



# Educational Management Practices And Adult Learners' Participation And Retention In Continuing Education Programmes In Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of educational management practices in adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes in Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the effects of educational planning, administrative leadership, instructional supervision, learner support services, and resource management practices on adult learners' engagement and persistence. A descriptive survey research design was employed, targeting adult learners across selected continuing education centres in urban and semi-urban areas of Nigeria. The study population consisted of 2,000 adult learners, from which a sample of 300 respondents was drawn using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire named the Educational Management Practices and Adult Learners' Participation Questionnaire (EMPALPQ), which was validated by three experts: two from the Educational Administration and Planning Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, and one from the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies, all within the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Reliability was established through a pilot study with 30 adult learners, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and ranking, with a decision rule interpreting scores of 1.00–2.49 as "Disagree," 2.50–3.49 as "Undecided," and 3.50–5.00 as "Agree." The findings indicated that adult learners perceive educational planning, administrative leadership, instructional supervision, learner support services, and resource management as critical factors influencing their participation and retention in continuing education programmes. The study concluded that effective management practices enhance learner engagement and programme completion, providing insights for policymakers, programme coordinators, and educational administrators to strengthen adult education outcomes in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Educational management practices, adult learners, participation, retention, continuing education programmes

## Introduction

One of the growing concerns confronting adult and continuing education in Nigeria is the persistent decline in adult learners' sustained participation and completion of continuing education programmes despite increasing enrolment rates. This situation raises serious questions about the effectiveness of educational management practices guiding the planning, organization, coordination, and supervision of these programmes. While continuing education is expected to empower adults with relevant skills, knowledge, and competencies for personal and national development, weak management structures often undermine these

objectives, resulting in poor learner engagement and high dropout rates. This concern forms the central worry of the present study. Educational management practices constitute the backbone of any functional educational system. They include administrative leadership, programme planning, instructional supervision, learner support services, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms put in place to ensure effective teaching and learning. According to Abdullahi and Musa (2020), educational management practices determine how educational resources are utilized, how learners are supported, and how institutional goals are achieved. In the context of adult and continuing education, effective management practices are particularly critical because adult learners differ significantly from conventional students in terms of motivation, responsibilities, learning styles, and expectations.

In Nigeria, continuing education programmes serve as alternative pathways for adults who seek to improve their educational qualifications, upgrade professional skills, or pursue lifelong learning opportunities. These programmes are offered through universities, colleges of education, institutes of continuing education, and community learning centres. However, evidence suggests that many adult learners enroll in these programmes with enthusiasm but later disengage due to poor administrative coordination, inflexible schedules, inadequate academic support, and ineffective communication between programme managers and learners (Okoroma and Okoroma, 2019). Such challenges point directly to deficiencies in educational management practices rather than learners' lack of interest in education. Adult learners are often burdened with multiple responsibilities, including employment, family care, and social obligations. As noted by Okeke (2021), adult learners require flexible, well-coordinated, and learner-centred management systems that recognize their unique circumstances. When educational managers fail to provide supportive learning environments through effective planning, counselling services, and continuous monitoring, adult learners may experience frustration, reduced motivation, and eventual withdrawal from programmes. This highlights the direct link between educational management practices and adult learners' participation and retention.

Furthermore, the Nigerian educational environment is characterized by limited funding, infrastructural challenges, and inconsistent policy implementation, all of which place enormous responsibility on educational managers. According to Ani, Igwe, and Omole (2022), effective educational management practices can mitigate these systemic challenges by ensuring efficient resource allocation, staff motivation, and learner support. Conversely, weak leadership and poor administrative practices often result in disorganized programmes, irregular academic calendars, and inadequate supervision, which negatively affect adult learners' willingness to remain in continuing education programmes. Despite the recognized importance of educational management practices, much of the existing research in Nigeria has focused more on access to adult education, curriculum relevance, and learner characteristics, with limited emphasis on how management practices influence adult learners' participation and retention. Bamidele (2023) observed that without empirical evidence linking management practices to learner outcomes, policy interventions may fail to address the root causes of dropout and low retention in continuing education programmes. This gap in the literature underscores the need for focused investigation into how educational management practices shape adult learners' educational experiences. In view of these challenges, there is a growing need to critically examine the role of educational management practices in enhancing adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes in Nigeria. Understanding how management practices influence learners' decisions to enroll, persist, and complete programmes is essential for improving programme effectiveness, promoting lifelong learning, and achieving national development goals.

