



## Parents' Engagement in Adult Literacy and its Impact on their Children's Schooling

Efua Irene Amenyah\*

### Abstract

This study examined the positive impact of adults' engagement in literacy classes and its relation to the retention and performance of their children's schooling. It was hypothesized that adults who are pursuing personal goals by engaging and attending literacy classes when perceiving the instrumentality value of the learning activities have their children attend and succeed at their schooling. A mixed research methodology combining qualitative and quantitative approaches was used to collect and analyse data. Respondents included 132 adult learners and 20 volunteer teachers from ten different adult literacy classes across Togo. Results have shown that adults who engaged in learning and performed and persevered while attending literacy classes, show positive behaviours to their children and consequently were able to be involved in their children's schooling by encouraging them to learn for better achievement and performance in school.

**Key Words:** Adult Literacy; Performance and Perseverance; Education role models.

### Résumé

Cette étude analyse les effets positifs de l'engagement des adultes dans les cours d'alphabétisation et son impact sur le maintien et la performance de leurs enfants à l'école. Le postulat est que lorsque qu'ils prennent toute la mesure de la valeur des activités d'apprentissage, les adultes -poursuivant des objectifs personnels à travers leur engagement et la fréquentation des cours d'alphabétisation- voient leurs enfants fréquenter régulièrement l'école et réussir. Les données ont été collectées et analysées selon une méthodologie mixte de recherche combinant approches qualitative et quantitative. Ont été interrogés 132 apprenants adultes et 20 enseignants volontaires empruntés à dix différents cours d'alphabétisation pour adultes à travers le Togo. Les conclusions ont permis d'établir que les adultes engagés dans un apprentissage, performants et persévérants pendant les cours avaient un comportement positif à l'égard de leurs enfants et étaient donc aptes à s'impliquer dans la scolarisation de leurs enfants en les encourageant à apprendre à faire mieux et plus à l'école.

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\* National School of Specialized Social Workers (ENTSS), Dakar, Senegal.  
Email: efuanam@yahoo.com

## **Introduction**

A major change in educational settings is the increasing number of adults enrolling as students in educational programmes (Bourgeois 1996; Carré 1997; 1998) and in literacy classes (Thomas 1990; Comings 1995). In recent years, many African countries have also registered many adults as students in literacy classes, particularly adult women (Amenyah 2005; 2011).

According to Comings and colleagues (2000), adults choose to participate in education-based activities by making an active decision to engage and to learn. Paraphrasing Brookfield (1986) about purposeful learning in adult educational settings, it can be seen that adults make an active decision regarding their perspective to overcome significant barriers as parents to attend classes that require hundreds of hours of learning in order to acquire knowledge and skills.

Different studies based on adult education have shown that adults engage in education for the sake of learning (Balleux 2000; Villemagne 2011) but many do not persist while attending classes (Gartner 2005; Amenyah et al., 2010). Other studies have shown that adults engage in learning with personal goals (Bourgeois 1998; 2009), because they have perceived the value of learning activities (Eccles and Wigfield 2002; Phalet et al., 2004) and they have tried to determine their outcomes or benefits and performance to themselves and their families. So, when adults students decide to attend classes and persevere in learning, it is because of the value related to its impact (Monnoye 2007).

The present study explores the relation between adults' engagement in literacy classes and its impact on their children's retention and performance in school. We postulate that when adult students, exclusively women, engage in literacy classes because of their perceived utility value, their behaviours serve and encourage their children to perform and succeed at school.

## **Engagement in Learning**

Regarding the Expectancy-Value model, Eccles and Wigfield (2002) indicate that individuals engage in learning activities because they have perceived the value of the task and believed in their chance to succeed (expectancy). The value construct refers to the beliefs individuals have about reasons they might have to engage in the task and it includes mainly four components: importance, interest, utility and cost. The expectancy construct reflects individuals' beliefs and judgments about their capabilities to do the task and to succeed. Both, value and expectancy are seen as important predictors for individuals' future choice behaviour as: engagement, persistence, effort and achievement when considering their motivation to engage in learning (Pintrich

and Schunk 2002). In learning situations, choice, behaviour and persistence are seen as successful patterns and positive predictors to succeed (Feather 1982; Eccles et al., 1983; Dweck and Leggett 1988) and to achieve learning (Pintrich and De Groot 1990; Guan 2004).

