

# ANDRAGOGY & METHODOLOGIES IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHING METHODS OF CHURCHES IN ILE-IFE AND ILESA METROPOLIS

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## Abstract

*The efforts by the church of seeking for how best to teach or educate its adherents on the message or mission of its founder to the world brought about the idea of Christian education and in particular the Sunday school concept a much narrower term. The Sunday school system is made up of both church teachers and learners or students or pupils as the case may be. The learners include all church members, both old and new, children, teenagers, youths and adults. The adult Sunday school as we have it in the churches today (and as far as Christian education is concerned) should utilize or apply the principles and methods of teaching adults in all adults Sunday school activities. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to better understanding of the impact of Andragogy and methodologies in Christian education of adult Sunday school teaching methods. Multistage sampling procedure was employed to select 154 and 30 sample sizes for the quantitative and qualitative phases respectively in 30 churches in both metropolises. Data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics techniques of mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics of ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis. Finding from this study revealed that there is a significant difference in the post-test Andragogy methodology learning mean score of adult learners exposed to Andragogy learning approach and those not exposed to it. Andragogy approach to learning produce a change in adult learners in the Sunday school classes.*

*It was therefore recommended that, awareness should be created among churches of their need to apply the principles, methods, and methodologies of adult education in the teaching of their adult learners in all adult Sunday school activities.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Church is that group of individuals who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and have openly confessed this faith (Rom. 10:9 – 10). The church thus, is not a building or even a denomination. It is the Body of Christ, composed of every true believer on the Lord Jesus Christ from Pentecost to the rapture (Eph.5. 25 – 30; Heb. 12:22 – 23). Although true believers are commanded by scripture to assemble themselves together in local churches (Heb. 10:25), to be part of the true church is not merely to be religious or to belong to a religious group. It is to possess the life of God in the soul. The believer is made a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

From its very beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the church in Nigeria was faced with the task of conveying its message to its audience. Apart from the usual Sunday sermons preached by trained clergymen the church saw the need to devise a means of how best to convey its message to its audience, or rather how best to educate its adherents on the mission of Christ to the world. Of course the teaching profession is recognised in the Holy Bible as one of the gifts of God to church (Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:7).

The purpose of Christian education is the directing of the process of human development toward God's objectives for man godliness of character and action. It bends its efforts to the end "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:17).

The goal of godliness pre-supposes the experience of regeneration. As education in general begins with physical birth, Christian education proper begins with spiritual rebirth when the life of God is communicated to the soul. To say that Christian education proper begins with the new birth is not, however, to say that it is pointless before regeneration. The student can be provided with necessary awareness of God and responses to His Word so that when the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin, he will readily and with full understanding accept Christ as Savior.

The Bible is the center of the Christian curriculum. The Bible is not only the most important subject matter but also the source of the principles determining the other subject matters and the way in which they are taught. The presentation of biblical truth is thus not confined to a single segment of the curriculum but diffused throughout the teaching of all subjects. The teacher's knowledge of the scriptures control his selection and interpretation of materials and determines his whole perspective on his subject matter. The scriptures possess this privileged status in the curriculum, for they are the primary means of conveying the knowledge of God.

It is adults who shape the world, for good or ill, and it is adult Christians who are called to be salt and light in a dying world. It is adults who vote. It is adults who work and who control the governments, schools, corporations, unions, social groups, charities, and other institutions of our society. It is adults who are called to actively disciple their own families. It is adults who decide the church's priorities and budgets. To teach adults is to be on the firing line of Christian ministry and social change. Adult education is

vital to the church because it is our opportunity to open the Word of God, the textbook of the church, for the people to whom it is ultimately addressed. Hestenes (1991), view that due to the unique characteristics of adult learners, they learn differently than children.

This effort by the church of seeking for how best to educate its adherents on the message or mission of its founder to the world brought about the idea of Christian education and in particular the Sunday school concept a much narrower term. Christian education is everything put together to educate the Christian such as the clergy's sermon, church seminars, conferences, conventions, workshops, etc as well as the Sunday school itself. As the name indicates, the Sunday school is a church school established to operate only on Sundays. The Sunday school system is made up of both church teachers and learners or students or pupils as the case may be. The learners include all church members, both old and new, children, teenagers, youths and adults.

The curriculum used in the Sunday school is the Holy Bible; the recommended texts are also the Holy Bible. The teachers in the Sunday school are the more spiritually matured members of the church who have the gift of teaching according to the Holy Bible and who are supposed to be very knowledgeable in the Holy Bible. There are different types of teachers in the Sunday school, such as adult teachers, youth teachers, teenager teachers and children teachers. The Sunday school is usually headed by a Sunday school director or superintendent who oversees the work of all the Sunday school teachers.

The Sunday school superintendent usually meets with his or her teachers on Saturdays to preview the lessons to be taught on Sundays.

