



## ADULT LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS PROMOTING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LITERACY CENTRES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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**Abstract:** This study examined adult learners' perceptions on the environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were formulated for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study constituted 70,448 adult learners, which comprised 26,010 males and 44,438 female adult learners in 286 literacy centres within the six (6) education zones in Anambra State. A sample size of 1,409 adult learners, which comprised 521 males and 888 female adult learners from 144 literacy centres in the six (6) education zones in Anambra State selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in the study. A 25-item questionnaire developed by the researcher for the adult learners and titled "Environmental Factors Promoting Adult Learners Participation Questionnaire (EFPALPQ) served as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, while reliability of the questionnaire was determined through a pilot test. Information retrieved were measured using the Cronbach Alpha method in order to get the estimate of internal consistency of the questionnaire. Coefficients 'r' value of 0.76, 0.99 and 0.99 were obtained from each of the three clusters respectively and thereafter summed up to an overall reliability 'r' value of 0.91 for the questionnaire. Data retrieved and collated after distribution were analyzed using mean statistics rated at 2.50 and standard deviation; while the t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study indicated that all the three environmental factors which includes physical learning environmental factors, social environmental factors, and economic environmental factors promoted the male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. As such, the difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on all these environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were proffered and among these included that: Anambra State government should provide sufficient funds and financial budgetary allocations to support adult learning so as to improve on the physical learning environmental factors and appropriate put the physical learning environment in place which will promote the male and female adult learners' participation in the literacy centres.

**Keywords:** Adult Learners, Perceptions, Environmental Factors, Promoting, Participation, Literacy Centres

### Introduction

Adult learners are one of the important human factors in the literacy centres who make significant contributions to national development. They are at the centre of every

teaching and learning activities organized in literacy centres which is spare headed by the adult facilitators or instructors. According to Aluvisia (2016) adult learners refers to matured individuals, men and women, who

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participate in a learning situation that will bring about changes. Nzeneri (2010) described an adult learner as anyone who consciously or unconsciously, formally, informally or non-formally engages him or herself in any adult educational programme (s) with an intent to solve life problems. Nzeneri noted further that, adult learners may constitute individuals or persons who are desirous to improve themselves and their social, economic, political, intellectual or the cultural well-being of their society. Adult learners are people who engage themselves in one form of adult education programme or the other in order to improve their productivity, profession, knowledge or skills. Adult learners who have reached the age of 18 years and above are independent individuals who contribute to socio-economic development of the Nigerian society. They occupy different positions in the social, economic, political, cultural and religious activities in the country. Many of these adult learners are married, single and divorced men and women in the society who work hard to earn a living. Most of them are leaders in their communities, churches or any other socio-cultural activity. They are also breadwinners in their families. All these characteristics and features including others makes adult learners unique individual whom children depend and rely on for their sustenance and development. Given all the above facts, it is important that adult learners especially those who were not fortunate to acquire literacy at their youthful age engage in formal education setting or literacy programmes at the literacy centres in order to improve their skills and develop their competences in their chosen careers or occupation. Hundessa (2011) opined that educating the adult learners increases and improves their productive capacity and brings about attitudinal changes which facilitates development of the national economy and well-being of individuals and households of half segments of the society. As a result, giving adult learners equal access to education through the administration and management of literacy programmes at the literacy centres is not only their right, but also likely to have significant social and economic benefits for the country. Full and complete development of any country requires maximum

participation of adult learners as they are the easier educators of children.

Promoting adult learners' participation in the literacy centres therefore, will make them stand a chance of completing the learning process; and literacy, highly promoted as well. Besides, literacy can be defined as the ability to read, write and compute figures. UNESCO (2006) defined literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying context. Avoseh (2008) defined participation as generally involving sharing or taking part in something. Applied to adult education, participation means active enrolment and involvement in an adult education programme or class. All social, economic, cultural, political, psychological, religious and environmental problems can be resolved through the acquisition of literacy. An educated populace therefore, is more likely to enjoy higher agricultural productivity, longer life expectancies, lower infant mortality rates and greater political stability (Olojede & Oladitan, 2013). Adult learners active participation in adult literacy programmes enables them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills which enable him/her to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his/her group or community and his/her attainment in reading, writing and arithmetic, making it possible for him/her to continue to use these skills towards his/her own and the community's development (Papen cited in Hundessa, 2011). Given the importance and benefits of the adult literacy programmes which can never be overemphasized, yet, adult active participation in the literacy centres are not significantly felt. Regards what is mostly felt all-over the literacy centres in Nigeria, including Anambra State is poor enrolment, increase in drop-out rate of adult learners and incompleteness of literacy programmes by adult learners (Aluvisia, 2016). This poor situation could have been responsible by some environmental factors which hinder adult learners active and consistent participation in the literacy centres as observed by some scholars and researchers like Aluvisia (2016) and the rest. Aluvisia (2016) asserted that adult literacy in Kenya just like



Nigeria did not receive much attention until the period of 1970's when the national literacy programme was launched to meet the needs of adult illiterates. The Government of Nigeria is committed to implementing the international, regional and national commitments to education. For this reason, much attention including the intentions of this research study is focus discovering the environmental factors promoting adult learners participation in literacy centres. Besides, participation as expressed by Gboko and Lekoko (2007) can be considered as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters the capacity to implement in people, for use in their own lives their communities and their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. Avoseh (2008) defined participation as generally involving sharing or taking part in something. Applied to adult education, participation means active enrolment and involvement in an adult education programme or class.

