

**BASIC LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF ADULT LEARNERS IN IKOT ABASI LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA OF AKWA IBOM STATE**

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of basic literacy skills on the educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area. The study focused on three key components of basic literacy: reading skills, writing skills, and numeracy skills. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from adult learners in selected adult education centres. The population of the study consists of two thousand adult learners gotten from seven adult learning center in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 250 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire, titled basic literacy and educational development of adult learners. Independent t-test analysis was use in testing the hypotheses, each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. The findings revealed that reading skills, writing skills, and numeracy skills each have a significant positive influence on the educational development of adult learners. Specifically, reading skills enhanced comprehension and learning ability, writing skills improved communication and participation, while numeracy skills strengthened problem-solving and decision-making abilities. The study concluded that basic literacy skills are critical determinants of effective adult learning and educational development. It recommended that stakeholders in adult education should prioritize the development of reading, writing, and numeracy skills through improved instructional methods, provision of adequate learning resources, and increased government support.

Keywords: Basic literacy, reading skills, writing skills, numeracy skills, educational development.



Introduction

Basic literacy is a fundamental requirement for human development and a key determinant of educational advancement, particularly among adult learners. It encompasses essential skills such as reading, writing, and numeracy, which enable individuals to function effectively in society, access information, and participate in socio-economic activities. For adults who were unable to acquire formal education during their early years, literacy provides a second chance for personal growth, empowerment, and lifelong learning (Mangvwat & Meshak, 2022).

Globally, literacy is recognized as a critical driver of sustainable development and social inclusion. Individuals with adequate literacy skills are better equipped to make informed decisions, engage in productive employment, and contribute meaningfully to their

communities. However, in developing countries such as Nigeria, adult illiteracy remains a persistent challenge. According to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), a substantial proportion of the adult population lacks basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills, thereby limiting their participation in educational and economic activities (NMEC, 2025).

Basic literacy is typically conceptualized through three core components: reading skills, writing skills, and numeracy skills. Reading skills involve the ability to decode written texts, comprehend information, and interpret meaning, all of which are essential for effective learning. Studies have shown that poor reading ability significantly affects learners' capacity to acquire knowledge and limits their educational progress (Adeyiga & Mpungose, 2025). Writing skills, on the other hand, enable individuals to express ideas clearly, communicate effectively, and perform essential tasks such as documentation and record keeping. The development of writing competence has been linked to improved confidence and academic performance among learners (Mangyvat & Meshak, 2022; Etoma & Patrick, 2020, Agbor et. al 2026; Olofu & Patrick, 2019, Patrick et al., 2025).

Numeracy skills constitute another vital aspect of basic literacy, involving the ability to perform simple calculations, interpret numerical data, and apply mathematical concepts in everyday situations. These skills are essential for financial management, decision-making, and workplace productivity. However, evidence from literacy intervention programmes indicates that many adult learners struggle with basic numeracy, which negatively affects their educational and economic outcomes (Oando Foundation, 2025; (Meremikwu et. al 2022; Adie et. al 2020; Adie & Anditung, 2019; Ibu, et. al 2019).

Statements of the problem

Despite various initiatives aimed at improving adult literacy, significant gaps still exist in the acquisition of these basic skills. Adult education programmes in Nigeria are often constrained by inadequate funding, shortage of qualified facilitators, poor infrastructure, and limited awareness among potential learners. Additionally, the use of traditional teaching methods, without adequate integration of modern instructional strategies such as information and communication technology, further reduces the effectiveness of these programmes (Aniagor & Ezenwa, 2025). As a result, many adult learners are unable to attain the level of literacy required for meaningful educational development.

The situation is particularly evident in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area, where socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to educational opportunities may hinder the acquisition of basic literacy skills. Many adults in the area who did not complete formal education continue to face difficulties in reading, writing, and performing simple numerical tasks. These deficiencies restrict their ability to participate effectively in adult education programmes and limit their overall educational development. More specifically, inadequate reading skills among adult learners in the area may result in poor comprehension of instructional materials, thereby reducing learning outcomes. Similarly, weak writing skills may hinder effective communication and participation in educational activities, while poor numeracy skills may affect individuals' ability to manage finances and engage in income-generating ventures. These challenges collectively contribute to low educational attainment and reduced opportunities for personal and socio-economic advancement.