Research based on Expectancy-Value model indicates that individuals engage in learning because of they have perceived the value of the learning task and believed they can succeed (Feather 1982; Eccles et al., 1998). In this regard, individuals refer to a question like 'why should I do the activity?', and responses include interest (I am interested in the activity), importance (the activity will help me to improve my self-image), utility beliefs (this topic is useful for my future or my different various activities) and cost (if I take this class, I will not be able to go to farm or sell my products). According to authors, importance, interest and utility are perceived to correlate positively with engagement, performance, persistence and effort; while cost is seen as the negative component (Wigfield and Eccles 1992; Pintrich and Schunk 2002). When considering importance, interest and utility of an activity, learners are confident that they can and will do well while engaging and persevering for achievement (Simons et al., 2004).

For many adult students who attend literacy classes, the first purpose they pursue while they engage in learning is to succeed in their economic activities in order to satisfy their primary family needs. In this perspective, there were many who choose to learn to write and to calculate as these two instrumental learning outcomes can help them in their daily activities. When adults decide to enrol in literacy classes, their first option is not to support their children in their schooling but this only comes later as a consequence of the learning content and beliefs.

According to Lens (2001), learning, performing and achieving in school, in educational programmes or elsewhere, are all intentional and goal-oriented activities. This intentionality can vary from the very simple (one single goal) to the very complex (multiple goals). For example, children or adults in learning have many, multiple or varied reasons to engage in a task while for the author, the individual goals that are striven for and which determine learners' motivation can be situated on two dimensions: intrinsic versus extrinsic goals and immediate versus future goals. The total motivation to learn is the combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and immediate and future time perspectives.

In literacy classes, adult learners were intrinsically motivated when they engaged in learning but they were more extrinsically motivated because the learning activities were done for the sake of the outcomes or other rewards that could be used for other different activities as their income-based activities that greatly contributed to sustaining their family needs.

### **Engagement in Literacy Classes**

In literacy classes, adult students choose to engage in learning because they have perceived the value of the learning task and expected to succeed (Phalet et al., 2004) and because they were extrinsically motivated (Porter et al., 2005). Adults who attended literacy classes have not engaged because they were only motivated to learn (Vallerand and Thill 1993; Viau 1994) but because they have perceived that learning activities are significantly useful accomplishments in their own standing. In many African countries, literacy classes are generally associated or coupled to small credits that many adults can benefit from to increase their economic activities when they are invited to attend classes. This strategy has been set up to assist local community adults in which learning activities' perceived value is related only to its instrumentality or utility value. Recent research has, however, shown that perceiving the value of learning in literacy classes implies judgments on importance, interest and utility as adult learners are motivated by personal and extrinsic goals for engaging in learning and also their looking forward to possible outcomes to be earned (Simons et al., 2004; Stamler 2007).

After all, many adult learners (if not all) engage and participate in literacy classes with different and multiple goals (Sansone and Harackiewicz 2000). It is not because adults are extrinsically motivated that they choose to engage and participate in learning whose outcomes are seen as advantageous to their future careers or their other current activities (Carré 2001).

The objective of literacy classes is to teach adults to learn to write, to read and to calculate in their local language and also to acquire 'skill-based learning'. Through the new development, literacy classes are organized to target local populations in their communities and classes have to be available and reachable (Unesco 2006). Thus, classes are organized in market places in urban areas and community centres in rural areas to facilitate access (Amenyah 2005).

### **Instrumentality Value of Literacy Classes**

For many adult students, engaging in literacy classes means to learn to write, to read and to calculate with the perspective to succeed on their economic activities (Vella 2002; Comings 2007). For many adult learners, engaging in literacy classes means to benefit from the loan that is needed for their economic activities' success. The focus while performing learning activities which are supported by their personal goals is their family basic needs. But it seems that adult learners who are extrinsically motivated are exploring other different aspects of the learning activities that can help with special outcomes and benefits for themselves and also their family (Bourgeois

2006,; 2009; Bourdon 2010). In this view, Aubret (2001) assumes that when adult learners engage in learning activities, they perceived learning in the perspective of their career, their relation to themselves and to others. How then do adult learners' own attitudes towards learning and persistence in school influence their own children's education? Certainly, adult learners' primary choice is related to their work and also their relation to others importantly their children.