Melese (2000) on his own part stated that, participation is genuine involvement of the people in problem identification, participatory planning and implementation. Melese further pointed out that participation is not only crucial, but critical because people know their own problems, better than outsiders. Participation or lack of it is what makes the adult learner need more effort to be empowered through literacy programmes which are designed for them at the literacy centres. Most of the goals of adult literacy education which are likened to acquisition of literacy and knowledge, are implemented and realized in the literacy centres which offer different adult literacy programmes for adult learners. Literacy centres are therefore, learning centres or environment which provide classes for working adults who are looking to pursue continuing education options primarily at night or on weekends (Study.com, 2020). The Educalingo (2020) described an adult literacy centre as a place whereby adults engage in systematic and sustained learning activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. It is a place where classes are held for adults. Adult literacy education can take place through "extension" school or "school of

continuing education". Other learning places include community colleges and folk high development, which are often associated with professional development. Adult literacy centre has also been referred to as schools, colleges and universities, libraries, and lifelong learning centers. The practice may also include andragogy to distinguish it from pedagogy (Educalingo, 2020). In the literacy centres different adult education programmes are offered to equip adult learners with the necessary skills and competences in order to function effectively in their environment. Among the various literacy programmes offered in the literacy centres in Anambra State as further mentioned by Adeleye (2018) and Olojede and Oladitan (2013) include the basic literacy, post literacy, vocational education, continuing education, liberal education, Qur'anic integrated education, civic education, extension education, distance education, among others. All these literacy programmes provided in the literacy centres as observed by Aluvisia (2016) serves as pillars for national development. They are fertilizers needed for development and democracy to take root and grow and invisible ingredients in any successful strategy for eradicating poverty. They equip citizens with knowledge and competencies to be able to seek gainful employment or engage in income generating activities. They further empower citizens to participate in social and political decision-making processes, enjoy their fundamental rights and enable them to lead a dignified life (Aluvisia, 2016). Given the importance and benefits of the adult literacy programmes which can never be overemphasized, yet, adult active participation in the literacy centres are not significantly felt. Regards what is mostly felt all-over the literacy centres in Nigeria, including Anambra State is poor enrolment, increase in drop-out rate of adult learners and incompleteness of literacy programmes by adult learners (Aluvisia, 2016). This poor situation could have been responsible by some environmental factors which hinder adult learners active and consistent participation in the literacy centres as observed by some scholars and researchers like Aluvisia (2016) and the rest. It has been observed and evident in several literatures that the environment promotes adult learners' participation and



learning in the literacy centres. The adult learning environment as described by Tochhawng (2013) refers to the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates. The environment is synonyms with habitat, territory, domain, home, abode; more the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity. According to Marie-Louise (2019), the term “environment” could be said to cover all those elements which in their complex inter-relationships form the framework, setting and living conditions for mankind, by their very existence or by virtue of their impact.

Environmental factors as further described by Marie-Louise (2019) are those social, economic, aesthetic and cultural conditions which affect the environment. Michalak (2014) described environmental factors in education as those factors relating to the physical aspects of the environment, the learning atmosphere, invisible social factors, among others, which influences learning and instructions in the school. They are measurable components of the learning environment. Environmental factors as described in this study are those internal and external environmental components, parts and make-ups which includes the physical, social, economic, emotional or psychological, and physiological which has great influence on human actions or activities. These environmental factors heavily affect the adult learners’ participation in the literacy centres. Therefore, those environmental factors which can influence adult learners’ participation as pointed out in different studies and literary works of Aluvisia (2016), Aminchi (2015), Ekundayo (2002), Hosea (2020), Melgosa (2012), Mogeni (2012), Nzeh (2012), Nzeneri (2010), Oluoch (2005), Onu (2007), Shamsideen (2015), Puteh, Che, Mohamed, Adnan and Ibrahim (2015), Sanda (2014), Tochhawng (2013), includes the following; the physical learning environmental factors, social environmental factors, economic environmental factors, psychological environmental factors and physiological environmental factors, among others. All these environmental factors have been investigated in the present study to ascertain how they promote adult learners’ participation in the

literacy centres. In describing the aforementioned environmental factors, the physical learning environmental factors is a combination of the social and physical qualities that create the classroom experience. It involves all those factors which includes the overall design and layout of the environment, including its learning centers, materials, and furnishings. Clint (2020) describing the physical learning environmental factors opined that to be effective the physical learning environment must be learner-centred, knowledge-centred, assessment-centered, community-centered and activity-based. Learner-centered environments pay close attention to the needs of the student. Students bring culture, beliefs, attitudes, skills, and knowledge to the learning environment. A learner-centered teacher builds on the conceptual and cultural knowledge of each student. The classroom is often involved in discussion, where the students do much of the talking and construct their own meaning based on prior knowledge and experiences. The teacher acts as a bridge between new learning and what students already know. Knowledge-centered environments focus on helping students learn information with deep understanding so students can use it in new situations and contexts. Teachers who believe in knowledge-centered classrooms believe rote memorization does not lead to true understanding and only helps students learn at the surface. Deep learning involves learning through problem-solving (Clint, 2020). The social environmental factors include those general factors at the level of human society or classroom concerned with social structure and social processes that impinge on the individual. It deals mostly on classroom interactions and human interrelationships existing in the classroom. Adult learners would prefer a social learning environment or climate which allows effective interaction among adult learners and facilitators, if possible, their family members inclusive. A well-designed social environment helps foster positive adult relationships, creates positive interactions between adults, their fellow colleagues and facilitators, and provides opportunities for adults to support the learning process in order to achieve their social goals (Green-Taylor & Schwartz, 2013;



Nafukho, Amutavi & Otunga, 2005; National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2013).