Furthermore, although several studies have examined literacy development in Nigeria, there is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on the relationship between basic literacy skills—reading, writing, and numeracy—and the educational development of adult

learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult to design targeted interventions that address the specific needs of adult learners in the area.

In view of these challenges, this study seeks to examine the influence of basic literacy skills on the educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. By focusing on reading, writing, and numeracy skills, the study aims to provide insights that can inform policy formulation, improve adult education programmes, and enhance literacy outcomes among adult learners.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of basic literacy on education development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government area of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically the study seeks to:

- i. Determine the extent to which possession of reading skills can influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State;
- ii. Assess the extent to which possession of writing skills can influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State., and
- iii. Examine, the extent to which possession of numeracy skills can influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi local Government Area of Akwa Ibom.

1.4 Research questions

The following questions are posed to guide the study:

- 1 How does possession of reading skills influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi local Government Area of Akwa Ibom
- 2 How does possession of writing skills influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi local Government Area of Akwa Ibom
- 3 To what extent does possession of numeracy skills affect educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

1.5 Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to direct the study.

- 1 Reading skills do not significantly influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State
- 2 writing skills do not significantly influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State
- 3 numeracy skills do not significantly influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Functional Literacy Theory and the Human Capital Theory, as they provide a suitable explanation for the relationship between basic literacy skills and the educational development of adult learners.

Functional Literacy Theory

Functional Literacy Theory emphasizes the ability of individuals to use reading, writing, and numeracy skills effectively in real-life situations. The theory posits that literacy is not merely the ability to read and write, but the capacity to apply these skills to solve everyday problems and improve one's standard of living. This perspective is particularly relevant to adult

education, where learning is expected to be practical and directly applicable to learners' social and economic activities (UNESCO, 2022).

The relevance of this theory to the study lies in its focus on the practical application of literacy skills. Adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area require reading, writing, and numeracy skills not only for academic purposes but also for daily activities such as communication, business transactions, and decision-making. Therefore, improving these basic literacy skills is expected to enhance their educational development and overall functionality in society.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, propounded by Gary Becker, posits that education and skill acquisition are investments that increase individuals' productivity and economic value. The theory assumes that individuals who acquire knowledge and skills become more efficient and capable of contributing to economic growth and development.

The relevance of Human Capital Theory to this study is that basic literacy skills—reading, writing, and numeracy—are forms of human capital that enhance the capabilities of adult learners. When adults acquire these skills, they improve their ability to learn, adapt, and participate in productive activities. This, in turn, promotes their educational development and increases their opportunities for socio-economic advancement.

Literature Review

Reading Skills and Educational Development:

Adeyiga and Mpungose (2025) examined the effect of reading comprehension on learners' academic performance using a survey design. The study found that learners with strong reading skills demonstrated better understanding of instructional materials and higher academic achievement. The study concluded that reading proficiency significantly enhances educational development (Agbade & Adeyeye, 2021; Usua, et al. 2023; Agbade, et al 2022; Agbade, et al 2023)

Okeke (2021) conducted a study on reading ability and adult learning outcomes in Nigeria. Using a descriptive design, the findings revealed that poor reading skills among adult learners limited their participation in literacy programmes, while improved reading skills enhanced comprehension and retention of knowledge.

Similarly, Yusuf and Alabi (2022) investigated the influence of reading skills on adult education programmes. The study adopted a correlational design and found a significant positive relationship between reading ability and learners' academic progress, indicating that reading skills are essential for effective learning.

A study by UNESCO (2022) on adult literacy programmes globally reported that reading skills are foundational to all forms of learning. The report showed that adults with improved reading skills were more likely to complete educational programmes and achieve better learning outcomes (Igyu et. al, Obi et. al 2020; Adie et. al, 2026)

Writing Skills and Educational Development

Mangwat and Meshak (2022) investigated the impact of writing skills on literacy development using a descriptive research design. The study revealed that writing skills significantly improved learners' ability to communicate ideas and enhanced their academic performance ((Patrick, et al. 2025; Patrick et al. 2026; Patrick, et al, 2025).