### **Children's Retention and Performance in School**

In the past decades when adults engaged in literacy classes, their personal goals were oriented to instrumental learning and importantly to writing and calculating learning. But once they persevere on learning and engage in skills-based learning activities that are taught, the goals they pursue change in direction and intensity as their learning progresses. With skills-based learning activities, they are able to explore new relations with their children.

In recent research, psychologists and sociologists have been interested in parental expectations about their children's achievement in school and their future occupational attainment (Salkind 2008). Most research tends to characterize parent expectations as realistic beliefs and judgements that they have about their children's future achievement. Surely, every parent has the same concern and illiterate parents attending literacy classes too have concerns about their children's retention and performance in school. Some empirical studies have also shown relations between parental expectations and student achievement. It is important to note that once parents have started to learn in literacy classes, they understand that they can relate their learning achievement to other goals that are not identified while engaging in learning.

In that regard, parents who hold high expectations for their children's performance in school or grades on examinations, their children tend to subsequently receive higher grades, achieve higher scores on standardized tests, hold higher aspirations for their future educational and occupational attainment and persist in their schooling (Boekaerts et al., 2000). At the same time, when adult parents are succeeding in their own learning, they are able to ascertain their children's learning and performance in school.

With literacy classes, parents too have expectations for their children's achievement in school and future occupational attainment, but most of them are illiterate and unable to follow subsequently their children's progression or improvement during their schooling. In recent research, Robinson-Pant (2004) concludes that illiterate women are likely to send their children to school as literacy programmes are designed to address the perspective.

Other field research investigates the positive aspect of the persistence in learning (Lebel et al., 2007) and demonstrate that when adults persevere in literacy classes, benefits and skills acquired are directly oriented to their children's retention and performance in school.

In summary, adult learners engaged in learning in literacy classes with personal goals. With learning progression, they too will have expectations for their children's educational achievement in school. To attain their objective, they have to strive to achieve all learning activities that were taught in classes and to persevere while performing learning activities and persevere while attending classes and try to behave in a way that encourages children in their own schooling. By doing so, adult learners relate their own learning achievement to their children's learning retention and performance in school and they try to behave in ways that encourage the children in their schooling because their own attendance serves as model and example. To understand the relation between adult learners' engagement in literacy classes and its impact on their children's retention and performance in school, field research was conducted during April/May 2008 and used a mixed methodology to collect data.

### **Methods**

To understand the positive relation between adult learners' engagement in literacy classes and its diverse impact on children's children retention and performance in school a mixed methodology combining quantitative and qualitative approaches was used to collect and analyse data. The positive aspect of the methodology used was to cross-analyse data collected in order to appreciate their relevance and effectiveness. Respondents included adult learners, volunteer teachers and their supervisors from 10 literacy classes reached across Togo, in West Africa. Descriptive and correlation analyses were used for quantitative data while in-depth analysis presented in form of monographs, was used to analyse qualitative data.

The sample distribution (see Appendix 1) covered the 10 literacy classes and it comprised 152 respondents of which 132 were learners, exclusively women. Ninety-seven learners were from rural areas and 35 were reached in urban areas. On the whole, there were 20 volunteer teachers of which 30 percent were women. Within a sample of teachers, 25 percent were supervisors. Data were collected in April and May 2008 by interviews and questionnaire. The questionnaire focussed on individual characteristics and applied to respondents whereas interviews were conducted at either individual or group level. In total, 52 individual and 10 group interviews were conducted; this was combined with quantitative data for all the 152 respondents.

