

# Literacy Promotion Among Members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria

Yusuf Akinola Akinyemi <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *University of Ibadan*

Oduduwa Road, 200132, Ibadan, Nigerian

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Corresponding Author:

[Yusufakinyemi0@gmail.com](mailto:Yusufakinyemi0@gmail.com)

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**Abstract.** This study addressed the electoral violence perpetrated by particular National Union of Road Transport Workers members, also known as "The Union". The prevailing perception is that the entire group is associated with street urchins and thugs who unleash mayhem on the general public. The union comprises professionals such as park managers, taxi drivers, tricycle riders, bus riders, okada riders, and due collectors. The survey technique was adopted for data collection by administering 100 questionnaires to park managers and members across major parks in Ibadan, gathering their valuable insights. The research findings highlighted the importance of adult literacy to empower and dignify union members to shun the enticement of political thuggery and all other social vices. The study findings emphasised the impact of literacy to facilitate effective engagement in daily activities and foster a culture of respect, both within the union and in interactions with the larger society. The utilisation of traditional media, particularly radio, was also underscored in its findings. Finally, this research recommended the entrenchment of literacy as a government program for union members to be recognised as respectable members of society, similar to their counterparts in other sectors.

**Keywords:** NURTW; adult literacy; media; Ibadan metropolis; electoral violence.

## INTRODUCTION

Society is developing rapidly, which necessitates an understanding of the significance of Adult Literacy programs in civilised societies of the world. It is imperative to ensure the availability of literacy programs for adults who may, for specific reasons, be unable to complete their education, regardless of their current station in life. If Nigeria is serious about its Human Development Index, it must prioritise adult education among its adult population to benefit from these global advancements. It must also embrace the adoption of the Internet in its application to adult education [1]. However, a challenge arises due to the prevalent network issues and other factors impeding effective internet-based learning in Nigeria. With this in mind, the radio can be a more suitable medium for promoting literacy among adult learners. An effective radio literacy program can democratise access to valuable information, active political engagement and positive interpersonal interaction.

The media serves as the conduit for conveying messages and ideas, acting as instruments to transmit or receive knowledge. This is what authors [2] regarded as educational media, and it refers to the use of media for educational purposes, with radio being the most critical tool for information dissemination. It is why no nation, despite its economic muscle, cannot relegate the importance of the radio in information dissemination.

*The radio: an instrument for grassroots information dissemination.* According to [3], media can be categorised into print and electronic media. Some press in print includes items such as printed paper textbooks. Electronic media, on the other hand, is grouped into big media and small media. Big media consists of complex new forms that are expensive, such as television sets, films with sound systems, and computer-aided instructions. In contrast, small media refers to

more straightforward, less costly types like slides and radio.

In Ibadan, Nigeria, over 30 radio stations broadcast mainly in the local Yoruba language, and the local population finds it easier to listen and learn from the media content. An example is Fresh FM 105.9 FM's "Mind Your Language" program, which focuses on learning English. When this program airs, rural-based individuals try to improve their English skills. This example demonstrates the significant influence and power of radio as a platform for learning and communication. Author [4] believes that there are techniques through which specialised groups use technological devices to disseminate symbolic content to diverse audiences and should be adopted for cases of adult learning. Author [4] supports this view, stating that mass communication is a form of social communication considering audience experience.

*Adult Literacy: Forms, functions and importance.* The term "adult education" is understood differently across societies and nations, making it challenging to establish a unified definition. Author [5] referred to adult education as a process where individuals no longer attending school on a regular and full-time basis engage in sequential organised activities that can bring in attitudinal changes and increased knowledge to meet personal and societal needs.

Adult education is designed for individuals engaged in the ordinary business of life and is not limited to traditional classrooms. It can be formal, informal, and non-formal settings. When it is legal, it takes place within educational institutions. It is organised with schedules, and certificates are awarded upon completion. Non-formal adult education primarily accommodates learners' needs and objectives. It is a skill acquisition program tailored towards fulfilling a lack. Informal adult education is spontaneous, unstructured, and serendipitous, acquired through everyday activities like reading or staying alive.

Nigeria must adopt adult education in its scope and application method as it necessitates improved continued development in aligning with global practices and ensuring its sustainability. These concepts and modes of application should be integrated with modern international trends. Adult education can unlock adults' capabilities by providing their adaptation to the evolving world. It also has significant implications for an individual's political, social, and cultural awareness. This

study, therefore, aims to contribute to the advancement of adult literacy to explore its applicability in administering such content through the media. This study will ascertain the following:

1. What is the general attitude of NURTW members in the Ibadan metropolis toward literacy acquisition?
2. What are the forms of literacy programs provided for the union?
3. How can the radio contribute to the adult acquisition level of union members?