Educational management practices have been widely recognized as critical factors influencing the effectiveness of adult and continuing education programmes, particularly with respect to adult learners' participation and retention. According to Abdullahi and Musa (2020), educational management practices involve systematic planning, administrative leadership, instructional supervision, learner support services, communication, monitoring, and evaluation aimed at achieving educational goals. In adult education settings, these practices are especially important because adult learners require flexible and supportive learning environments that accommodate their diverse responsibilities and learning needs. Educational planning practices play a significant role in determining adult learners' sustained participation in continuing education programmes. Okoroma (2018) observed that poor programme planning, rigid timetables, and unclear academic schedules often discourage adult learners, leading to irregular attendance and eventual withdrawal. Conversely, well-planned programmes that integrate flexible scheduling and clear instructional timelines enhance adult learners' commitment and retention. Effective planning practices therefore serve as a foundation for sustained participation in adult education programmes.

Administrative leadership practices further influence adult learners' experiences and persistence in continuing education programmes. Ani, Igwe, and Omole (2022) noted that effective administrative leadership promotes coordination of academic activities, consistency in programme implementation, and responsiveness to learners' needs. Where leadership practices are weak, adult education programmes often experience poor coordination, ineffective policy implementation, and limited learner engagement, which negatively affect retention rates. Strong leadership practices, on the other hand, foster trust and stability, encouraging adult learners to remain in programmes. Instructional supervision practices and learner support services are also central to adult learners' participation and retention. Eze and Okeke (2021) emphasized that

adult learner's benefit from instructional supervision that ensures facilitators adopt appropriate teaching methods and provide timely feedback. In addition, learner support services such as academic advising and counselling help adult learners cope with academic and personal challenges. Adult learners who receive adequate support are more likely to persist and complete their programmes than those who experience neglect or inadequate guidance.

Communication, monitoring, and evaluation practices equally shape adult learners' retention in continuing education programmes. Momoh and Bamidele (2023) reported that effective communication of academic requirements, regular monitoring of learner progress and continuous programme evaluation enhance learner satisfaction and commitment. Poor communication and weak monitoring systems often result in confusion, frustration, and disengagement among adult learners. Effective management of educational resources further strengthens programme delivery and supports learners' sustained participation. Taken as a whole, existing literature indicates that educational management practices including planning, administrative leadership, instructional supervision, learner support services, communication, monitoring, evaluation, and resource management—are key determinants of adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes. Building on these insights, the present study examines how educational management practices influence adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes in Nigeria.

Hence, this study is therefore anchored on the assumption that strengthening educational management practices will significantly improve adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes across Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Educational management practices are fundamental to the effective functioning of adult and continuing education programmes, particularly with regard to adult learners' participation and retention. Ideally, continuing education programmes in Nigeria ought to be efficiently managed through effective planning, flexible administrative structures, adequate learner support services, sound instructional supervision, and consistent monitoring and evaluation. In such an ideal situation, these management practices would create enabling and learner-centred environments that motivate adult learners to enroll, sustain participation, and successfully complete their programmes, thereby fulfilling the objectives of lifelong learning and national development.

In reality, however, many continuing education programmes in Nigeria operate under conditions that fall short of this ideal. Although enrolment into adult and continuing education programmes has increased over time, a significant number of adult learners fail to sustain participation or complete their programmes. Persistent issues such as poor administrative coordination, rigid programme schedules, inadequate counselling and learner support services, weak instructional supervision, and ineffective communication continue to characterize many programmes. These challenges often discourage adult learners who must balance educational pursuits with work, family, and social responsibilities, leading to reduced participation continuity and high dropout rates.