It is usual also for the superintendent to review or summarize the lesson before the general church assembly after all the teachers had rounded up in their various classes at the end of the lesson. This is to ensure that the same ideas are conveyed to all the church members on that particular Sunday. Depending on the size of the church the Sunday school can also be divided into different sections or sub-departments for effective teaching. The larger churches usually have children school, youth school, and adult school each of which are further sub-divided into classes. Each of these three or more schools is supervised by a coordinator of the class teachers under him. But all coordinators report to the Sunday school superintendent who in turn reports to the pastor or minister-in-charge of that local congregation of the church.

It should also be mentioned that the Sunday school is conducted in the church hall and in other available spaces within the church premises depending on the size of the congregation. Generally, the Sunday school meets before the main service and may last for between thirty minutes and one hour depending on the church denomination or local church. Therefore, Sunday school is the main vehicle through which Christian education is conveyed or transmitted to the adherents of the Christian faith. It is against this background that the study becomes relevant.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sunday school classes have been synonymous with the application of different learning method. This application at time make Sunday school unattractive to most adults who have a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction. They resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them while some adult are worried about Sunday school because they don't know what it is.

Lack of understanding of how to facilitate adult learning that may explain why adult students in Sunday school class attend and hear lessons for many years, yet the lessons learned in the teaching are not reflected in their day-to-day lives. Barna(2002) found that only half of church-going adults left church feeling challenged to change. He reported that believers are exposed to many sermons using state of the art technology in a seeker-friendly atmosphere and still are not experiencing any significant change in their personal behavior. Factors contributing to this problem may be attitudes toward adult learning found during the Sunday school service and ministerial training that may lack classes on the educational process and adult learning. Andragogy is the instructional learning activities that are guided purposefully to produce a change in adult students. Knowles (1984). He further Knowles suggested the following four guidelines for educators to effectively teach adults: (a) give adults the reason for learning the lesson before the lesson begins, (b) take into account the great and diverse experiences that adults have, (c) realize that adults are ready and excited about learning which will help them deal with real life, and (d) understand that adult learners are primarily intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically. McKenzie and Harton (2002) posited that there was still some resistance to adoption of adult learning principles in adult religious education due to what they suggested was a reliance on theology over methodology. While religious educators emphasized “the application of theology to life results in religious learning”

Lai (1995) argued that approaches where theology is taught through a teacher-centered lecture need to give way to a model that encourages dialogue with listeners in order to produce individuals that are “biblically literate, critically conscious, and actively involved Christians”. Lai listed two reasons why it is time for a change in the way the Bible is taught in churches.

Lai first reason was that the printed Bible is now available to the people in the pew and they have become enabled independent learners. Lai's second reason related to his view of the changes in the church and society through the expansion in information availability that has left the church and its antiquated educational modalities less functional. Carter (2009) pointed out that preachers are often unaware of the educational realities associate with preaching.

It observed that adults Sunday school learners are not learning because their behavior is not changing. It is believed that the adult Sunday school as they have it in the churches today (and as far as Christian education is concerned) should utilize or apply the principles and methods of teaching adults in adult education as an academic discipline.

III RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the different adult teaching methods applicable to the teaching of adults in church Sunday school in Ile-Ife and Ilesa metropolis
2. Is there a difference in the pre-test and post-test Andragogy methodology learning mean score of adult learners exposed to Andragogy learning approach in Sunday School Classes and those not exposed to it?

**Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in the post-test Andragogy methodology learning mean score of adult learners exposed to Andragogy learning approach in Sunday School Classes and those not exposed to it.

IV METHODOLOGY

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed research design involving quantitative phase, and the qualitative phase. This was adopted for opportunity to provide supplement data to enrich and clarify the core question for this study. Specifically, quasi-experimental (pretest-postest control group design) was used for the quantitative phase, while

case study design was used for the qualitative phase.

The study made use of one experimental group exposed to Andragogy method of teaching adult and other teaching methods of Adult learning; and one control group that was exposed to the regular method of teaching in Sunday school class. This is illustrated as:

Experimental Group -  $O_1 X_1 O_2$

Control Group -  $O_1 X_2 O_2$

Where:

$O_1$  = pre-test for experimental and control groups respectively.

$O_2$  = post- test for experimental and control groups respectively.

Multistage sampling procedure was employed to select 154 and 30 sample sizes for the quantitative and qualitative phases respectively in 30 churches in both metropolis. The instruments used for the study were a close-ended questionnaire tagged to collect quantitative data and follow-up to collect qualitative data. The instruments were administered to 154 participants for the pre-test before the treatment; the same instruments were administered to the same participants after treatment with the assistance of research assistants. The case study design used in the qualitative study included one-on-one interviews with Sunday school teachers. The focus groups and personal interviews were conducted face-to-face in an effort to capture a description of the participants' experiences. This strategy was chosen because it offers a focus on the essence of the participants' experiences in connecting to the teaching. Church congregation was not participating in the study to avoid bias and undue influence on the participants. Data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics techniques of mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics of ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis.

**Analysis**

**Research Question 2:**

Is there a difference in the pre-test and post-test Andragogy methodology learning mean score of adult learners exposed to Andragogy learning approach in Sunday School Classes and those not exposed to it?