To answer these questions, we will administer a survey method by administering questionnaires across the four significant garages in the Ibadan metropolis. The garages include:

1. The Ojoo garage
2. Iwo Road bus terminal
3. Isiaka Ajimobi park, New Garage park
4. Apata bus station.

*The Need for Literacy Promotion.* Emphasis on eradication of illiteracy has been at an all time. Its time came when member nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10th December 1945 by the United Nations General Assembly. The consensus was that every human being deserves education regardless of any identifiers. The elaboration on the need for the acquisition of education was to serve as a conduit for the advancement of the economy and politics of member states as a result of the betterment of learners. This objective was not achieved within the allotted timeframe, giving a need for another forum to happen. It was why World Leader gathered in Dakar, Senegal, for the World Education Forum geared toward achieving education goals for member states in April 2000. This forum prioritises the learning needs of citizens across the globe. It built a curriculum tailored around the expectations of young and adult learners. It also focused on ensuring equitable opportunities and platforms for learners to access appropriate learning and programmes required for a better, healthier life – the forum aimed to achieve improved levels of adult literacy by 2015 through lifelong and continuing adult education.

There are concerted efforts in Nigeria for rural dwellers to access continuing adult education to become well-adjusted adults and improve their living conditions and social status. The author [6]

analysed the literacy situation in Nigeria at 49% and expected to decline because of its attendant corruption in the next decade. While Nigeria is considered a developed economy in Africa, more than half its population faces poverty issues and substandard infrastructure that hinder development. The important note is that an essential intersection exists between adult literacy and poverty reduction. With less worry about surviving, more adults will seek education.

*The Attitude of Adult Learners towards the attainment of literacy.* The application of adult education content is crucial for maintaining an educated and resourceful workforce, benefiting both participants and society. It is also why lifelong learning is essential for preparing and engaging the workforce to foster positive attitudinal change in the workplace. Adult lifelong learning is considered a way of life, encompassing education from cradle until adulthood, with some literature saying education that happens in the grave could be involved. The best way to overcome challenges for this form of teaching requires designing the program to attend to the needs of adult learners, and this will enable educators and facilitators to develop programs that address those challenges. Employers often focus their training and development programs on highly educated and well-paid employees, while low-skilled and low-paid workers receive minimal training. However, in a knowledge-based society, it is required that employees have a high level of knowledge and skills to scale their productivity. Therefore, fostering positive attitudes towards adult education can increase participation and benefit individuals and society [7].

*Attempts at Promotion of Adult Literacy in Nigeria.* Promoting adult literacy has been a joint effort by government and non-governmental agencies to penetrate rural communities for national development. Only the Christian Mission was the primary agency responsible for literacy development during the colonial era before 1922. Initially, these literacy classes were organised for adults who served as interpreters for the missionaries. Authors [8] shed further light on the issue that the British colonial government was not interested in adult literacy. However, their hands were forced to set a commission in 1922. The Phelps-Stokes Commission reported its recommendation the following year, but it was not until 1944 that the colonial government started paying attention to the need for adult literacy.

However, its implementation was delayed due to some impediments.

After the country's independence, UNESCO, in its effort to support literacy in the newly independent country, proposed the establishment of an Adult Literacy Institute in Ibadan. The government accepted this proposal, and it was the first time adult education was institutionalised by the government, and it gave rise to the discipline. The Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE) was established barely half a decade later. This metamorphosed into NNCAE collaboration with government and non-governmental agencies to achieve various milestones. For example, in 1974, the government included the Adult Education Unit as part of the Ministry of Education. This has also led to the creating of agencies meant for Adult and Non-formal Education across Nigeria. This started in 1980 to democratise adult education further.

President Babangida led the federal government and created the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult, and Non-formal Education in 1990. The charge of military administrators in the states was to create agencies that would cater to adult and non-formal education to reduce adult illiteracy.

The lesson is that literacy promotion is crucial for adults, especially union members, because they play an essential role in society and, if channelled correctly, will generate increased revenue for the government. Such campaigns may be of everyone's efforts if the target audience does not understand the message.

## METHODOLOGY

The study utilised a descriptive survey research design to document the media's role in acquiring and promoting literacy among union members. Primary data will be collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled 'Acquisition of literacy among NURTW members in Ibadan'. Twenty items were listed under two sections for the union members to pick the most suitable response using a Likert point type scale. The Research Design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research design. This design was adopted because it enables the researcher to collect factual information about promoting literacy among members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in the Ibadan metropolis. The population of this study comprises

purposely selected drivers and park managers within four government-approved garages in the Ibadan metropolis. These garages are chosen because they are government-owned and have experience with different political administrations. In selecting the garages, the researcher adopted a purposive sampling technique. The sample frame will be a systematic random sampling technique because it represents the larger population with some characteristics and features. The data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistical instrument, including tables, frequency count and simple percentages.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic information of the questionnaire is divided into gender, age, religion, marital status, level of formal education and ethnicity. This ensured the survey was equitably distributed among all the groups in the different garages. On gender (male/female), the majority of the participants were male. Out of the 100 questionnaires administered, 79% of the respondents were male, while 21% of them were female. This further strengthens the position that the transportation sector is male-dominated, where the female gender struggles to survive. Age (19-25, 26-32, 33- 39, 40 and above). The religious beliefs of the respondents were also sampled (Islam, Christianity and others). All the respondents identified as either Christians or Muslims. Also, the respondent's educational level was interrogated (primary school education, secondary school education, higher tertiary education, continuing education and Islamic education).