The economic environmental factors as observed by Ahurumonye (2000), Aluvisia (2016) and Nzeh (2012) include all those household factors, occupational factors and poverty related issues, cost of education, opportunities for entrepreneurship development, needs for improvement on income generating activities for adults, adult social economic status, among others which influences adult learners' participation in the literacy centres. Aluvisia (2016) opined that the decision to participate in any adult literacy programme for the adult learners in highly dependent on economic factors which is viewed from different angles. For instance, adult learners will also check on their social economic status or income generating means before engaging into any literacy programme so that their participation in learning would not be affected by their family responsibility. Rather such a person will prefer to train his or her children in school before thinking about his own schooling. The family responsibilities are always at top priority before anything else. From all the foregoing discussions, the present study sought to investigate the physical learning environmental factors, social environmental factors, and economic environmental factors promoting adult learners participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. The study sought to also find out whether there are differences between gender, that is, the male and female adult learners participation in the literacy centres; given the fact that in the literacy centres there exists the presence of male and female adult learners. Gender according to Guzura (2017) refers to the social relations between men and women. It refers to the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, and how this is socially constructed. Gender refers to human traits linked by culture to each sex. Within a society; males are socialized to be masculine as females are taught to be feminine. Thus, gender is the difference that sex makes within a society, guiding how we are to think of ourselves, how we interact with others, the social opportunities, occupations, family roles and prestige allowed to males and females. Gender is used to describe the characteristics of women and men that are socially

constructed. The present study however, sought to find out whether there are differences between the male and female adult learners as regards to their perception on the physical learning environmental factors, social environmental factors, economic environmental factors promoting learner's participation in the literacy centres. From all the foregoing discussions, the present study sought to determine whether these environmental factors are responsible for the poor active participation of the male and female adult learners in literacy centres. It is therefore upon this background that the researchers are motivated to investigate adult learners perceptions on environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The poor situation of many literacy centres in Anambra State and beyond draws a lot of doubts and attention to the environmental factors promoting adult learners' participation in the literacy centres. This situation has equally created concern for both the researcher and other education planners and stakeholders like the government, centre coordinators, supervisors, facilitators, among others. The problem of poor and low participation in literacy centres is a crucial matter of discourse because it has led to the closure of many adult literacy centres in Anambra State, thus, leaving most of the facilitators out of jobs. Despite the crucial position which the literacy centres occupy as important catalysts for eradication of illiteracy and sustainable national development, promoting active participation of adult learners in the literacy centres still remains a big challenge in Anambra State. This situation has created a gap which needs to be filled by the present study and warranted the need to conduct an investigation towards determining adult learners perceptions of environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State; which is equally the problem of the study.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine adult learners' perceptions on the environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.



Specifically, the study determined whether adult learners perceived the:

1. Physical learning environment as factors promoting male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.
2. Social environment as factors promoting male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.
3. Economic environment as factors promoting male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of male and female adult learners on the physical learning environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State?
2. What are the perceptions of male and female adult learners on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State?
3. What are the perceptions of male and female adult learners on the economic environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on the physical learning environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on the economic environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

### **Method**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. In carrying out this design, the researcher conducted a field investigation by studying a sample from a given large population of adult learners in selected literacy centres in Anambra State. This is in line with Nworgu (2015) who opined that the descriptive survey design enables a researcher to collect data and describe them in a systematic manner of the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. Studies of such nature are interested in describing certain variables in relation to the population of the study. The population of this study constituted 70,448 adult learners, which comprised 26,010 males and 44,438 female adult learners in 286 literacy centres within the six (6) education zones in Anambra State. A sample size of 1,409 adult learners, which comprised 521 males and 888 female adult learners from 144 literacy centres in the six (6) education zones in Anambra State selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in the study. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique as attested by Nworgu (2015) involves a technique in which elements are randomly drawn from each stratum in such a way that the relative proportions of the strata in the resultant sample are the same as the parent population. Here, the population was first stratified in terms of one or more variables of interest to the researcher. This technique however, ensures greater representativeness of the sample relative to the population and guarantees that minority constituents of the population are represented in the sample. This made the sampling technique suitable for the present study.

