



The Role of Adult Education Graduates in Improving Secondary School Education: A Case of Nyamagana District, Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study aimed at establishing the contribution of adult education graduates to the improvement of secondary education in Nyamagana District, Tanzania. The study used the mixed approach and employed the descriptive research design. Data were collected by using the questionnaires. Out of 480 subjects, the study sampled 82 respondents including 25 heads of secondary schools, 40 adult education graduates, 12 heads of adult education centers and 5 adult education officials. Data was analyzed by using tables, frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed a significant contribution of adult education graduates in improving the secondary education. Therefore, adult education graduates are among important stakeholders toward the improvement of secondary education in Tanzania. The study recommends that adult education graduates should be taken as key stakeholders in decision-making regarding changes in education so as to bring a significant improvement in the secondary education system in Tanzania.*

Keywords: Adults, Education, Graduates, Secondary, Enrolment, Infrastructure, Quality, Tanzania

Introduction

Contribution of adult education graduates toward secondary education improvement has not been documented. Although adult education exists in Tanzania, and there are adults who have successfully completed their courses in various adult education programs, less attention has been paid to it (Mwaikokesya & Mushi, 2017). Evidences to show the impact of adult education graduates on secondary education are missing. By considering the adult education under the Institute of Adult Education, this study assessed the contribution of adult education graduates, who passed through the adult education centres and have graduated from secondary to university level, to the improvement of secondary education in Tanzania. The study was guided by three research questions:

1. In which ways have adult education graduates contributed to secondary schools' enrolment?
2. What are the contributions from adult education graduates in promoting the secondary school infrastructure?
3. What are the contributions from adult education graduates toward the improvement of the quality of education?

Trends in School Enrolment

To build a nation which is self-reliant, its people have to be literate since there is no strong nation with illiterate citizens (Anjulo et al., 2017). According to Global Economy (2020), in 2017, secondary school enrolment rate in Belgium was 100%, while the rate for Central African Republic was 17.14%. For Tanzania, the rate was 27.35%. Nevertheless, the rate reached 29.44% in 2018 from 2.67% in 1970. This shows the way effort is still needed to boost the enrolment in secondary education in developing countries such as Tanzania.

According to UNICEF (2019), the number of dropouts in children of lower secondary education has decreased to 61 million in 2018 from 99 million in 2000. For upper Secondary education age, the drop outs have decreased from 177 million in 2000 to 138 million in 2018. Though there is improvement, there are still challenges such as inadequacy of learning resources that face the provision of universal secondary education across the world (UNICEF, 2019).

In India, Kingdon (2007) found an increasing pattern of enrollment in secondary schools. The rise in secondary education demand was accelerated by the private schools increase. Nevertheless, the rise

in enrollment was below the targeted rates due to lack of supply of infrastructure such as classrooms to the nearby secondary schools and the traditional perception of parents about girls on education.

In Ethiopia, on the other hand, Anjulo et al. (2017) identified factors that hindered the adult graduates from enrolling in adult education classes to include: weak institutional arrangements, inadequate supervision, lack of community awareness and lack of motivation. Fentiman et al. (1999) in Ghana found that the number of children who joined lower secondary level in rural areas was less than those who joined primary schools. They confirmed that the dramatic decrease of enrollment from primary schools to junior secondary level was due to the fact that only few children managed to complete primary education. Their data evidenced progressive dropouts from early primary education to late primary education. Factors identified to affect enrollment in junior secondary schools included social whereby some girls were involved in early marriages, long distances from home to school and child labor where some children were considered as a source of income for families.

Free universal education policy in Tanzania has contributed to the enrolment increase especially in lower secondary education. According to URT (2018), the enrollment rose by 1.65% and 5.51% in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Generally, total enrolment from form one to form six increased by 5.7% in 2017 (URT, 2018). This might have been contributed by the private sector where by 18.7% of secondary school students were studying in private schools as well as through Big Results Now and Secondary Education Development Plan II (URT, 2018).

