the number of hours spent on accomplishing each academic task in the learning process	3.18	.70	HE
7. I reflect on what was learned from my courses in literacy programme	3.08	.83	HE
8. I check my academic progress in achieving set goals	2.89	.72	HE
9. I clearly define appropriate learning behaviour	2.90	.81	HE
10. I cross check my assignments to ensure they were done well before submission	3.08	.76	HE
Grand Mean	**3.06**	**.68**	**HE**

Table 1 shows the grand mean score of 3.06 and standard deviation score of .68 indicating that the extent to which adult learners adopt self-monitoring strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes in Anambra State is high. The item-by-item analysis shows that the respondents rated the 10 items in table 1 as being adopted to a high extent by the adult learners with their mean rating ranging from 2.89 to 3.20.

Research Question 2: To what extent do adult learners adopt self-evaluation strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean ratings on the extent adult learners adopt self-evaluation strategy for improving academic performance in literacy Programmes.

N =876

Extent of adoption of self-evaluation as a strategy	Mean	SD	Remark
11. I always examine my work to know if I met the specific objectivesi have set for the programme	2.60	.59	HE
12. I self-assess my capacity to solve learning problem	2.55	.50	HE
13. I seek for feedback from my fellow adult learners to know my level of progress so far	2.53	.50	HE
14. I compare my progress against required learning	2.81	.63	HE

15. I use feedback from my lecturers/educators to know my level of progress during my study/programme	3.01	.68	HE
16. I assess my ability towards goals achievement	2.55	.50	HE
17. I assess my ability to know if there would be improvement in skill acquisition at the end of the programme	2.62	.49	HE
18. I prepare a short question at the end of each lesson to evaluate my understanding of the course content	2.54	.74	HE
19. I check if the knowledge acquired is meaningful to me in life	2.58	.49	HE
20. I check if the skills acquired can be useful in real life situations	2.57	.50	HE
Grand Mean	2.64	.56	HE

Table 2 shows the grand mean score of 2.64 and standard deviation score of .56 indicating that the extent to which adult learners adopt self-evaluation strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes in Anambra State is high. Analysis of the items shows that the respondents rated all 10 items in table 2 as being adopted to a high extent with their mean ratings ranging from 2.53 to 3.01.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on their adoption of self-monitoring as a strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes.

Table 3: t-test comparison of male and female adult learners on adoption of self-monitoring as a strategy for improving academic performances in literacy programmes.

Source of variation	N	Mean SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	361	3.07 .55	219	.15	1.96	Not-Significant
Female	515	3.06 .56				

Table 3 shows that the mean score for males (*M*=3.07, *SD*=.55) was not significantly greater than that of the females (*M=3.06, SD=.56*); *t-cal* =.15 indicating that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on their adoption of self-monitoring as a strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes.The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on their adoption of self-evaluation as a strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes.

Table 4: t-test comparison of male and female adult learners on adoption of self-evaluation as a strategy for improving academic performances in literacy programmes.

Source of variation	N	Mean SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	361	2.67 .27	874	1.18	1.96	Not-Significant
Female	515	2.62 .29				

Table 8 shows that the mean score for males (*M*=2.67, *SD*=.27) was not significantly greater than that of the females (*M=2.62, SD=.29*); *t-cal* =1.18, indicating that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on their adoption of self-evaluation as a strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study on research question 1 revealed that the extent to which adult learners adopt self-monitoring strategy for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes in Anambra State is high. This implies that adult learner's academic performance will be high. This finding is in line with Perry and Rahim (2018) who found that adult learners engaged in self-monitoring in their learning using strategies called self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS). The finding of this study is also in line with Zimmerman (2018) who noted that all adult learners adopt self-monitoring strategies to a high degree. Similarly, Bradley, Parr and Lan

(2017) disclosed that adult learners adopt self-monitoring strategy to a high degree because they feel it positively enhance their academic performance. Rada (2017) reported that self-monitoring strategy is one of the best self-regulated learning strategies adopted by adult learners in enhancing their academic performance.

The finding of this study is in contrast with that of Lear, Li and Prentice (2016) which stated that adult learners do not have enough ability to direct their own learning independently using self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies. Zimmerman (2008) highlighted that adult learners were often not taught to use effective self-regulated learning strategies for learning or encouraged to reflect on or self-monitor their work. He pointed out that many adult learners rely on feedback. The findings of Pedrosa, Cravino, Morgado and Barreira (2017) also revealed that adult learners are not self-monitoring their learning progress so as to improve their academic performance.
Moreso, the findings of the corresponding hypothesis showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on their adoption of self-monitoring as a strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes. This finding is in line with that of Ozan, Gundogdu, Bay and Celkan (2018) and Fettahlioglu (2017) who revealed that gender was not a significant factor on adoption of self-regulated learning strategies

The finding of the study in research question 2 revealed that the extent to which adult learners adopt self-evaluation strategy for improving academic performance is high. The implication is that adult learner's academic performance will be high in literacy programmes in Anambra State. This finding corroborates with Elias (2017)

who reported that adult learners identified self-evaluation as one of the top six activities which promote their learning and academic performance. Elias further pointed out that adult learners' adoption of self-evaluation strategy helps to create a culture of intrinsic motivation to succeed as well as promotes their approaches to completing assignments for the sake of growth and learning. Self-evaluation is a very important tool in learning. This is why Obidiegwu (2013) stressed that adult learner's need constructive feedback, they need to know how well they are doing through self-evaluation questionnaire and activities. However, in contrast, Brown and Harris (2017) reported that adult learners' adoption of self-evaluation strategy is doubtful. They further explained that adult learners' lack of adoption of self-evaluation strategy was common issue and the basis for one of the biggest criticisms of adult learners-self-evaluation as a learning strategy or tool. Similarly, Guillory and Blankson (2017) agreed that adult learners struggle with the task of self-evaluating their learning progress.

Furthermore, the finding in hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on their adoption of self-evaluation as a strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes. This suggests that both male and female adult learners have similar perspectives regarding their adoption of self-evaluation as a strategy for improving academic performance in literacy programmes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that the extent to which adult learners adopt self-monitoring and self-evaluation strategies for improving their academic performance in literacy programmes in Anambra State is high.

On the other hand, there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female adult learners on the adoption of self-monitoring and self-evaluation as a strategy for improving academic performances in the literacy programmes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Adult educators or facilitators should emphasis the teaching of self-regulated learning strategies to enable adult learners to acquire self-regulated learning skills. This will enable them adopt other self- regulated learning strategies like goal setting, self- reinforcement and planning for better performance in literacy programmes.
2. Adult education Administrators should organize in-service or on-the-job training programmes such as workshops, conferences or seminars for facilitators in their various centres to enable them update their skills for effective teaching of self-regulated learning skills to adult learners.
3. Federal and State government should provide conducive teaching and learning environment in literacy centres to motivate adult learners to learn and support their progress in learning.

4. Anambra state government should encourage facilitators who are the live wire in literacy programmes by increasing their remuneration for better job performance.

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