Additionally, ineffective educational management practices have contributed to irregular academic calendars, inadequate monitoring of learners' academic progress, and insufficient institutional support mechanisms. Such conditions negatively affect adult learners' motivation and commitment, making it difficult for them to remain engaged throughout the duration of their programmes. The gap between expected management efficiency and actual administrative practices has continued to undermine the effectiveness of continuing education programmes and limits their capacity to meet adult learners' needs. Despite the importance of educational management practices to adult education outcomes, much attention has been given to issues of access, curriculum relevance, and learner characteristics, with relatively limited focus on how management practices influence adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes. This lack of focused empirical evidence restricts the ability of educational administrators and policymakers to develop effective management strategies that address the root causes of low retention and programme attrition among adult learners. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is the persistent low participation continuity and poor retention of adult learners in continuing education programmes in Nigeria, which appear to be strongly associated with ineffective educational management practices despite increased enrolment and growing demand for lifelong learning opportunities.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the role of educational management practices in adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To examine educational planning practices and adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes.
2. To determine administrative leadership practices and adult learners' continued engagement.
3. To evaluate instructional supervision practices and adult learners' retention.
4. To investigate learner support services and adult learners' participation and sustained engagement.

5. To assess resource management practices and adult learners' engagement and successful completion of programmes.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the educational planning practices that relate to adult learners' participation and retention?
2. What administrative leadership practices support adult learners' continued engagement in continuing education programmes?
3. What instructional supervision practices help adult learners remain engaged and retained in programmes?
4. What learner support services contribute to adult learners' participation and sustained engagement?
5. What resource management practices facilitate adult learners' engagement and successful completion of programmes?

### Methods and Materials

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design enabled the researchers to collect detailed information from adult learners across multiple centres and to describe the relationship between various management practices and learners' engagement and persistence in continuing education programmes. The study was conducted in selected continuing education centres across Nigeria, covering both urban and semi-urban locations where adult education programmes are actively offered. These centres were chosen due to their large enrolment of adult learners and the diversity of educational management practices implemented in the programmes. The population of the study comprised all adult learners enrolled in continuing education programmes within the selected centres, estimated at 2,000 learners. A sample of 300 adult learners was drawn to ensure adequate representation across age, gender, and educational background, providing a reliable basis for generalization of the findings. The stratified random sampling technique was employed to select respondents. The population was divided into strata based on centre location, and respondents were randomly selected from each stratum. This ensured proportional representation and minimized sampling bias, allowing all subgroups of adult learners to be adequately represented.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire named the Educational Management Practices and Adult Learners' Participation Questionnaire (EMPALPQ). The instrument was developed to cover the key variables of the study, including educational planning practices, administrative leadership practices, instructional supervision practices, learner support services, and resource management practices. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument was validated by three experts: two from the Educational Administration and Planning Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, and one from the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies, all within the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts reviewed the questionnaire for content relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of items. Their feedback was incorporated to ensure that the instrument was suitable for collecting reliable data from adult learners in continuing education programmes. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study conducted with 30 adult learners in a centre not included in the main study. Data from the pilot were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the selected adult learners, with explanations provided where necessary to ensure accurate and complete responses. Data collection was carried out over a period of two weeks, with follow-up visits to maximize the response rate. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and ranking, to summarize the perceptions of adult learners regarding each educational management practice. The decision rule for interpreting the findings was as follows: mean scores of 1.00–2.49 were interpreted as "Disagree," 2.50–3.49 as "Undecided," and 3.50–5.00 as "Agree." This rule was applied consistently across all items to determine the overall perception of adult learners on the contribution of educational management practices to their participation and retention in continuing education programmes.

### Results

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Educational Management Practices and Adult Learners' Participation and Retention**

S/ N	Item Statement	Mea n ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Ra nk	Decisi on
1	Educational planning practices (clear schedules, structured programmes, flexibility)	4.35	0.52	4.00–5.00	1	A

2	Administrative leadership practices (participatory leadership, consistent policies)	4.20	0.60	4.00–5.00	2	A
3	Instructional supervision practices (monitoring, feedback, learner-centered methods)	4.05	0.65	4.00–5.00	3	A
4	Learner support services (counselling, mentoring, academic guidance)	4.00	0.70	4.00–5.00	4	A
5	Resource management practices (instructional materials, qualified facilitators, facilities)	3.90	0.75	3.50–3.99	5	A
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.64</b>	4.00–5.00		<b>A</b>

