

EFFECTIVENESS OF IDIA RENAISSANCE SKILL ACQUISITION PROGRAMME AMONG WOMEN IN BENIN CITY

Uche Josephine Obidiegwu¹
Nosakhare Richard Erharuyi²

ABSTRACT: The study was carried out to access the activities of Idia renaissance skill acquisition programme in enhancing livelihood among women in Benin City. The need for the study arose as a result of the rising cases of unemployment, poverty, human trafficking, experienced in Benin City. The study was guided by four research questions and three null hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 150 women, 135 of them were adult learners who were registered in the programme, while 15 of them have graduated and established their businesses. The researcher used the entire population for the study because they were readily accessible and manageable, no sampling was done. The data for this study was obtained using a questionnaire. The findings revealed that IRSAP was effective in providing skills in hair dressing, cosmetology and bead making. It was recommended among others that the Government should expand and extend IRSAP programme to all the 18 local governments in the State. Finally, The State Government should continue to assist the trainees with micro credit loan after learning a skill at the Centre. This will encourage many vulnerable people in our society to enrol in the programme.

Keywords: women, renaissance skills, unemployment, poverty, human trafficking

Many young people in Nigeria have basic education but limited access to skills, information, and resources that they require to tackle the myriad of social, health and economic problems they face. This has resulted in the critical situations threatening the survival, development, protection and the participation rights of adolescents and young people in societal development. Toward ensuring the protection of the rights of children, young people and women in Nigeria, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Idia Renaissance, established the Youth Resource Centre in Edo State. Idia renaissance is an organization set up by the Edo State Government for the purpose of building local capacity and empowering children, young people and women with information, skills and services to reduce their vulnerability to child trafficking, sexual exploitation, violence and HIV/AIDS. Idia renaissance was established on the 8th of July 1999. The organization was officially registered with the corporate affairs commission (CAC), on the 22nd of October 2003. It was formally commissioned on the 15th of December 2004.

Idia renaissance is an initiative of Mrs. Eki Igbiniedion (Former Edo State First Lady). It was conceived out of her determined effort to combat the disturbing scourge of human trafficking, prostitution, maternal mortality, drug abuse, cultism, youth restiveness, prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other social and health problems prevalent especially among children, youths and women in the society. It is a non-governmental, non-political, non-religious and non-profit organization working through research, education and enlightenment towards the restoration of the dignity of women, youths and children

¹ Professor, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria, West Africa. E-mail: Ucheobi200@yahoo.com

² Lecturer, Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, West Africa. E-mail: nosakhare.erharuyi@uniben.edu.

in Nigeria. The scourge of human trafficking and its attendant problems have been a major concern for all Edo indigenes both at home and in diaspora. In recent past, Edo State was notorious for human trafficking activities. This situation gave a lot of concern to Mrs Eki Igbinedion who saw this as a challenge. In 1999, she used the programmes of Idia renaissance to rejuvenate and spearheaded the campaign against human trafficking in Nigeria especially in Edo State where the trend was believed to have assumed an unimaginable dimension. It is estimated that over 90% of trafficked persons in Nigeria are from Edo State (UNESCO, 2006).

In Edo State, several NGOs have dedicated themselves to providing assistance to victims of human trafficking through the provision of skills acquisition programmes as a measure to reduce poverty in the State. One of the prominent skill acquisition centres in Benin City was the Idia renaissance skill acquisition programme (IRSAP) on women empowerment. IRSAP empowers victims of human trafficking; vulnerable persons, women and youth organizations involved in skills acquisition and organize income generating activities such as soap making, candle making, paint making, shampoos, hair creams and mattress making. In addition, IRSAP offers trainees skills in hairdressing, cosmetology and bead making. IRSAP adopts a preventive and curative approach in seeking to resolve the problem of human trafficking and other related socio-economic and health issues.

The objectives of the programme include:

1. Eradicating human trafficking
2. Promoting sexual health of women
3. Promoting positive cultural values and eradicating harmful traditional practices against women and children
4. Protecting the fundamental human right of women and children to develop their capacity
5. Advocating for mobilization of relevant organs to promote gender equity and equality
6. Sponsoring and lobbying for legislative framework to fight human trafficking and other social vices
7. Rehabilitating and integrating victims of trafficking into society, equipping youths with information to guide against drug abuse, restiveness, human trafficking, sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS.
8. Promoting legal migration and providing assistance services to voluntary returnees (Igbinedion, 2014).