Eze and Nwosu (2020) examined writing competence among adult learners in South-East Nigeria. The study found that learners with better writing skills were more confident and actively participated in learning activities, which positively influenced their educational development.

Ogunleye (2021) conducted a study on writing skills and academic achievement among adult learners. Using a survey design, the study found that writing ability significantly contributed to learners' success in educational programmes and improved their record-keeping and communication skills.

Aniagor and Ezenwa (2025) studied the role of ICT in improving writing skills among adult learners. The study revealed that exposure to modern instructional methods enhanced writing competence and contributed to better learning outcomes.

Numeracy Skills and Educational Development

The Oando Foundation (2025) evaluated numeracy intervention programmes in Nigeria using an experimental design. The findings showed that improved numeracy skills enhanced learners' problem-solving abilities and participation in economic activities. Akinola (2021) examined the relationship between numeracy skills and adult learning outcomes. The study found that numeracy skills significantly influenced learners' ability to perform everyday calculations and improved their educational development. Olatunji and Adeyemi (2022) conducted a study on numeracy skills and financial literacy among adult learners. The results indicated that learners with strong numeracy skills were better able to manage finances and make informed decisions, which contributed to their overall development (Agbade, et al. 2019; Agbade, et al 2017; Agbade, et al 2023; Agbade & Ukpanukpong, 2022). World Bank (2023) reported that numeracy skills are critical for both educational and economic advancement. The report showed that adults with basic mathematical skills are more likely to succeed in education and employment.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is survey research design, Erica (2008) assert that survey research design is the systematic way of measuring variables by asking people question and then examine relationship among the variables. The area for this study is Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Ikot Abasi is one of the twenty one Local Government Areas of the state. The population of the study is two thousand five hundred (2500) adult men and women, gotten from (7) Adult learning centers in Ikot Abasi local government area Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state. The stratified and simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. The first stage was to group the adult in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area into their respective age grade (stratum) namely grade A, grade B, and C. The second stage was to select the number of age grade that are required for the study (seven age grade out of fifteen age grade). Using simple random sampling technique; same technique was adopted from in selecting the sample size for the study, (10% of the population of respondent from each study center was considered), using ballot system. This involves writing Yes and No in pieces of papers in the required numbers accordingly and mixed in a container. Those who pick yes were used in the study. At the end of the exercise one hundred and two (102) male and female peasant farmers picked yes and were used as sample for the study. The sample of this study is made up of two hundred and fifty (102) adult both male and female from the seven age grade in Ikot Abasi local government area of Akwa Ibom state. The main instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled the basic literacy and educational development of adult scale design by the researcher with the help of the supervisor.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of reading skill and educational development of adult

Variable	N	Mean	Sd	T	c/t
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Reading skills	100	12.03	3.39	13.8	1.96
Educational dev.	150	25.88	4.288		

$p > 0.05, df = 198, c/t = 1.96, N = 102$

The result of the analysis from table 1 above revealed that the calculated t-value of 13.8 is greater than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom, since the calculated t-value is greater than the greater critical value. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This shows that reading skills has a significance influence on educational development of adult in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis two: Writing skills does not significantly influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Table: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of writing skills and educational development of adult

Variable	N	Mean	Sd	T	c/t
Writing skills	150	10.87	2.40	9.2	1.96
Educational dev.	100	25.83	3.916		

$P > 0.05, df = 198, c/t = 1.96, N = 102$

The result of the analysis from table 2 above revealed that the calculated t-value of 9.2 is greater than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom, since the calculated t-value is greater than the greater critical value. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This shows that writing skills has a significance influence on educational development adult in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Hypothesis three

Hypothesis Three: Numeracy skills does not significantly influence educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of numeracy skills and educational development

Variable	N	Mean	Sd	T	c/t
Numeracy skills	100	11.61	1.09	5.81	1.96
Educational dev.	150	25.91	4.002		

$P > 0.05, df = 198, c/t = 1.96, N = 102$

The result of the analysis from table 3 above revealed that the calculated t-value of 5.81 is greater than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom, since the calculated t-value is greater than the greater critical value. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This shows that numeracy skills have significant influence on educational development of Adult in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that reading skills, writing skills, and numeracy skills all have a significant influence on the educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area. This implies that basic literacy skills are critical determinants of how effectively adult learners acquire knowledge, participate in learning activities, and improve their overall competencies (Adie, Okri & Anditung, 2019; Adie, Inah; Ibu & Anditung, 2022; Meremikwu, Adie, Idoko, Arikpo & Tawo, 2022; Meremikwu, Adie, Idoko, Arikpo & Tawo, 2022).