#### Acquisition of Literacy among NURTW Members in Ibadan, %

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
It annoys me that I did not finish my schooling programme earlier.	48	27	12	13	100
If I have the opportunity, I will return to school, not the transport work.	28	48	13	11	100

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Acquiring literacy in school is not necessary for life successes	21	37	17	25	100
Whatever is learnt in school can be effectively carried out at home without problem.	26	42	15	17	100
It gives me a sense of pride and satisfaction that I am educated	47	37	9	7	100
Acquiring literacy has distinguished me from other members of the transport union.	41	43	9	7	100
Continuous learning will help me with my all-round development	35	47	13	5	100
Continuous learning helps people in their future opportunities and career achievement.	38	46	8	8	100
Literacy acquisition is not restricted to schooling alone but to solving real-life problems.	45	39	10	6	100`
NURTW leaders are trying their best to get all their followers to educate	23	37	13	27	100

Table 2 – Promotion of Literacy Among Members Of The National Union Of Road Transport Workers, %

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
I get information and news only from the radio programmes	31	29	18	22	100
Only a few radio stations in Ibadan have literacy programme content	18	47	9	26	100
I am unable to access other broadcasting platforms for literacy promotion	25	38	12	25	100
There are many platforms where one can access literacy promotion and its content.	36	47	10	7	100
The government is highly interested in promoting literacy acquisition among NURTW in Oyo state on radio programmes	24	53	6	7	100
The state government supports the broadcast of literacy promotion programmes and their contents.	22	59	7	12	100
Individuals and organisations are supporting media	32	52	8	8	100

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
stations that broadcast literacy programmes.					
Trained facilitators should be invited to facilitate literacy acquisition among NURTW effectively	42	45	6	7	100
The media should evangelise the importance of literacy for members of NURTW.	41	49	6	4	100
Members of NURTW were mandated to acquire adequate literacy skills for the safety of their jobs.	28	51	77	14	100

The study adds to the existing literature on the impact of literacy among the unlettered members of Nigerian society. It also emphasises that literacy can be a tool for developing communicational messages to improve the community. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of [9], who discovered that lifelong learning is essential for adults to adapt to ongoing changes in the workplace and society as a whole. This is also why it is crucial to assist individuals in cultivating positive attitudes towards education and learning, whether formal or informal. The findings from the study revealed that most members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers are unhappy about not completing their school education. The conclusions of this study also announced that if given the opportunity, which in most cases was hindered by financial incapability, most Transport Union members would have completed their secondary school education.

Furthermore, the findings from this study revealed that the leadership of the NURTW has highlighted various means for its members to

acquire basic literacy to allow them to function with the demands of the 21st century. The unanimous agreement from this finding is that education does not start or end in the classes. In passing, the union leadership also said they have organised sensitisation programmes for members to shun political thuggery and any form of thuggery across the Ibadan metropolis. Also, there is a high-value proposition placed on formal education by members of the NURTW, and a large percentage of them believe that you are well-placed in society if you acquire formal education.

## CONCLUSIONS

The consistent theme of this study is that literacy acquisition extends beyond the formal education system and includes both formal and informal channels. The study also emphasised the various means of promoting literacy and why the radio perfectly fits this group. In the context of Ibadan, the members of The Union play a significant role in our society. The Transport Ministry in Oyo state, where Ibadan is located, is one of the largest ministries in the region. Therefore, the gov-

ernment needs to pay attention to the NURTW members, just as it does to other members from different ministries and agencies in the state.

The extensive network of Micra taxis managed and operated by the union members, will yield increased revenue for the state government if members are adequately educated and the union is structured to redirect the monies going into the informal purses into the state coffers. These individuals' acquisition of literacy skills would substantially impact the larger population as they will form opinions and attitudes from an informed perspective. Acquisition of adult literacy by this group will improve the general accessibility of the Ibadan populace.

Finally, it has been observed in this study that consistent administration of literacy programmes will enhance a behavioural change in how union members relate with the public, and it will also improve the perception of the public view of the union members. Mutual respect and empathy with an improved understanding of emotional intelligence in daily conversation and interactions will reign supreme.

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