On the other hand, particular age-groups and selection criteria were identified by Msoroka (2015) as the main factors affecting secondary school enrolment in the country in that schooling has been regarded as a service for a certain age-group which comprises of mostly young students. This has made adults who are sometimes qualified to be enrolled in secondary schools to fail or shy away due to their advanced age. Selection criteria for students to join form one have also been leaving out adults whose performance has been comparatively lower compared to students from primary schools who have gone through the formal system. In addition, adult learners have been found to have poor performance in formal secondary schools

(Shahanga, 2015). This is mainly due to the way teaching and learning processes are conducted in formal schools as the adults are overwhelmed by many roles to play in the society while taking their studies.

As a result, according to Kanukisya (2014), adults aged between 20 and 30 years from families with middle income were mostly motivated to get enrolled in non-formal secondary education. The main reason was their expectations about white collar jobs, possession of higher education and promotion. This shows that another important factor affecting enrolment in secondary education being age and income. Human Right Watch (2017) analyzed factors hindering access to enrolment in secondary schools in Tanzania and highlighted several challenges including students facing significant barriers financially. Other related costs for schooling like uniforms, transport to and from schools and school material acquisition especially of books blocked the eligible students either to get enrolled or to continue with their studies.

Infrastructure Challenges

The report by the World Bank Group (2019) insisted that better school infrastructure has to be established including better space for learning, school community relationship and access to healthy and safe school environment. The study by Zhang et al. (2008) revealed that in Peru, more than 30% of pupils especially in villages were learning in poor classrooms to be completely rebuilt while 38% were learning in classes which needed major repairs. The same situation was observed in Chile, Sri Lanka and Philippines. Only 30% of pupils in Malaysia were enrolled in schools which had all the requirements. Few schools in Tunisia, Peru, India, Philippines and Paraguay were found to have all the requirements. More than 50% of pupils were studying in schools with no electricity while 10% of pupils in many countries including Sri Lanka, Peru, India, Philippines, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil were in schools with no running water.

The study of Chakacha et al. (2014) in Zimbabwe revealed that well equipped schools tend to offer better learning environment compared to those which lack sufficient equipment. Thus, policy makers, planners and funders must focus on attractive, clean and functional school environments.

In Kenya, due to a huge enrollment brought about by free secondary education program, secondary

school classes have a large number of students than required. In some areas, there are classes without cemented floors and many school libraries have insufficient materials. This is an evidence of the need of infrastructure improvement in schools (Parnwell, 2015). Insufficient staff quarters, inappropriate toilets especially for girls and inadequate classrooms were found to affect the performance of learners in Uganda (Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, 2018).

In Tanzania, aging of school buildings, carelessness in handling facilities, inadequate financial resources and ignorance of students on their role to maintain facilities were the factors found to cause poor school infrastructure (Mvuyekule, 2017). These need to be evaluated by representatives from bodies which are outside the school administration. On the contrary, the report by the Controller and Auditor General (2017), among other issues, it identified that not all infrastructures were inspected by external bodies. This gives a picture that there is insufficient and poor infrastructures management among public secondary schools.

Quality of Adult Education

Adult education promotes the provision of skills related to information and communication technology, among other things. These skills improve employability, general wellbeing and civic altitudes. They also increase innovations, motivate labor participation and increases economic benefits (European Commission, 2015). Countries with higher rates of adult learning participation are more competitive economically.

The US National Commission on Adult Literacy argues that to help adults who have lower skills is the responsibility of development institutions

together with adult education system (Strawn, 2007). Educating adults in Africa is one of ways of helping the continent to properly allocate resources since it increases the workforce team which will in turn enable the citizens to take care of extended families, administer the welfare of the families and enhance participation in social activities (Friebe & Schmidt-Hertha, 2013). Many African adults live in the rural areas where social services are few and most of them experience difficulties in accessing health services, community care and income support. Therefore, it is necessary to have them educated through adult education for them to be empowered. It is also very important for them to be educated so that they may know how to claim their rights and to offer proper contribution in various economic activities.

According to Mwaikokesya and Mushi (2017), most of adult education programs in Tanzania are less organized and coordinated. Formal system is considered superior to the informal one as graduates' qualifications as well as official documents like certificates from formal system are normally considered as superior than those from the from informal system. This means graduates from informal system are less considered and are given less opportunity to use their qualifications. Furthermore, education for All report put more emphasis on primary education than adult education (Bhalalusesa, 2003). The Education Sector Development Plan Section Five for 2015/16 to 2020/21 clearly states that the plans for Tanzanian education and priority for non-formal and adult education programs, their implementation is lacking (URT, 2018). This study therefore sought to establish the role of adult education graduates in improving the quality of secondary education.