A 25-item questionnaire developed by the researcher for the adult learners and titled "Environmental Factors Promoting Adult Learners Participation Questionnaire (EFPALPQ) served as instrument for data collection. Items on the research instrument was measured on a 4-point scale and rated as: (a) Strongly Agree (SD)– 4 points, Agree (A)– 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)– 1 point, as response items for all the statements in the research instrument concerning the environmental factors



promoting adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. The questionnaire was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education. Three copies of the questionnaire were given to these experts to determine the face validity of the instrument in line with the purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses. They examined each of the items on the questionnaire as regards its content coverage, sentence construction, appropriateness of language, adequacy of questions in relation to the purpose, research questions and hypotheses. Comments and corrections made by these experts were incorporated in the instrument before final copies were produced. Reliability of the questionnaire was determined through a pilot test sampling 20 males and 25 female adult learners in Enugu State, and which were not part of the study. Information retrieved were measured using the Cronbach Alpha method in order to get the estimate of internal consistency of the questionnaire. Coefficients 'r' value of 0.76, 0.99 and 0.99 were obtained from each of the three clusters respectively and thereafter summed up to an overall reliability 'r' value of 0.91 for the questionnaire.

Method of data collection involved using a direct and personal contact with the adult learners. A hand delivery process and on-the-spot method was also adopted in order to distribute copies of the questionnaire to the adult learners who are the respondents of this study using the help of six research assistants. These research assistants were representatives from the six education zones and who are also familiar with the geography of each education zone in Anambra State where the sampled literacy centres are located. The research assistants were given instructions and briefings on how to communicate

by politely approaching the respondents in the various literacy centres in order to gain their trust and administer the questionnaire to collect the necessary data for the study. Distribution of all the copies of the questionnaire took a duration of three weeks.

A total of 1,409 copies of the questionnaire were printed and distributed to the respondents in the various literacy centres in Anambra State. All the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and calculated at a 100% rate of return. Data retrieved and collated after distribution were analyzed using mean statistics rated at 2.50 and standard deviation; while the t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for the items on each of the research questions was based on the premise that any statement or item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was taken as agreed response, while any one below 2.50 was taken as disagreed response. All the three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics to determine the statistical differences in the mean ratings from the responses of the male and female adult learners in the literacy centres in Anambra State. Decision rule was based upon the fact that wherever p-value obtained is greater than or equal to the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is not rejected (accepted). Otherwise, wherever an obtained p-value is less than the alpha 0.05 level of significance, such null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected.

### **Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the perceptions of male and female adult learners on the physical learning environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State?



**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Male and Female Adult Learners' Perceptions on the Physical Learning Environmental Factors Promoting their Participation in Literacy Centres in Anambra State**

S/N	Items	Male		Remark	Female		Remark
		$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD	
1	I am disposed to learn because learning materials including equipment for practical works are provided	2.63	1.05	Agree	2.60	1.03	Agree
2	I attend classes because the instructional materials like textbooks, writing materials, I need are available	3.00	0.97	Agree	2.97	1.06	Agree
3	I am disposed to learn because adequate teaching aids such as the chalkboard/whiteboard, facilitators manual/guide, etc, for facilitation of learning are provided	2.93	1.04	Agree	2.94	1.01	Agree
4	I am disposed to learn because the curriculum used has a wider coverage, content and scope	2.91	0.95	Agree	2.66	0.97	Agree
5	I attend classes because the centre environment has enough classrooms with space	2.61	1.12	Agree	2.57	1.06	Agree
6	I attend classes because the classroom is well-ventilated with good classroom layout, design, sizeable and well-spaced out	2.80	1.15	Agree	2.64	1.06	Agree
7	I am disposed to learn because the centre location is easily accessible	2.40	1.11	Disagree	2.34	1.13	Disagree
8	I attend classes because the language of instruction used in literacy delivery encourages me	2.22	1.07	Disagree	2.38	1.06	Disagree
9	I participate in class because the classroom arrangements coupled with seating arrangements is suitable for me	3.12	0.90	Agree	2.61	1.07	Agree
10	I am disposed to learn because the aesthetic beauty arrangements of the centre surroundings move me	2.16	1.00	Disagree	2.54	0.96	Agree
11	I attend classes because the school plant facilities like the buildings are well-structure	3.00	0.97	Agree	2.71	1.11	Agree
<b>Grand Mean/SD</b>		<b>2.71</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Male = 521, Female = 888**

Analysis on Table 1 shows that male and female adult learners rated all items above a mean score of 2.50 except items 7, 8, and 10 (of only the male respondents) with mean scores of 2.40, 2.22 and 2.16 respectively for male respondents as well as items 7 and 8 with mean scores of 2.34 and 2.38 respectively for female respondents. This implies that male and female adult learners agreed that physical learning environmental factors promotes their participation in literacy centres. The evidence of this agreement by male and female adults learners is also indicated in grand mean scores of 2.71 (males) and 2.63

(females). The grand standard deviation scores of 1.08 (males) and 1.06 (females) shows that the respondents have homogeneity in their responses and a similar view on the physical learning environment promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

**Research Question 2:** What are the perceptions of male and female adult learners on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State?