The ultimate target of the organisation was to help alleviate growing scourge of poverty among women and young people in the state. In this regard, the organization provides loans to several victims of human trafficking through the Edo State Micro Credit Scheme, the United Nations Office on drugs and crime (UNODC), United Nations Inter-Regional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), Micro Credit Programmes. IRSAP collaborated with Microfinance Banks, Philanthropist and well-meaning individuals to establish businesses for young girls and women.

One of the most fundamental imperatives for ensuring and fostering development is helping women to evolve the necessary capacity to meet their basic needs. Such needs include skill development, job creation, education, health, environmental sanitation among others. How to empower women so as to improve their lives and meet their basic needs for enhanced livelihood remains a major challenge in contemporary society. Enhanced livelihood connotes that the needed capabilities, assets and activities to enjoy better quality of life are strengthened (Adepoju & Olawuyi, 2012). In this study, enhanced livelihood includes provision of skill acquisition centres and programmes by promoting self-reliance skills among women. It includes promotion of health care services and reduction of poverty among women in Edo State. The growth and development of the economy depend largely on the kind of skills that the women and youths are equipped with. This underscores emphasis and interest in skill acquisition programme for women and youth in Edo State.

Skill acquisition is a process used to equip individuals or a group of individuals with training that can lead to self-sustenance. Skill acquisition is the manifestation of idea and knowledge through training, which is geared towards inculcating in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship needed for meaningful development (Donli, cited in Ikon, 2004). It involves training of people in different trades. The acquisition and effective utilization of these skills would enable the beneficiaries to become self-reliant and economically independent. It is based on this fact that this study strives to determine the effectiveness of IRSAP in enhancing livelihood among women in Benin City. Effectiveness is one of the vital keys to successful management of every organisation. According to Obiiegwu (2014), effectiveness means completing a task appropriately by fitting the square pegs in square holes and round pegs in round holes. IRSAP effectiveness refers to its ability to provide veritable skills for enhancing the livelihood of women in Benin City. The respondents to this study were literate (Qualification above O' level) and non – literate (Qualification below O' level) women involved in IRSAP who may differ in their responses on how effective IRSAP has been in enhancing the livelihood of women. The two groups may differ in their responses because of their perceptive level. Hence, the researcher used the two groups to determine how effective IRSAP is in providing specified skills for women in Benin City.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major challenges every responsive government must be concerned with is how to make life better and more meaningful for citizens. Edo State government has approached the problem of poverty by using different policies and programmes to reduce the challenge. However, despite the efforts made by the Edo State government using IRSAP, many Edo youths and women are presently unemployed and poor (Oyitso & Orobator, 2005). More worrisome is that there are still incidences of trafficking and re-trafficking among the populace. This unsatisfactory situation affects the health and wellbeing of the people; hence, so many die untimely. It is, therefore, the aim of this study to assess the effectiveness of IRSAP in enhancing the livelihood of the people of Edo State so that gaps in actualizing the objectives of the programme could be identified for subsequent filling of such gap through appropriate planning and decision taking.

Purpose of the Study

The study assessed the effectiveness of Idia Renaissance skill acquisition programme in enhancing livelihood among women in Benin City. Specifically, the study assessed the effectiveness of IRSAP in:

1. Providing skills on hairdressing among women
2. Providing skills on cosmetology among women
3. Providing skills on bead making among women
4. Determining the possible strategies for improving Idia renaissance skill acquisition programme.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How effective is IRSAP in providing skills on hairdressing among women?
2. How effective is IRSAP in providing skills on cosmetology among women?
3. How effective is IRSAP in providing skills on bead making among women?
4. What are the strategies that could be used for improving the Idia Renaissance skill acquisition programme?

Hypotheses

The following three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H1: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women on the effectiveness of IRSAP in —providing skills on hairdressing among women in Benin City.

H2: Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the effectiveness of IRSAP in providing skills on cosmetology among women in Benin City.

H3: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women on the effectiveness of IRSAP in providing skills on bead making among women in Benin City.

Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to Benin City where IRSAP is located. IRSAP runs five departments, namely: Computer, Catering and Hotel Management, Fashion Designing and Tailoring, Hairdressing, Cosmetology and Bead making, and Videography and Photography Department. This study is focused specifically on the effectiveness of IRSAP in enhancing acquisition of skills on Hairdressing, Cosmetology and Bead making among women in order to enhance their livelihood. It also focused on the strategies that

could be used for improving the Idia Renaissance skill acquisition programme in Benin City.