Table 1: Study Sample Description

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling technique
Heads of secondary schools	61	25	Simple Random
Heads of adult education centers	32	12	Simple Random
Graduates	360	40	Purposive
Adult education officials	5	5	Purposive
Total sample	458	82	

Research Methodology

This study used the descriptive research design. The researchers collected in-depth information from respondents who talked about the way adult education graduates have contributed to initiate education changes, based on their experiences.

Population and Sampling Technique

Table 1 indicates that the population considered by this study was 458 subjects including 61 heads of secondary schools, 32 heads of adult education centers, 5 adult education officials from the Institute of Adult Education in Mwanza Regional Office and

360 graduates from the adult education in Nyamagana District. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to identify the sample, which was 82 subjects, including 25 heads of secondary schools, 40 adult education graduates, 12 heads of adult education centres and 5 adult education officials. This study used questionnaire to collect data. Close-ended items were used to collect quantitative data while the open-ended items was used to collect qualitative data.

Validity and Reliability

This study established validity by using the content validity approach. This was applied by using professionals and experts in the field who went through the instruments to be used. The experts gave comments for improvement prior to data collection. The study ensured reliability by piloting in three secondary schools, three adult education centers and one official from Ilemela District. The results yielded the Cronbach's Alpha of above 0.7 meaning the questionnaire was reliable for data collection. The data was analyzed through Descriptive Statistics.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to all ethical standards required for research. Permission was acquired from the Saint Augustine University of Tanzania, the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) and the District Administrative Secretary (DAS) before the researchers went to the field for data collection.

Findings and Discussion

This part presents the results of the study based on the data from the questionnaire.

Research Question 1: In which ways have adult education graduates contributed to secondary schools' enrolment?

Regarding the contribution of adult education graduates to secondary school enrolment, the heads of schools were first asked to explain the number of students their schools enrolled from 2017 to 2020. According to the responses, enrollment from 2017 to 2018 increased by 1,560 students from 7,305 to 8,865 students. From 2018 to 2019, there was a slight drop from 8,865 to 8,780 students, a decrease of about 85 students. There after there was a significant increase from 2019 to 2020, of about 1,270 students, from 8780 to 10050 students.

Generally, there has been an increase in enrollments in schools. The study followed up the comments of heads of schools on this enrolment. Through interview, the qualitative findings, reasons for the decrease included lack of classrooms that forced schools to enroll only the number they could accommodate. On the other hand, the general increase in enrolment was due to free education policy by the government and the increased awareness of parents on the importance of education to their children.

Regarding the way adult education graduates have contributed to the enrolment, the response of heads of schools are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Heads of Schools' Responses on Adult Education Graduates' Contribution

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent
No contribution	12	48
Joining upper level	3	12
Inspiring students	4	16
Getting involved in decision making	6	24

Table 3: Graduates' Responses on Their Contribution to School Enrollment

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent
I advised schools to add classes and laboratories to accommodate more students	8	20
I paid for my relative to join Advanced level of Secondary School	6	15
I encouraged finalists to work hard in their	12	30
I mobilized relatives to pay fees for their young brothers and sisters	8	20
I did not participate	6	15

Table 2 shows that 48% of respondents said there is nothing adult education graduates have contributed while the remaining 52% confirmed that adult education graduates have contributed to school enrollment through various ways including 12% for graduates having influenced students to join upper

education, 16% by inspiring potential candidates and 24% by getting involved in decision making in school boards.

Table 3 indicates the responses from the adult education graduates on their contribution to school enrollment.

According to table 3, only 15% of adult education graduates indicated that they did not contribute toward school enrolment. This means majority of them had contributed toward school enrolment. The highest contribution was in terms of encouraging finalists to work hard in their studies, which accounted for 30%. The table also indicates that 20% of adult education graduates confirmed to have advised schools to add more classes and laboratories while 20% played part by mobilizing relatives to pay school fees for their younger brothers and sisters. Furthermore 15% paid for their relatives to join Advanced level of Secondary Schools. Therefore, both school heads and

graduates confirm that there is a significant contribution by adult education graduates towards the school enrolment. This could be the reason why the Global Economy Report (2020) indicated an increase in enrollment of 29.24% in 2018 compared to 2.67% in 1970.