**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Male and Female Adult Learners' Perceptions on the Social Environmental Factors Promoting their Participation in Literacy Centres in Anambra State**

S/N	Items	Male		Remark	Female		Remark
		$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD	
12	I attend classes because a strong collaboration/interpersonal communication exists amongst adult learners	3.10	0.95	Agree	2.91	0.97	Agree
13	I attend classes because of the facilitators' expertise in use of varieties of teaching methodologies to promote learning	3.13	0.76	Agree	2.74	1.13	Agree
14	I am disposed to learn because of open communication between the facilitators in the classroom and the learners	3.10	0.93	Agree	2.30	1.00	Disagree
15	The cooperation I get from my family members towards learning increases my efforts to participate in classes	3.05	0.88	Agree	2.54	1.08	Agree
16	I participate in the learning process because of the social interactions existing between adult learners and facilitators during instructions delivery	2.92	0.96	Agree	2.87	0.98	Agree
17	I am disposed to learn because of the facilitators' adoption of learner-centred generated method in the classroom	3.09	0.93	Agree	2.83	1.07	Agree
18	I am disposed to learn because of certain social or civic responsibility which I need to fulfil	3.00	1.04	Agree	2.66	1.16	Agree
<b>Grand Mean/SD</b>		<b>3.05</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Male = 521, Female = 888**

Result of Table 2 reveals that all items were rated above a mean score of 2.50 by the male and female adult learners except item 14 with a mean score of 2.30 for the female respondents. This indicates that male and female adult learners agreed that social environmental factors promote their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. The response by male and female adult learners are evident in grand mean score of 3.05 and 2.69 respectively. The grand standard deviation scores of 0.93 and 1.08 indicates

homogeneity in their responses and that male and female adult learners do not have varied views on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

**Research Question 3:** What are the perceptions of male and female adult learners on the economic environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State?



**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Male and Female Adult Learners’ Perceptions on the Economic Environmental Factors Promoting their Participation in Literacy Centres in Anambra State**

S/N	Items	Male		Remark	Female		Remark
		$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD	
19	I am disposed to learn because of my socio-economic status	2.47	1.06	Disagree	2.29	1.13	Disagree
20	I am free to attend classes because of the type of occupation/career I engage into	3.09	0.93	Agree	2.47	1.05	Disagree
21	I am engaged to participate in the learning process because I need to improve my current socio-economic statusquo	3.03	0.94	Agree	2.61	0.97	Agree
22	I disposed to learn because I need to improve on my living conditions	3.01	1.00	Agree	2.61	0.88	Agree
23	I attend classes because of my level of income generating activities	2.28	1.10	Disagree	2.45	1.09	Disagree
24	I participate in classes due to the opportunities created for entrepreneurship development in the programmes	2.90	1.06	Agree	2.73	1.09	Agree
25	I attend classes because of my desire to change to a new employment or job	2.93	1.04	Agree	2.80	0.92	Agree
<b>Grand Mean/SD</b>		<b>2.82</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Male = 521, Female = 888**

Table 3 shows that the male and female adult learners rated all items above a mean score of 2.50 except items 19 and 23 with mean scores of 2.47 and 2.38 for male respondents as well as items 19, 20 and 23 with mean scores of 2.29, 2.47 and 2.45 for female respondents. This reveals that male and female adult learners agreed that the economic environmental factors promote their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. Furthermore, the grand mean scores of 2.82 and 2.56 are empirical evidence supporting the agreement among the respondents. The grand standard deviation scores of 1.06 (males) and 1.03 (females) showcases homogeneity in their responses and

equally, that male and female adult learners had similar opinions on the economic environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

#### **Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the physical learning environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.



**Table 4: Test of Difference between Male and Female Adult Learners’ Perceptions on the Physical Learning Environmental Factors Promoting their Participation in Literacy Centres in Anambra State**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig
Male	521	42.8522	7.69136	1407	-3.722	.003
Female	888	44.5507	8.58840			

*p* < 0.05

Table 4 reveals that t-test was run to test the difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the physical learning environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. The result shows a significant difference given that t-value = -- 3.722 and *p* < 0.05 (.003 < 0.05), thus, the null hypothesis was rejected that the difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the physical learning

environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

**Table 5: Test of Difference between Male and Female Adult Learners’ Perceptions on the Social Environmental Factors Promoting their Participation in Literacy Centres in Anambra State**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig
Male	521	43.1881	7.90199	1407	-2.570	.038
Female	888	44.3502	8.36081			

*p* < 0.05

Analysis on Table 5 shows that t-test was run to test the difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. The analysis reveals a significant difference given that t = - 2.570, and *p* < 0.05 (.038 < 0.05), hence, the null hypothesis was rejected that the difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the social

environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the economic environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

**Table 6: Test of Difference between Male and Female Adult Learners’ Perceptions on the Economic Environmental Factors Promoting their Participation in Literacy Centres in Anambra State**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig
Male	521	44.1555	7.94094	1407	-5.513	.000
Female	888	46.8131	9.16927			

*p* < 0.05

Table 6 shows that t-test was run to test the difference between male and female adult learners’ perceptions on the economic environmental factors promoting their

participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. The result shows a significant difference given that t-value = - 5.513 and *p* < 0.05 (.00 < 0.05), therefore, the null



hypothesis was rejected that the difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on the economic environmental factors promoting their