Specifically, the study found that reading skills significantly influence educational development among adult learners. This suggests that learners who possess the ability to read and comprehend instructional materials are more likely to understand lessons, retain information, and actively engage in the learning process. This finding is consistent with the work of Adeyiga and Mpungose (2025), who reported that reading proficiency enhances comprehension and academic performance. It also aligns with Okeke (2021) and Yusuf and Alabi (2022), who found that reading ability is a strong predictor of learners' participation and success in adult education programmes. The implication is that without adequate reading skills, adult learners may struggle to benefit fully from educational opportunities (Patrick et al., 2025; Patrick, et al, 2026; (Olofu et al. 2024; Olofu et al. 20245; Olofu et al. 2026)

The study also established that writing skills have a significant influence on educational development. This indicates that the ability to express ideas clearly in written form enhances learners' participation in educational activities, including note-taking, assignments, and communication. This finding supports Mangwat and Meshak (2022), who observed that writing competence improves learners' confidence and academic engagement. Similarly, Eze and Nwosu (2020) and Ogunleye (2021) found that writing skills contribute significantly to learners' academic achievement and effective communication. The implication of this finding is that strengthening writing skills can enhance adult learners' ability to interact meaningfully within the learning environment.

Furthermore, the study revealed that numeracy skills significantly influence educational development among adult learners. This suggests that learners who are proficient in basic arithmetic and numerical reasoning are better equipped to solve problems, make decisions, and apply knowledge in real-life situations. This finding is in line with the report by the Oando Foundation (2025), which emphasized that numeracy skills improve learners' problem-solving abilities and functional competence. It also agrees with Akinola (2021) and Olatunji and Adeyemi (2022), who found that numeracy skills enhance financial literacy and support overall learning outcomes. The implication is that numeracy is not only essential for academic purposes but also for practical life applications.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the three components of basic literacy, reading, writing, and numeracy collectively contribute to the educational development of adult learners. This supports the assumption of both Functional Literacy Theory and Human Capital Theory, which emphasize the practical application and economic value of literacy skills. The results further indicate that deficiencies in any of these skills may hinder learning, while improvements in them can significantly enhance educational outcomes.

In summary, the study confirms that basic literacy skills are indispensable for the effective educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area. Therefore, efforts to improve adult education in the area should prioritize the development of reading, writing, and numeracy skills to achieve meaningful and sustainable learning outcomes.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of basic literacy skills- reading, writing, and numeracy on the educational development of adult learners in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area. The

findings revealed that all three components of basic literacy have significant positive effects on the educational development of adult learners.

The study concludes that reading skills enhance learners' comprehension and ability to acquire knowledge, writing skills improve communication and active participation in learning, while numeracy skills strengthen problem-solving and decision-making abilities. Collectively, these skills form the foundation for effective learning and overall educational advancement among adult learners. Therefore, the study affirms that basic literacy is indispensable for adult education and that improving these core skills will significantly enhance the quality and outcomes of adult learning programmes. Without adequate development of reading, writing, and numeracy skills, adult learners may continue to face challenges in achieving meaningful educational progress.

Recommendations

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

- i. Adult education centres should prioritize the development of reading skills through structured reading programmes, provision of relevant learning materials and the use of interactive teaching methods to enhance comprehension.
- ii. Facilitators should adopt practical and participatory approaches such as guided writing exercises, continuous assessments, and feedback mechanisms to improve learners' writing competence.
- iii. Adult education programmes should incorporate practical numeracy training that focuses on real-life applications such as financial management, measurement, and basic calculations.

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