The findings in Table 1 indicate that all educational management practices examined in this study were rated positively by respondents. Educational planning practices had the highest mean (4.35) and were ranked first, showing that clear schedules, structured programmes, and flexible arrangements are the most significant factors influencing adult learners' participation and retention. Administrative leadership practices (mean = 4.20) and instructional supervision practices (mean = 4.05) were also highly rated, suggesting that participatory leadership, consistent policies, monitoring, and feedback enhance learners' engagement. Learner support services had a mean of 4.00, indicating that counselling and mentoring contribute positively to sustained participation. Resource management practices had the lowest mean (3.90) but still fall within the "Agree" category, highlighting that provision of instructional materials and facilities supports engagement and successful completion. The overall mean of 4.10 confirms that, on aggregate, respondents agree that educational management practices are crucial for adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes. This aligns with the research questions, demonstrating that effective planning, leadership, supervision, support services, and resource management collectively enhance learner engagement and persistence.

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Adult Learners' Responses on Administrative Leadership Practices**

S/ N	Item Statement	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Ra nk	Deci sion
1	Leaders involve adult learners in decision-making processes	4.25	0.55	4.00–5.00	1	A
2	Leaders maintain consistent policies for programme implementation	4.10	0.60	4.00–5.00	2	A
3	Leaders provide guidance and direction to staff and adult learners	4.00	0.65	4.00–5.00	3	A
4	Leaders regularly communicate programme requirements to adult learners	3.95	0.70	3.50–3.99	4	A
5	Leaders encourage a supportive and motivating learning environment for adult learners	3.90	0.72	3.50–3.99	5	A
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.64</b>	4.00–5.00		<b>A</b>

The findings in Table 2 indicate that adult learners generally agree that administrative leadership practices support their continued engagement in continuing education programmes. Involvement in decision-making processes had the highest mean (4.25), showing that adult learners value being part of programme decisions and that this increases their commitment. Consistent policies (mean = 4.10) and guidance from leaders (mean = 4.00) were also rated highly, suggesting that clear direction and structured leadership enhance adult learners' engagement. Communication of programme requirements and fostering a supportive learning environment received slightly lower means (3.95 and 3.90) but remain within the "Agree" category, indicating that adult learners see these practices as important for retention. The overall mean of 4.04 confirms that adult learners perceive administrative leadership practices as key factors in sustaining their participation and engagement in continuing education programmes. This supports the research question, demonstrating that effective leadership creates an enabling environment that motivates adult learners to remain committed to their studies.

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Adult Learners' Responses on Instructional Supervision Practices**

S/ N	Item Statement	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Ra nk	Deci sion
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1	Facilitators are regularly monitored to ensure quality teaching	4.20	0.58	4.00–5.00	1	A
2	Facilitators provide timely feedback on learners' performance	4.10	0.60	4.00–5.00	2	A
3	Learners are engaged through learner-centered teaching methods	4.00	0.65	4.00–5.00	3	A
4	Supervision ensures facilitators follow the planned curriculum	3.95	0.68	3.50–3.99	4	A
5	Facilitators are supported to improve teaching strategies	3.90	0.70	3.50–3.99	5	A
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.64</b>	4.00–5.00		A

The findings in Table 3 indicate that adult learners generally agree that instructional supervision practices help them remain engaged and retained in continuing education programmes. Regular monitoring of facilitators had the highest mean (4.20), showing that adult learners value supervision that ensures teaching quality. Timely feedback on performance (mean = 4.10) and learner-centered teaching methods (mean = 4.00) were also highly rated, suggesting that these practices enhance engagement and learning satisfaction. Ensuring adherence to the curriculum and supporting facilitators to improve teaching strategies received slightly lower means (3.95 and 3.90) but still fall within the "Agree" category, indicating that adult learners see these practices as important for retention. The overall mean of 4.03 confirms that adult learners perceive instructional supervision practices as significant in maintaining engagement and persistence in continuing education programmes. This supports the research question by demonstrating that structured supervision and active instructional support foster an environment that encourages adult learners to remain committed to their studies.