### **Discussions**

The finding of this study presented in this section indicated that the physical learning environmental factors promoted male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres. However, the difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on the physical learning environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant. This finding indicated that both the male and female adult learners were disposed to learn because learning materials including equipment for practical works were provided. They attended classes because the instructional materials like textbooks, writing materials, they need were available. They were equally disposed to learn because adequate teaching aids such as the chalkboard/whiteboard, facilitators manual/guide, etc, for facilitation of learning were provided. They were also disposed to learn because the curriculum used had a wider coverage, content and scope. They attended classes because the centre environment had enough classrooms with space. They further attended classes because the classroom is well-ventilated with good classroom layout, design, sizeable and well-spaced out. They participated in class because the classroom arrangements coupled with seating arrangements were suitable for them. The female adult learners were especially disposed to learn because the aesthetic beauty arrangements of the centre surroundings moved them. They attend classes because the school plant facilities like the buildings are well-structure. Finding agrees and corroborates with Aluvisia (2016) study on factors influencing participation of learners in adult literacy programmes in Kakamega Central Sub-County which found out that there were more female instructors than male instructors and there was an acute shortage of instructors. Also, Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) centres did not receive any financial support leading to low morale, majority of women preferred mixed classes while men preferred men only classes, there was low participation in the literacy

programme, and ACE centres lacked relevant teaching and learning materials and there was no approved curriculum for the ACE programme. This negatively affected adult learners participation at the literacy centres. Hosea (2020) study found out that the attitude of the adult educator can also motivate adult learners to enroll in functional literacy programmes. Hosea's study further confirmed that educators (that is, teachers) play vital role in the teaching and learning experience. When educators have the right attitude towards adult learners, they will be encouraged to participate in literacy programmes.

The findings of the Mogeni (2012) study on factors influencing gender parity in adult basic education programmes in Masaba North District, Kenya discovered that the teaching and learning resources influenced adult learners participation in the literacy centres. Nzeneri (2010) confirmed that the physical learning environment is one of the most essential elements in adult teaching and learning. For teaching and learning effectiveness, the physical environment is expected to have such essential factors as the physical facilities, appropriate social working conditions (that is, conducive interpersonal relations), informal setting and conducive organizational setting for effective participation of the adult learners in the educational process. Adult learners and their instructors desire educative environment that is free from tension, fear or threat and a situation that is free from ridicule. The physical learning environment for adult learners must be different from the formalistic classroom arrangement for teaching children which is characterized by rows small seats or chairs in front of an authoritarian teacher (Nzeneri, 2010). The present study finding also corroborates with Puteh, Che, Mohamed, Adnan and Ibrahim (2015) a study which confirmed that the learning space, furniture, ventilation and lighting have a direct relationship with the teaching and learning comfort level. The physical learning environment being an important element in creating a conducive and stimulating learning environment is an important determinant for adult learning. A conducive learning environment creates a comfortable teaching and learning environment, while keeping the students focused and interested in the



classroom. An environment that is conducive and suits the needs of the teachers and students, as well as complements the classroom activities can help improve the learning outcomes. Based on this findings, factors such as learning style and classroom design needs proper attention because these elements would interact and influence the teaching and learning comfort level, which in turn, would affect learning effectiveness. This is due to the fact that the learning environment is not just a physical space, but also consists of a variety of materials and sources of information, interaction, relationship between and amongst learners and educators, and expectations and rules for learning and behaviour. There is a relationship between the physical structure of the classroom, such as room organization, size of space, lighting and table arrangement and psychological aspects, such as interaction between educators and learners, and interaction among the learners (Puteh, Che, Mohamed, Adnan & Ibrahim, 2015). The way in which the physical aspect is organized can limit or encourage interaction that takes place in the classroom and display of expected behaviour. Thus, the classroom physical environment needs to be given due attention and planned carefully, as the right environment can affect the learning atmosphere, generation of ideas, and students' values, attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, there is a relationship between the physical aspects of the classroom and the teaching and learning comfort level. Overall, the findings show that there is a highly positive relationship between the physical environment and teaching and learning comfort level (Puteh, Che, Mohamed, Adnan & Ibrahim, 2015).

Ekundayo (2002) study discovered that the physical learning environment of adult learners classes and centres with income generating activities are likely to retain both the learners' motivation and their participation. Supporting the finding of Ekundayo (2002) study, Oluoch (2005) study also found out that the physical learning environment has a greater role to play in adult learners participation in the literacy centres. It was discovered through this finding that both the male and female adult learners were not disposed to learn because the centre location was not easily accessible. Their

attendance to classes was not mainly because the language of instruction used in literacy delivery discourages them. Also, the male adult learners were especially not fascinated about the aesthetic beauty arrangements of the centre surroundings, as such, this did not move their participation in the learning centre. This finding is at variance with agrees with Puteh, Che, Mohamed, Adnan and Ibrahim (2015) a study which confirmed that the learning space, furniture, ventilation and lighting have a direct relationship with the teaching and learning comfort level. The physical learning environment being an important element in creating a conducive and stimulating learning environment is an important determinant for adult learning. The study hypothesis which showcased that the difference between the male and female adult learners' perceptions on the physical learning environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant also agrees with Sanda (2014) study which found out that there was a significant difference between male and female adult learners participation in adult basic literacy programmes. With the present study finding, it can be deduced that the physical learning environmental factors promoted male and female adult learners' participation in the literacy centres in Anambra State.