Learners' ages ranged from 20 to 70 years and teachers' ages ranged from 25 to 56 years. Respondents were single, married, divorced or widow. Learners' educational level covers three parameters: no instruction, primary level and secondary level. The time spent in attending classes varied a lot. Four categories were identified: up to 3 months (short-time period, SP), up to 6 months (average period, AP), up to 9 months (long-term period, LP) and indefinite period (IP) as some learners do not remember the number of months spent.

Variables examined through interviews included different and various topics among which learners' engagement in learning, learning achievement behaviours and learning outcomes for their immediate family such as children retention and performance in school.

## Results

Prior to focus on variables measuring learners' engagement, achievement behaviours and learning outcomes for the direct family, such as their children, descriptive and correlation analyses were used to determine learners' mean age ( $M = 43.6$  and  $SD = 11.72$ ) and teachers' mean age ( $M = 41.9$  and  $SD = 8.36$ ). Seventy-eight percent of learners were married and the others were divorced, single and widow. Ninety percent of teachers and supervisors were married; ten percent were single. In terms of prior learning, a little over half of the learners (53 percent) have never had any formal education whatsoever; 33 percent had primary education; 14 percent had secondary education. Eighty percent of the learners in rural areas had no prior formal education while there were 52 percent of respondents from urban areas who had no prior formal education either. Among the teachers and supervisors, 50 percent had primary education and 50 percent secondary education. One teacher had high school education (Advanced level) and one supervisor had university education level. Main characteristics of learners are summarized in Appendix 2.

### *Engagement in Learning*

Four specific learning activities were reported as taught in literacy classes because they are related to personal goals pursued (learning outcomes) by adult learners. They include: writing, reading, calculating (arithmetic) and a 'discussion' of life issues. The first three activities were referred to as 'instrumental learning' (numeracy, literacy and writing skills); and the fourth one was referred to as 'skills-based learning'. The following scripts represent some learning goals as described by a representative sample of adult learners engaged in literacy classes.

I have followed the literacy classes to learn how to do calculation [arithmetic] so that if I see cars' registrations number; I can read them and so they [car drivers] cannot 'cheat' me anymore when I charged the products (Afi, Hanoukopé).

We have attended literacy classes to learn to know certain things, like writing and signing with my name, that we do not know before, so we can educate ourselves and others (Eugenie, Atsokou).

Analyses of learners' learning goals show that many (if not all) were extrinsically motivated when they were engaging in literacy classes. Lots of learners were oriented to outcomes to be earned from learning activities. Each learning goal pursued is associated with one or more learning activities to achieve. Learners who engaged in literacy classes attributed their learning behaviour to specific learning goals that they have perceived the value. We found too that adult learners have engaged in literacy classes in order to achieve 'instrumental learning' [or acquire basic skills in writing, reading and calculating] as they were related to their economic activities and to acquire 'skills-based' learning. They strove to achieve learning a they perceived learning to be 'important', 'interesting' and 'useful'.

Analyses show too that learners engaged in learning, perceived the value of 'instrumental learning' for their economic activities and for their self-image. Learners who perceived the value of 'skills-based' learning, orient outcomes to achieve their family concerns. We found that many learning engaged in literacy with these specific perspectives. In sum, they have chosen to engage and to attend classes to achieve learning activities as they present outcomes for their economic activities, their family and particularly for themselves.

### ***Learning Achievement Behaviours***

Results showed that the time spent attending literacy classes varies considerably. Three forms of persistence were observed with adults engaged in learning: low attendance level (14 %), average attendance level (72 %) and high attendance level (14 %).

Analysis shows that learners with average and high level of persistence in literacy classes present positive behaviours patterns in achievement of the goals pursued while engaging in learning. We have found too that when learners persevered with learning, the perception they have on learning value are wide and in many cases it is in favour of their relation to their children attending school and the whole family. In clear, with these two attendance levels, learners were not only focussed on 'instrumental learning' directed to their economic-based activities but they were also able to show strong



interest in their own learning achievement and retention because, with the time spent in literacy classes and by perceiving the value of 'skills-based learning', they orient directly to the outcomes on the family and importantly to their children's performance at school and their future career.