Research Question 2: What are the contributions from adult education graduates in promoting the secondary school infrastructure?

In order to determine the contribution of adult education graduates in promoting the secondary school infrastructure, heads of schools presented their feelings in table 4.

Table 4: Heads of Schools Responses on Graduates' Contribution to Infrastructure

Category of Response	Frequency	Percent
Nothing	10	40
Through participation in school planning	4	16
They participate in rehabilitation contributions	5	20
Advised on rehabilitation of infrastructure	6	24

Table 5: Graduates' Responses on Improvement of School Infrastructure

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent
Sharing ideas in the school boards that the school should renovate the infrastructure	18	45
I gave contribution for building classes in our area	10	25
I advised the head to add missing facilities	4	10
I have done nothing	8	20

Table 4 indicates that 40% of the heads of schools had not observed any contribution from the adult education graduates on the school infrastructure. This suggests that majority of the school heads considered the graduates to have contributed toward the improved school infrastructure in one way or the other. Particularly, 24% considered the graduates to have participated by giving ideas and advices in school boards on the rehabilitation of infrastructure. Furthermore, 20% believed that the graduates had contributed towards giving their financial contributions while 16% considered the graduates to have contributed through participation in school planning.

Table 4, further indicates the perception of the adult education graduates on their participation toward school infrastructure. As only 20% believed they had not contributed towards the school infrastructure, 80% believed to have contributed through one way or the other. Particularly, 45% gave ideas in the school boards that the schools should renovate the infrastructure. While 25% participated through giving contributions for building classes, 10%

participated through advising the school heads to add the missing facilities. Therefore, majority of the graduates believed that they have contributed toward the improvement of the school infrastructure.

Research Question 3: What are the contributions from adult education graduates toward the improvement of the quality of education?

This research question sought to determine the contribution of the adult education graduates on the quality of education. This is due to the fact that the quality of education should be known in order to understand whether there is improvement.

Table 6 (p. 70) indicates the role of the graduates in supporting the quality education as perceived by the school heads. None of the school heads perceived that graduates had contributed nothing toward the quality education. Majority of them believed that the graduates had contributed through visiting centers and encouraging students (50%), following up through the WhatsApp groups (50%), encouraging the students (50%), through financial

contributions (25%) and through giving their personal testimonies (17%).

Table 6: Heads of Centers Responses on Initiatives to Increase Quality of Education

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent
Visiting centers and encouraging students	12	50
Forming up through WhatsApp groups	12	50
By financial contribution	6	25
Encouraging students during the graduation days	12	50
Graduates giving testimonies wherever they are	8	17

Table 7: Graduates' Responses on Quality Education

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent
I am teaching students at the center	9	22.5
Insisting fellow graduates to follow up quality and to encourage students to work hard	6	15
I have visited centers to encourage students regularly	8	20
We have formed WhatsApp group we normally follow up and discuss	10	25
I have financially contributed to the center from where I graduated	5	12.5
I testify the quality of my former center wherever I am asked to do so	2	5

Furthermore, the adult school graduates were also given opportunity to indicate their contribution toward the education quality.

As revealed in table 7, the respondents perceived to have contributed toward the education quality through various ways including teaching students at the centers as well as insisting to fellow graduates to follow up the quality of education and encouraging students to work hard.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This part presents the conclusions of the study based on the findings and then gives the recommendations.

Conclusions

The study concludes that there is a remarkable contribution of adult education graduates to the improvement of secondary education in Nyamagana District. Adult education graduates contributed towards improved enrollment by influencing students to enroll for secondary education studies and through BOG resolutions on expanding access to secondary education. They also contributed through infrastructure development by urging schools to put up more classes, laboratories and making financial contributions to schools. Finally they also contributed towards quality education by mentoring learners through motivation talks in schools and monitoring school performance and giving feedback.

Recommendations

The study recommends that more adult education graduates should be offered opportunities to serve in school boards and other school organs so that

they can use their knowledge and experience to make secondary education better in Tanzania by promoting the enrolment. There is need to appreciate the role of adult education graduates in the development of school infrastructure. Schools should exploit the presence of adult education graduates in local communities and use them to mentor secondary school students.

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