The finding of this study presented in this section indicated that the social environmental factors promote male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. Additionally, the difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant. This finding included that both the male and female adult learners attended classes because a strong collaboration/interpersonal communication exists amongst adult learners. They attended classes because of the facilitators' expertise in use of varieties of teaching methodologies to promote learning. The male adult learners were especially disposed to learn because of open communication between the facilitators in the classroom and the learners. The cooperation both adult learners got from their family members towards learning increased



their efforts to participate in classes. They both (that is, male and female adult learners) participated in the learning process because of the social interactions existing between them and their facilitators during instructions delivery. They were disposed to learn because of the facilitators' adoption of learner-centred generated method in the classroom. They were disposed to learn because of certain social or civic responsibility which they needed to fulfil. This finding corroborates and agrees with the studies of Aluvisia (2016) and Melgosa (2012) which found out that the social environment had a great influence on adult learners participation in the literacy centre. The finding equally shows that human beings are made to relate to each other by cultivating social relationships which may include participating in voluntary programmes such as enrolling in classes that interest them and allow them to share experiences.

This finding of the present study is equally at par with Mogeni (2012) study which found out that the social-cultural factors which were the leading factors for gender disparity influenced adult learners participation at the literacy centres. Most of the adult learners are female and have positive attitude towards adult basic education. In a similar vein, a study was carried out by Adeleye (2018) on the impact of motivation on adult learners in functional literacy programme in Oyo State, Nigeria and one of the findings depict that social interaction had great influence on adult learners participation in classes. The overall results show that social interaction assists in adult learners' class, as it helps to expose where learner is lacking and how the instructor can help. A total number of eleven tables was constructed for the results of this research, along with charts. From the findings of this work, the results show that social interaction has great influence in adult learner classes. The purpose of social interaction is to help impact the adult learner with knowledge, therefore instructor should be careful so as not to misplace priority. The present study finding agrees with Green-Taylor and Schwartz (2013) study and the National Center for Biotechnology Information (2013) which found out that the social environmental factors affecting adult learning. therefore, important aspects of the social

environment as further confirmed by Green-Taylor and Schwartz (2013) which will enhance active participation involves building rapport through frequent, open, and honest communication with adult learners and their families, making families and those important to them feel welcome. Family members can include adult learners' immediate family, extended family, and others in the community or neighborhood that are important in the family's life. Family members can share information about the strategies they use in their homes and cultures to promote social interaction. Facilitators incorporating family members' beliefs into their instructional practices, including suggestions about how to encourage and guide adult learners definitely promotes adult learners participation in the centre. Factors in the social environment as discovered by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (2013) include those related to safety, violence, and social disorder in general, and more specific factors related to the type, quality, and stability of social connections, including social participation, social cohesion, social capital, and the collective efficacy of the neighborhood (or work) environment. Factors of social participation and integration in the immediate social environment (e.g., literacy centre) as found out by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (2013) appears to be important to both mental and physical health of adult learners. Nzeneri (2010) confirmed that the teaching-learning environment must reflect learners' social roles either as individuals or as members of a group or community. The findings of Findings of Hosea (2020) study on the factors motivating adult learners' participation in functional literacy programmes in New Karu LGA of Nasarawa State revealed that the social interaction or relationship promoted adult learner's participation in function literacy programmes: The learners were motivated by these factors because they see it as a means of learning so that will empower them to interact and socialize with their environment. Responsibility and personal life factor: With this, the researcher was able to know that this factor greatly



influenced adult learners' participation in functional literacy programmes.

The results of the Aminchi (2015) study revealed that poverty, socio-cultural belief, gender stereotyped and lack of awareness were the major factors that contributed to the low level of women participation in literacy programme. It was further discovered that the female adult learners especially were not fascinated to learn because of the open communication between the facilitators in the classroom and the learners. However, other social environmental aspects promoted the female adult learners participation in the literacy centres. This finding agrees with Shamsideen (2015) study found out that recognition of one's right in the society, consultations in political matters in the community and participating actively in decision making in the community were accepted as the social factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institutions. The study hypothesis which showcased that the difference between the male and female adult learners' perceptions on the social environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant also agrees with Sanda (2014) study which found out that there was a significant difference between male and female adult learners participation in adult basic literacy programmes. With above present study discoveries, it can be deducted that the social environmental factors promoted male and female adult learners' participation in the literacy centres in Anambra State.

The finding of this study presented in this section indicated that the economic environmental factors promote male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. Also, the difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on the economic environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant. This finding further discovered that especially the male adult learners were free to attend classes because of the type of occupation/career they engage into. Both the male and female adult learners engaged to participate in the learning process because they needed to improve their current socio-economic statusquo. They were

disposed to learn because I need to improve on my living conditions. They participated in classes due to the opportunities created for entrepreneurship development in the programmes. They equally attended classes because of their desire to change to a new employment or job. This finding agrees and is equally in line with Aluvisia (2016) study which confirmed that the decision to attend adult literacy classes by male and female adult learners is mainly determined by economic factors. The household income is therefore, an important factor that can influence participation in adult literacy. The finding of Adeleye (2018) study equally indicated that a lot of male and female adult learner's motive in participating in functional literacy programmes is due to economic reasons or factor. The finding also corroborates with Hosea (2020) study which found out that most of male and female adult learners' motive in participating in functional literacy programmes is due to economic reasons or factor. The respondents showed that they are motivated to participate in functional literacy programme in order to improve on their personal life and to know how to take on responsibilities. For example, they take part in order to learn how to compute, know how to read and write in order to improve on their business transactions, vocations and employment as the case may be. The implication from these findings showed that adult learners have felt needs that should be met. As a result of these felt needs, they are motivated to participate in functional literacy programmes which makes him or her to carry out an action that is worthwhile and will bring satisfaction.