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of pre-test, post-test Andragogy Methodology learning mean score of participants.

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Mean difference
Mean	47.0	48.5	
Experimen	8	4	1.46

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	318.596	1	318.596	7.269	.008
Within Groups	6662.262	152	43.831		
Total	6980.857	153			

Control	Frequency	79	79	
	Std. Deviation	6.11	7.99	
	Mean	48.2	45.6	
		7	7	- 2.6
	Frequency	75	75	
	Std. Deviation	4.74	4.76	
		6	6	

Data in Table 1 shows the pre-test and post-test Andragogy methodology learning mean score of participants. For experimental group pre-test (N= 79, mean= 47.08, standard deviation= 6.110) and post-test (N= 79, mean= 48.54, standard deviation= 7.992). For control group pre-test (N= 75, mean= 48.27, standard deviation= 4.746) and post-test (N= 75, mean= 45.67, standard deviation= 4.766).

In response to research question 2, there is a difference in the pre-test and post-test Andragogy learning approach mean score of adult learners exposed to Andragogy methodology approach and those not exposed to it.

Specifically, the mean difference for the experimental group is positive (1.46) while the

control group is negative (-2.6). To test if there is a significant difference in the post-test transformational learning mean score of the two groups, one-way ANOVA statistics was used.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the post-test Andragogy methodology learning mean score of adult learners exposed to Andragogy learning approach in Sunday School Classes and those not exposed to it.

Table 2: One-way ANOVA of Andragogy methodology learning post-test mean for groups  $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 2 shows  $F(1,154) = 7.269$  and a p-value of 0.008. Testing at an alpha value of 0.05, the p-value (0.008) is less than the alpha value. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that 'there is no significant difference in the post-test in Andragogy methodology learning mean score of adult learners exposed to Andragogy learning approach and those not exposed to it' is rejected. This means there is a significant difference in the post-test Andragogy methodology learning mean score of adult learner exposed to Andragogy learning approach and those not exposed to it.

## V DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Finding from this study revealed that superintendent of adult Sunday school programme in Ile-Ife and Ilesa metropolis believed that pedagogues learning styles is also applicable to adult learning styles. No church had used an adult educator to train their teachers about adult education methods and practices. All churches shared the same desire to have an integrated approach and responsibility to impact the truths of the faith to adult who attending the Sunday school. Central to this approach was teaching the content of the Bible on a consistent basis so that people would learn its principles and put them into practice. Resources and materials for learning tended to be chosen by a team responsible for the adult education ministry of the church.

Little of this was delegated, reflecting a desire to maintain continuity, consistency, and quality in material selection. In most cases, the materials or general course content were approved by church leadership. Once approved, the specific course content was determined by the teacher of a given class. For adult education expertise, church leaders had no one person or set of resources to consult. Though each of the church staffs was composed of active readers in the fields of theology, biblical studies, and church management, few were familiar with adult education resources common to the field

The finding revealed that Andragogy approach in teaching adult learners in Sunday school has positive effect on the learner attitude toward learning. The finding shows that there is significance difference between learners who exposed to Andragogy approach and those who continue with traditional approach. This study is in line with study conducted by Ekoto and Gaikwad (2015) the study revealed that majority of respondents agree that their learning satisfaction is somehow related with Andragogy. The inference here is that, though they do not differ by demographics, adult learners overall experience learning satisfaction in an andragogical environment. This finding is also collaborate with study conducted by Mohamed (2013) her finding show that the academic performances of experimental group which was taught by Tutor A with andragogical approach has significantly scored better result in the subject Abnormal Psychology compare those who taught by Tutor B with usual approach.

This finding supported by Siebert (2000) who states that research has shown that adult learners do better in courses where instructors tend to create a relaxed and safe atmosphere, accommodate different learning style, recognise adult learners' uniqueness, validate cultural differences, let learners influence course coverage, match teaching method to content, build on learners' experience, encourage self-motivated learning, include team learning projects, avoid setting up competition, support theory with real-life examples, make learning environment become more interactive, and provide frequent positive feedback. Smith, (2002) found that Andragogy is an approach to learning that is problem-based and collaborative rather than didactic and emphasises more equality between the teacher and learner.

## V CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Andragogy make the distinction difference in teaching and learning of adult learners in Sunday school class. It is time that Sunday school superintendent should understand the importance of Andragogy for adult Christian education. Utilising andragogical methods would enable adult learn in a dignified manner, If Sunday school teacher explore and utilize the concepts from adult learning and communication theory, they will see transformational learning taking in the lives of their adult listeners this would benefit from more intentional integration of adult education principles and practices into their overall strategy for developing adults. The teaching should be a teaching and learning that would stimulate a life change of the learners because adults are eager learners and want not only to learn but to be challenged to change. Awareness should be created among churches of their need to apply the principles, methods, and methodologies of adult education in the teaching of their adult learners and church should include adult education in the training curricula of their pastors, priests, teachers and other church workers.

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