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study consist of all female apprentices who are currently enlisted in the Department of Hairdressing, Cosmetology and Bead making, under the platform of IRSAP in Benin City. The population of the study consisted of 150 women, 135 of them were adult learners who were registered in the programme, while 15 of them have graduated and established their businesses. The researcher used the entire population for the study because they were readily accessible and manageable; no sampling was done. The data for this study were obtained using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was organised into five sections. The items in the questionnaire were structured using the modified Likert scale comprising four levels of measurement; strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. It was validated by two lecturers in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Benin.

The Cronbach alpha approach of estimating reliability was used to ascertain the reliability coefficient of the instrument. (See attached Appendix D, pages 26 - 29). A correlation index of 0.79 was obtained for hairdressing variables, an index of 0.86 was obtained for cosmetology variables, while 0.62 was obtained for bead making variables and 0.75 for IRSAP strategies' variables. An overall reliability index of 0.79 was obtained for all the variables. Cronbach alpha was used because there are multiple likert items in the questionnaire that forms a scale and the researcher wishes to determine if the scale was reliable. Mean and t-test statistics were adopted for answering research questions and testing the hypotheses respectfully. Hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. 2.5 mean value was used, a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree, while values 2.49 and below were regarded as disagree. A null hypothesis was accepted when the t-cal is less than the t- critical and rejected when t-cal is equal to or greater than t-critical at 0.05 level of significance.

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory refers to the experience of personal growth and an improvement in self-definition that occurs as a result of the development of capabilities and proficiencies (Staples, 1990). This theory can be applied to community development by empowering the people within the community to develop their own community. Similarly, it brings about individual empowerment. As people gain skills in assessing their needs, it will help them to set their priority right and take control of their environment (Kreuter, Lezin & Young, cited in Elekwa, 2019). The empowerment theory is related to this study, because it lays emphasis on individual empowerment by gaining skills that will enable people to assess their needs and take control of their environment. In line with this theory, IRSAP has empowered many women with hairdressing, cosmetology and bead making skills which has really improved their livelihood. Interestingly, many of these women empowered, have established their businesses and are now training others in many veritable skills, thereby contributing to the growth of their communities.

Results

Research Question One

How effective is IRSAP in providing skills on hairdressing among women?

Table 1

Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Effectiveness of IRSAP in Providing Skills on Hairdressing among Women

N = 150

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remark
1	IRSAP has enabled me to learn weaving skill	3.20	.65	Agree
2	IRSAP has enabled me to learn braiding skill	3.42	.78	Agree
3	IRSAP has enabled me to learn hair colouring skill	3.07	.57	Agree
4	IRSAP has enabled me to learn hair styling skill	3.01	.74	Agree
5	IRSAP has enabled me to learn barbing skill	2.07	.77	Disagree
Cluster Mean		2.95		Agree

Table 1 indicates a grand mean of 2.95. It shows that following the decision rule of 2.50 as the criterion mean, the respondents agreed that IRSAP was effective in facilitating the learning of skill of hairdressing which would enhance their livelihood. However, item 5 with a mean point of 2.07 shows that IRSAP was not effective in facilitating barbing skill. The value of the SD equally shows similar responses among the respondents, hence less deviation from the mean.

Research Question Two

How effective is IRSAP in providing skills on cosmetology among women?

Table 2

Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Effectiveness of IRSAP in Providing Skills on Cosmetology among Women

N = 150

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remark
6	IRSAP has enabled me to learn facial make up skill	2.93	.57	Agree
7	IRSAP has enabled me to learn facial treatment skill	3.07	.57	Agree
8	IRSAP has enabled me to learn eyelash fixing skill	3.20	.65	Agree
9	IRSAP has enabled me to learn pedicure skill	3.40	.71	Agree
10	IRSAP has enabled me to learn manicure skill	3.64	.63	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.27		Agree

Table 2 indicates a grand mean of 3.27. It shows that following the decision rule of 2.50 as the criterion mean, the respondents agreed that IRSAP was effective in facilitating the learning of skill of cosmetology, which would enhance their livelihood.

Research Question Three

How effective is IRSAP in providing skills on bead making among women?

Table 3

Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Effectiveness of IRSAP in Providing Skills on bead making among Women.