The present study finding equally does not deviate from Onu (2007) study on the factors that motivate married men and women to participate in non-formal education in Nenwe, Aninri Local Government Area of Enugu State which revealed that acquiring knowledge for proficiency in an occupation is the greatest economic factor that motivated the learners to participate in the non-formal education programme. The previous study of Nafukho, Amutavi and Otunga (2005) found out that the social environment affected adult learners participation in learning. Invariably, the households in Africa consist of about eight people on average with only



one bread winner. Even where the household income is high, the distribution of that income is unfair since it favours a few people while the majority of citizens live below the poverty line. Among such families, the little money available is more likely to be spent on educating the children rather than the adults. This means that the income generated from adults' occupation can highly influence their attendance or participation in literacy programmes. Oluoch (2005) found out that competing priorities at individual, family and community levels that have direct impact on the lives of adults leave little room for the literacy programme, hence the low priority it has. Ekundayo (2002) study confirmed that the decline in male and female learners' enrolment is attributed to lack of income-generating activities and low teacher motivation, among other reasons. Ekundayo further discovered that centres with income-generating activities are likely to retain both the levels of learners' motivation, and their participation. Also, centres with income-generating projects register more learners due to high motivation as skills learned are put into practical use and the income generated helps learners to solve some of their domestic problems. Nzeh (2012) study found out that the economic environmental factors influenced adult learners' participation in the literacy centres. The finding of Nzeh (2012) study further indicated that the greatest education factors motivating women's participation in adult literacy programme are obtaining certificate for a better job, becoming literate, and improvement on communicative skills. Adult learners' like women, participate in those activities which they feel will bring increased income, which they could use to supplement whatever is available or brought in by the breadwinners of the family, hence, this would affect their participation in literacy centres. In the same vein, studies conducted by Ahurumonye (2000) and Akinpelu as cited in Nzeh (2012) found out that economic factors influenced adult learning a lot. Therefore, the search for economic liberation influenced the functional literacy programmes organized for women which embraced a mixture of literacy method capable of addressing the socio-economic and physiological peculiarities of women. In the same vein, the functional

literacy created psycho-socio development especially in rural women and improved the quality of human input to national development. Shamsideen (2015) study on the factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in Nigeria tertiary institution: A study of Lagos State University, Nigeria revealed that gaining an employment, earning an improved income, and having a better standard of living were accepted as the economic factors motivating female adult learners to enroll for tertiary education.

The findings of Shamsideen (2015) study further indicated that factors motivating female adult learners' enrolment in tertiary institution include obtaining certificate for a better job, ability to take decision on developmental processes and improvement on communicative skills. It was further discovered that both the male and female adult learners were not affected to be disposed to learn because of their socio-economic status. The female adult learners participation and attendance to classes especially were not promoted mainly because of the type of occupation/career they engaged into. Their motive for attending classes was not mainly because of their level of income generating activities. This finding agrees with Adeleye (2018) study which confirmed that the male and female adult learners are motivated in order to know how to cope mentally in any situation they find themselves, thus for their reason to engage in literacy programmes. The hypothesis which showcased that the difference between the male and female adult learners' perceptions on the economic environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant also concurs with Sanda (2014) study which found out in a study that the difference between male and female adult learners participation in adult basic literacy programmes is equally significant. With present study findings together with other studies discoveries, it can be deduced that the economic environmental factors promoted male and female adult learners' participation in the literacy centres in Anambra State.



## Conclusion

Adult learners, whether male or female are one of the important human resources whom high considerations should be given and adequate attention paid to in the literacy centres. When adequate attention is given towards the environmental factors promoting adult learners participation in the literacy centres, they will be motivated to make significant contributions towards their learning which is requisite for the achievement of instructional objectives, educational goals and boosting national development in the country. However, this study concludes and equally submits that the male and female adult learners perceived that all the environmental factors which includes physical learning environmental factors, social environmental factors and economic environmental factors promoted the male and female adult learners' participation in literacy centres in Anambra State. As such, the difference between male and female adult learners' perceptions on all these three environmental factors promoting their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State is significant. However, recommendations has been proffered below.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this present study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Anambra State government should provide sufficient funds and financial budgetary allocations to support adult learning so as to improve on the physical learning environmental factors and appropriate put the physical learning environment in place which will promote the male and female adult learners' participation in the literacy centres.
2. Anambra State Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education should constantly organize orientation and enlightenment programmes in order to enable the male and female adult learners handle and tackle social issues in connection with all the social environmental factors which could hinder or mar their active participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.
3. The adult education curriculum including teaching and learning activities in the literacy centres should

be enriched with income/economic-generating training programmes by all concerned (that is; the State government, policy makers, Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education curriculum developers and other educational practitioners) to assist the male and female adult learners' engage into high income generating businesses and activities so as to positively aid and support economic environmental factors that will promote or mar their participation in literacy centres in Anambra State.

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