The following short monographs of two learners, one with an average attendance level in a rural area and the other with a high attendance level in an urban area, show how the perception of the value of learning activities varies to focus on their children's schooling:

**Dovi:** A learner with a continuous participation

Regarding Dovi, her engagement in literacy classes occurs in Atsokou village where she is a native, mother of five girls and a member of the women's local association. The interview was conducted while she was still attending literacy classes after many breaks and at the time when the number of learners has decreased considerably. She engaged in literacy classes to learn principally to write in order to be able to benefit from the credits which were granted to women members of the association. Formerly, she had to put her fingerprint as all the other members whereas she had attended primary school in her young childhood but had given up at the elementary second year (CP2). After a few months of classes, she signs today with her name to receive the credits and to save funds on an account she has opened with the local cooperative. During the classes, Dovi saw some changes in her personal goals like supporting her daughters on their schooling; the fight against cheating in the market, so on. From time to time, Dovi cannot attend the classes because she is obliged to remain at the disposal of the sharecroppers whom she engaged to work in her farm. Like the others learners, she has to manage in order to reconcile learning activities and her agricultural activities in the farm which is the principal income for her family. In this way, Dovi is not able to attend her learning classes on a regular basis but she has noticed that while she was attending the literacy classes, her daughters too like going to school but when she stopped, they too are lazy going to school. So Dovi cannot remember the time spent to attend classes because she is shifting between her literacy classes and her agricultural activities but she did not drop out. Presently, she paid extra time learning work for her daughters in order to help them succeed in school. Today, Dovi felt herself totally valorised by learning achieved by attending classes since she shows a new image of herself to her daughters and, consequently, she is perceived differently in her family and also makes future plans with them all.

**Améyo:** A learner with successful achievement

Regarding Améyo, her engagement in literacy classes happened in Adawlato market, the biggest and quite famous market of Lomé where various goods are traded. Améyo has not attended school because she was placed in her childhood with relatives and she was only authorized to go to market with her supporter. At the moment of the interview, she had already finished the classes and had obtained the certificate. Améyo engaged in literacy classes in order to learn to read the Bible so she will be able to read it at church and also follow the schooling of her children. Améyo had no prior education as she had never been to school but she had admired her supporter's children in their uniform and with their shoulder bag attending school. Although, she did not know anything about school but she has to make it understandable to her children who are attending school that they should study, study hard to succeed with distinction. While attending literacy classes, she said she tried out what she was asking and requiring from her children but at the same time she is seeing a decrease in their learners' number day to day. She persevered in learning as she had a positive image of school and had too to show the example to her children and finally she had too to achieve her personal goals. During the interview, she showed full satisfaction and the pleasure she had gained during the literacy classes, especially the adjustment of the learning schedule which did not prevent her from trading and the possibility of counting on her neighbouring sellers during her classes. Today, Améyo complained a lot because literacy classes were over and she would wish that they reorganize them with the same scheduling. She reads, writes and calculates but she had not enough reading learning achieved since the pursued goals which brought her to engage in literacy classes were not attained. At end, she preserved good relationship with others learners. In her family, she developed new relationships with her children who are satisfied with her. But for her, learning is largely insufficient because she would strongly like to continue the classes in order to be able to read.

Analyses of learners' learning choice, achievement, behaviours and persistence, point to diverse findings regarding goals attainment, learning performance, achievement beyond pursued goals and their influences on their children retention and performance in school. Concerning the first case, when the learner tried out to drop out from literacy classes, the behaviour displayed affects directly the daughters' retention in school as they too tried to withdraw from school. With the second learner, without having any prior education, the learner encourages and requires from her children to study hard and to succeed at school and that is what they are doing because it is their mother's expectations for them. In this way, literacy

classes constitute an opportunity for her too to experiment and to insist on her wishes. In both cases, the learners have a positive image of school and of educational achievement. We found too that learners engaged in learning in literacy classes attend classes not only to learn and to achieve the goals pursued but also to replicate what school attendance recommends and to serve their children's interest. They have recognized that the effects of their personal behaviours while attending literacy classes are not neutral in their children's educational achievement as, they, parents are their first model. And consequently, the way they behave when they chose to persevere on learning and to perform has direct positive or negative effects on their children's retention in school.