N = 150

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remark
11	IRSAP has enabled me to design different traditional attire.	3.40	.57	Agree
12	IRSAP has enabled me to use bead to design different traditional caps	3.07	.71	Agree
13	IRSAP has enabled me to learn necklace beading skill	2.93	.65	Agree
14	IRSAP has enabled me to use bead to design different kinds of shoes	2.93	.71	Agree
15	IRSAP has enabled me to learn purse bead weaving skill	2.80	.63	Agree
16	IRSAP has enabled me to use bead to design earrings	2.98	.57	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.0		Agree

Table 3 indicates a grand mean of 3.02. It shows that following the decision rule of 2.50 as the criterion mean, the respondents agreed that IRSAP was effective in facilitating the learning of skill of bead making which would enhance their livelihood.

Research Question Four

What are the strategies that could be used for improving Idia Renaissance skill acquisition programme?

Table 4

Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Strategies for improving Idia Renaissance Skills Acquisition Programme

N = 150

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remark
17	Creation of awareness on the activities of IRSAP.	3.01	.53	Agree
18	Regular training and proper remuneration of the trainers.	3.40	.71	Agree
19	Encouraging donor agencies to assist IRSAP by providing equipment and helping in establishing the trainees after learning a skill at the centre	3.20	.54	Agree
20	Provision of necessary facilities for IRSAP trainees by Government.	3.54	.50	Agree
21	Providing financial assistance to IRSAP by Traditional rulers	3.27	.57	Agree
22	Provision of necessary micro credit loan for IRSAP trainees by Government.	3.73	.44	Agree
23	Provision of necessary equipment for IRSAP by Government.	3.33	.47	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.36		Agree

Table 4 indicates a grand mean of 3.36. This implies that the respondents agreed that all the identified strategies would improve the IRSAP programme for enhancing the livelihood of women in Benin City.

Hypotheses Testing

The results for testing of hypotheses 5, 6 and 7 are shown in Table 5, 6 and 7 below.

H01: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women on the effectiveness of IRSAP in —providing skills on hairdressing among women in Benin City.

Table 5

The t-test Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Literate and Non-Literate Women on the Effectiveness of IRSAP in Providing Skills on Hairdressing among Women in Benin City

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
Literate women	111	9.23	3.71	148	1.72	.086	Accepted
Non-Literate women	39	8.00	4.18				

P < 0.05

Table 5 shows that the t-value is 1.72, degree of freedom (df) is 148, while the level of significance is 0.086 which is greater than the set alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women on the effectiveness of IRSAP in providing skills on hairdressing among women in Benin City.

H02: Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the effectiveness of IRSAP in providing skills on cosmetology among women in Benin City.

Table 6

The t-test Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Literate and Non-Literate Women on the Effectiveness of IRSAP in Providing Skills on Cosmetology among wWomen in Benin City

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
Literate women	111	9.29	3.80	148	1.89	.060	Accepted
Non-Literate women	39	8.05	2.57				

P < 0.05

Table 6 shows that the t-value is 1.89, degree of freedom (df) is 148, while the level of significance is 0.060 which is greater than the set alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This shows that Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the effectiveness of IRSAP in providing skills on cosmetology among women in Benin City.

H03: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women on

the effectiveness of IRSAP in providing skills on bead making among women in Benin City.

Table 7

The t-test Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Literate and Non-Literate Women on the Effectiveness of IRSAP in Providing Skills on Hairdressing among Women in Benin City

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
Literate women	111	9.27	3.19	148	1.36	.176	Accepted
Non-Literate women	39	8.46	3.20				

P < 0.05

Table 7 shows that the t-value is 1.36, degree of freedom (df) is 148, while the level of significance is 0.176 which is greater than the set alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of Literate (Qualification above O' level) and non-literate (Qualification below O' level) women on the effectiveness of IRSAP in providing skills on bead making among women in Benin City.

Discussion of Findings

Findings in Table 1 indicated that IRSAP was effective in facilitating the learning of hairdressing among women in Benin City. This implies that most women have acquired the skill of hairdressing; hence, some of them used for the study have established hairdressing shops. This made it possible for them to earn some income and as a result, enhance their livelihood. The findings of this study are interesting because according to Olomukoro and Aghedo (2015), a family where a woman earns an income is more sustainable than a household where a woman has no source of income. Olomukoro and Aghedo (2015) also opined that non – formal education provides women and girls with vocational skills that will make them self - reliant, self - employed and economically independent. This can raise their economic status and free them from being trafficked and enable them to live a rewarding life.