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Adult Learners' Responses on Learner Support Services**

S/ N	Item Statement	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Ra nk	Deci sion
1	Learners receive counselling to address personal and academic challenges	4.15	0.55	4.00–5.00	1	A
2	Mentoring programmes are available to guide learners throughout the course	4.10	0.60	4.00–5.00	2	A
3	Learners are provided with academic guidance and study resources	4.05	0.62	4.00–5.00	3	A
4	Orientation programmes are conducted to familiarize learners with course requirements	3.95	0.65	3.50–3.99	4	A
5	Support services help learners overcome challenges that may affect participation	3.90	0.68	3.50–3.99	5	A
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.62</b>	4.00–5.00		A

The findings in Table 4 indicate that adult learners generally agree that learner support services contribute to their participation and sustained engagement in continuing education programmes. Counselling to address personal and academic challenges had the highest mean (4.15), showing that adult learners value guidance that helps them overcome barriers. Mentoring programmes (mean = 4.10) and academic guidance with study resources (mean = 4.05) were also highly rated, indicating that these services motivate learners to remain engaged. Orientation programmes and general support services received slightly lower means (3.95 and 3.90) but still fall within the "Agree" category, demonstrating that learners perceive these services as important for retention. The overall mean of 4.03 confirms that adult learners view learner support services as essential in maintaining participation and sustained engagement. This supports the research question by highlighting that counselling, mentoring, guidance, and orientation collectively enhance learners' commitment to continuing education programmes.

**Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Adult Learners' Responses on Resource Management Practices**

S/ N	Item Statement	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Ra nk	De cisi on
1	Adequate instructional materials are provided for	4.05	0.60	4.00–5.00	1	A

	learners					
2	Learning facilities and infrastructure support	4.00	0.65	4.00–5.00	2	A
3	Qualified facilitators are available to guide adult learners	3.95	0.68	3.50–3.99	3	A
4	Resources are efficiently allocated to ensure smooth programme delivery	3.90	0.70	3.50–3.99	4	A
5	Learning resources are regularly maintained and updated	3.85	0.72	3.50–3.99	5	A
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.67</b>	3.50–3.99		A

The findings in Table 5 indicate that adult learners generally agree that resource management practices facilitate their engagement and successful completion of continuing education programmes. Provision of adequate instructional materials had the highest mean (4.05), showing that learners value having necessary learning resources. Supportive learning facilities (mean = 4.00) and the availability of qualified facilitators (mean = 3.95) were also rated highly, indicating that these resources enhance engagement and persistence. Efficient allocation and regular maintenance of resources received slightly lower means (3.90 and 3.85) but still fall within the “Agree” category, showing that learners recognize their importance for completing programmes successfully. The overall mean of 3.95 confirms that adult learners perceive effective resource management as essential for engagement and successful completion. This supports the research question by demonstrating that access to materials, facilities, and qualified facilitators creates a conducive learning environment that encourages adult learners to remain committed to their studies.

### Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that structured and flexible educational planning practices, such as clear academic schedules, well-organized course content, and consideration for adult learners’ responsibilities, are critical to participation and retention. The findings are in consonance with the study of Ani, Igwe, and Omole (2022), who posited that well-planned programmes enhance learner engagement and reduce dropout rates. Similarly, Okoroma (2018) observed that poorly planned programmes with rigid schedules discourage adult learners, leading to irregular attendance and withdrawal. The findings of the study revealed that administrative leadership practices such as participatory decision-making, consistent policy implementation and provision of clear guidance encourage adult learners to remain committed to their programmes. The findings are consistent with the study of Momoh and Bamidele (2023), who stated that strong leadership enhances learner persistence and programme coordination. Eze (2020) also noted that leadership practices that provide direction and maintain consistent engagement significantly improve adult learners’ continued participation.