As can be seen in the preceding paragraphs, the first learner is still attending the literacy classes with lots of breaks while the second learner completed the classes over the fixed period. The first learner came from a rural area where agricultural activities are dominant in cyclical periods and the second learner was a trader in the big market in urban area where selling activities require six days attendance per week. Learners' local context and personal goals pursued are different but literacy classes' objectives are the same and focus on similar and predefined activities which include 'instrumental learning' and 'skills-based' learning.

### ***Learning Achievement and Outcomes***

Analyses show that both learners have performed different and specific learning activities which were supported by their personal goals. Dovi, the first learner writes and signs with her name to receive credits and/or to save money with the local cooperative. Améyo, the second learner reads, writes and calculates and she can also use a calculator to do some operations in her selling activities. In both cases, learners engaged in literacy classes have experienced 'instrumental learning' that they have desired to learn and to develop with literacy classes. Moreover, learners have also performed 'skills-based learning' as they have persevered while attending and achieving learning activities. It is important to note that none of learners have engaged in literacy classes by pursuing goals that related to 'skills-based learning' that they have achieved because they imply discussion about 'life issues' such as girls' education, immunization, water and sanitation, and so on. However, learners who have persevered with learning were able to perform them because they were not only able to participate in discussion but that help them to have broad understanding of different issues including in learning activities and through which they have reinforced their comprehension of educational achievement and performance to attain in school.

We found too that learners engaged in literacy classes have achieved the goals that have motivated them to learn. More specifically and on her side, Dovi achieved goals that have motivated her to engage and to learn in literacy classes. That can be a sufficient reason for her to withdraw from classes but she has considered her girls' retention in school. And for that reason, she has to continue attending literacy classes as they are still on. On the one hand, Dovi has improved her knowledge by achieving 'skills-based learning' which was oriented toward her daughters' educational achievement in school. On the other hand, Améyo has performed all 'instrumental learning' activities taught in literacy classes as her goal was to learn to read only but she has not achieved the goals pursued while engaging in literacy classes because she is not able to read the Bible at Church. But she has acknowledged that she has gained, and literacy classes have positive impact on her children's educational achievement in school. Finally, achievement attained, performance realized and persistence observed by learners are considered as positive outcomes which are relevant and determinant in their children's retention and performance in school. In summary, learners engaged in literacy classes to learn have achieved in different ways 'instrumental learning' activities of reading, writing and calculating and they have also picked up 'skills-based learning' activities which were observed to resulting from their persistence, choice and performance that have direct impact on their children in school.

### **Discussion**

The contribution of this paper is to show the relation between adults' engagement in learning in literacy classes and children's retention and performance in school. It appears clearly from different results that adults' engagement in learning, participation, choice behaviours, achievement and persistence in literacy classes are motivated and supported by different factors that are determined by learners' immediate and direct environment, personal goals pursued and the perspectives they clearly have or not concerning their own life's improvement and their children's future achievement and aspirations.

As noted by Brookfield (1986), 'adults engaged in purposeful learning' and for Lens (2001), 'adults chose to participate in learning for its instrumentality value'. As indicated by our results, goals pursued while adults choose to engage and to participate in learning are strongly and extrinsically motivated by their economic activities, their social life aspiration and other personal goals oriented onto themselves. However, looking forward to influence on their family life's conditions and importantly their children's educational achievement, the goals pursued while adults are entering in learning have changed in direction and in intensity into 'skills-based learning' (Forster et al., 2001; Bourgeois 2006).

Within Expectancy-Value Model, Eccles and Wigfield (2002) and Feather (1982) indicated that individuals have different reasons for engaging in different achievement tasks. When extrinsically motivated, individuals engage in activities for instrumental or other reasons. In-depth analyses of interviews have shown that adult learners have had different reasons that lead them to engage in learning in literacy classes and they were extrinsically motivated as goals were principally oriented to activities related to their basic needs and the improvement of their life existence (Bourgeois 2009).