The findings of the study revealed that instructional supervision practices, including regular observation of facilitators, timely feedback, and adoption of learner-centred teaching methods, contribute positively to learners’ engagement and retention. The findings align with Eze (2020), who found that continuous instructional supervision improves teaching quality and learner satisfaction, thereby enhancing retention. Ani, Igwe, and Omole (2022) also reported that instructional supervision ensures adherence to effective teaching strategies, reducing learner frustration and dropout rates. The findings of the study revealed that learner support services such as counselling, mentoring, academic guidance, and orientation programmes significantly improve participation and sustained engagement in continuing education programmes. The findings are in consonance with Ani, Igwe, and Omole (2022), who noted that learner support services reduce attrition by addressing academic and personal challenges. Eze and Okeke (2021) also found that counselling and mentoring motivate adult learners to remain committed to their studies and successfully complete programmes.

The findings of the study revealed that effective management of resources, including availability of instructional materials, learning facilities, and qualified facilitators, enhances learners’ engagement and the likelihood of programme completion. The findings are consistent with Okoroma and Okoroma (2019), who posited that adequate resource management ensures programme efficiency and learner satisfaction. Ani, Igwe, and Omole (2022) also emphasized that efficient allocation of human and material resources directly supports learners’ ability to remain engaged and complete programmes.

### Policy and Practice Implications

The study has important implications for policy and practice in adult and continuing education. First, policymakers and educational administrators can use the findings to design strategies that improve educational planning, ensuring that programmes are structured to accommodate adult learners’ work and family commitments. Second, effective administrative leadership and supervision practices highlighted in the study can inform the development of training and professional development programmes for education managers and facilitators.

Furthermore, the study suggests that institutions should strengthen learner support services such as counselling, mentoring, and academic guidance to enhance participation and retention. Proper resource management, including the provision of instructional materials and qualified facilitators, is essential to creating conducive learning environments that support adult learners' sustained engagement. Generally, the findings underscore the need for evidence-based management practices in adult education. Implementation of these practices can lead to higher learner satisfaction, reduced attrition, and improved programme completion rates, ultimately contributing to lifelong learning, personal development, and national capacity building.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the role of educational management practices in adult and continuing education programmes in Nigeria. The research demonstrates that educational planning, administrative leadership, instructional supervision, learner support services, and resource management significantly affect adult learners' participation and retention. By examining these practices, the study expands understanding of how management strategies can directly shape learner engagement, persistence, and successful programme completion. This study contributes to knowledge by highlighting the practical mechanisms through which educational management practices influence adult learners' outcomes. It shows that careful planning, effective leadership, structured supervision, and adequate learner support can reduce dropout rates and enhance sustained participation in continuing education programmes. Additionally, the research emphasizes the importance of resource allocation, demonstrating that proper management of both human and material resources strengthens programme effectiveness. Hence, by linking educational management practices to adult learners' participation and retention, the study fills a gap in existing literature, which often focuses more on curriculum design, learner characteristics, or access rather than management strategies. This knowledge provides a foundation for further research and offers empirical evidence that can guide the improvement of adult education programmes in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

The study examined the role of educational management practices in adult learners' participation and retention in continuing education programmes in Nigeria. The findings revealed that structured educational planning, effective administrative leadership, instructional supervision, learner support services, and proper resource management significantly contribute to learners' engagement, persistence, and successful completion of programmes. Adult learners were more likely to remain committed when programmes were well-planned, leadership was consistent and participatory, instructional activities were closely supervised, learners received guidance and counselling, and resources were adequately provided. These findings indicate that educational management practices are critical determinants of programme success in adult education. The study also highlights that gaps in planning, leadership, supervision, support services, or resource provision can negatively affect learners' participation and retention. The implications of these findings suggest that deliberate efforts to strengthen management practices can improve adult education outcomes, enhance learner satisfaction, and contribute to lifelong learning and national development.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. Educational planners should ensure that adult education programmes are systematically structured with flexible schedules that accommodate learners' work and family responsibilities.
2. Administrative leaders should adopt participatory and consistent leadership practices to motivate adult learners and maintain high levels of programme engagement.
3. Instructional supervision should be strengthened by regularly monitoring teaching activities and providing timely feedback to facilitators to enhance learners' retention.
4. Institutions should provide comprehensive learner support services, including counselling, mentoring, and academic guidance, to assist adult learners in sustaining participation.
5. Educational institutions should prioritize effective resource management, ensuring that adequate instructional materials, learning facilities, and qualified facilitators are available to support learner engagement and successful programme completion.

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