Our results are consistent with the Expectancy-Value model in such a way that choice behaviour, performance and persistence are achieved toward learning activities. How do these findings relate to Feather (1988) who worked mainly on adults' engagement in learning? In the current study, learning achievement was positively related to the extent to which performance to attain had subjective value. The results of our study add to the evidence that supports links between goals pursued and value of outcomes of learning activities.

One issue that will require further conceptualization and research is the process around persistence by which adult learners participate differently in learning activities. Therefore, findings related to persistence showed some similarities to Comings (2007) and Porter and colleagues' (2005) research which demonstrated discrepancies in attending adults' literacy classes. Our results showed three different types of attendance levels. Variation in attendance level has much influence on learning activities' achievement. The findings revealed that learners who attended literacy classes during a short period were not able to deepen their knowledge with 'skills-based learning' which would help them to focus their own learning achievement with regard to their children's educational achievement. But learners who attended literacy classes during the average or long period were able to emphasize their own performance achieved in regard to their children's performance.

An important finding from this study is that the perception individuals have from one's self and from others. Within Expectancy-Value Model, authors deal with self-concept (Feather 1982; Wigfield and Eccles 1992; Eccles et al., 1998; Fredricks et. al., 2004). Our study results showed that adults who engaged in literacy classes felt uncomfortable about the image they showed of themselves to themselves and/or to others and of how they were perceived by themselves and by others (including their children). For themselves and for others, they were looked at as individuals or parents with no prior education and in many cases that conflicts with the 'ideal' self-image some children would like to have of their parents. The second

idea deriving from this finding concerns the parents' behaviour regarding educational settings. As children copy mostly from their parents because they are the primary care providers and first educators or models (Salkind 2008), children are highly influenced by parents. When Dovi withdrew from her literacy classes it influenced her children's retention in school. Améyo has a strong esteem for learning and has transmitted it to her children. Finally, when learners attend literacy classes, the perceptions they have of themselves and others have on them and the image they show of themselves to others are positive and they are full of self-confidence and they behave in such a way that their children rely on them and can involve themselves in their educational achievement.

Last, our results have practical implications in that they imply that engagement in adult literacy classes has a positive impact on children's retention and performance in school. Adults engaged in learning do not only provide an example to their children but also change the perception of the image their children have of them. Our findings shed light on many aspects regarding learning achievement, choice behaviours, performance and persistence in adult educational settings (Wigfield 1994; Pintrich and Schunk 2002; Amenyah et al., 2010). And different aspects will need further conceptualization and development in another paper.

Finally, this paper concludes by reporting that a positive relation between engagement in adult literacy classes and children's retention and performance in school exists. Further improvement and also discussion are needed in order to orient the debate towards the perspective to reverse trends by focussing on school enrolment rate in developing countries. In another way, advocacy and interventions can be undertaken in order to encourage adults to engage in learning in literacy classes in order to directly influence on their children's retention and performance in school.

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## Appendix 1

Learners and teachers and their supervisors' number per site visited

	Site	Indicators	Numbers	%
<b>Literacy classes</b>	<b>Urban</b>	Abattoir	9	5,9
		Adawlato	9	5,9
		Attikpodzi	11	7,2
		Hanoukopé	6	4,0
		Teacher & supervisor	2	1,3
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24,3</b>
	<b>Rural</b>	Agbodeka kopé	9	5,9
		Atsokou	15	9,8
		Gboto	51	33,6
		Klologo	12	8,0
		Kpavou	3	2,0
		Plakomé	7	4,6
		Teacher & supervisor	18	11,8
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>75,7</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>152</b>

## Appendix 2

Learners and teachers and their supervisors' number per site visited

	Site	Indicators	Numbers	%
<b>Literacy classes</b>	<b>Urban</b>	Abattoir	9	5,9
		Adawlato	9	5,9
		Attikpodzi	11	7,2
		Hanoukopé	6	4,0
		Teacher & supervisor	2	1,3
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24,3</b>
	<b>Rural</b>	Agbodeka kopé	9	5,9
		Atsokou	15	9,8
		Gboto	51	33,6
		Klologo	12	8,0
		Kpavou	3	2,0
		Plakomé	7	4,6
		Teacher & supervisor	18	11,8
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>75,7</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>152</b>