The result of findings in Table 2 revealed that IRSAP is effective in providing skills in cosmetology. A majority of the respondents agreed that they acquired cosmetology skills taught at the centre. Findings also revealed that some of the respondents who were graduates from the centre have established their businesses and are also training other people. Aruma (2004) supported this view when he said that non – formal education programmes provide skills and training for women, girls and youths to enable them utilize their potentials and capabilities to the fullest for improvement of life and to solve their immediate and general problems. Such skills acquired can enhance gainful employment and also promote self - employment among the people. This is of interest

because it is hoped that this programme will build families and empower the State and most of the social ills will be stories of the past.

The result of findings in Table 3 showed that a majority of the respondents agreed that IRSAP was effective in imparting bead making skill; this can be attributed to the efficient and effective way the centre is being managed. This is in line with Obidiegwu (2014) who was of the view that success in any programme requires both efficiency and effectiveness of all stakeholders.

The result of findings in Table 4 revealed that the following strategies will improve the activities of IRSAP. They are creation of awareness on the activities of IRSAP, regular training and proper remuneration of the trainers, encouraging donor agencies to assist IRSAP by providing equipment and helping in establishing the trainees after learning a skill at the centre, provision of necessary facilities for IRSAP trainees, provision of micro loan for IRSAP trainees and provision of necessary equipment for IRSAP which requires huge amount of money. This implies that the government has the main responsibility for financing programmes such as IRSAP. Funding such programme demands favourable budgetary allocation. According to Aghedo (2019), poor budgetary allocation hinders effective implementation of programmes in Nigeria.

The result of findings in Table 5, 6 and 7 showed that literate and non- literate women in the programme do not differ in their responses on the effectiveness of IRSAP. This may be as a result of the way the programmes are organized, vocational skills are combined with literacy skills, and this has helped the non – literate participants to become empowered literates. This affirmed the view of Kazeem and Aghedo (2015) that non – formal education programmes can become the tool for girls, women and youths to acquire the relevant knowledge and make them literates.

Conclusion

IRSAP is effective in equipping women with veritable skills for improved livelihood and empowerment. One of the most fundamental imperatives for ensuring and fostering development is helping women to evolve the necessary capacity to meet their basic needs. Such needs include skill development, job creation, education, health, environmental sanitation among others.

Recommendations

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

- 1 Government of Edo State should expand and extend IRSAP programme to all the areas in the State. Presently, there is an increased demand for skill acquisition at the centre, however, only 200 participants can be admitted at a time
- 2 IRSAP should improve the effectiveness of the 22 respondents in facilitating barbing skill. This is because barbing skill enables an individual to earn his/her living and improve livelihood. Many other veritable skills can be integrated into the existing ones.

- 3 The State Government should continue to assist the trainees with micro credit loans after learning a skill at the centre. This will encourage many vulnerable people in our society to enroll in the programme
- 4 There should be budgetary allocation from the State Government to the centre in order to guarantee continuity of the programme. Donor agencies should continue to assist IRSAP by providing equipment and helping in establishing the trainees after learning a skill at the centre
- 5 The relevant stakeholders should always combine literacy education with vocational skills at skill acquisition centres, this will enable the non – literate trainees to cope easily with the training, equip them with knowledge that will enable them to withstand the pressure of being exploited by others and provide them with all - round empowerment.

References

- Adepoju, A. A., & Olawuyi, S.O. (2012). Effects of livelihood activities on food security among farmers in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. *Advances in agriculture & biotronics. Journal of the Bioflux Society* 1(4), 112 – 121.
- Aghedo, F. U. (2019). Assessment of the resources for the implementation of adult literacy education programmes in South – South Nigeria (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Benin, Benin City.
- Aruma, E. O. (2004). Report of sustainable development. Development Emending workshop from 13th – 14th Sept. Warri, Delta State.
- Igbinedion, E. (2014). *Idia renaissance: Restoring hope and dignity to humanity*. <https://www.Idia-renaissance.org>.
- Ikon, M. A. (2019). Economic diversification of Nigeria and small and medium scale enterprise (SME) development (2000 – 2017). *European Journal of Business and management* 11(14), 19 – 25.
- Kazeem, K. K., & Aghedo, F.U. (2015). Functional literacy as a tool for poverty alleviation and rural development in Nigeria. *Journal of Nigerian National Council for Adult Education*, 20(1), 137 – 147.
- Obidiegwu, U. J. (2014). Management in adult education. In J.U. Obidiegwu & W. E Obiozor (Eds.), *Adult learning: Towards human development throughout lifespan* (pp. 27 – 77). Rex Charles & Patrick
- Olomukoro, C., & Aghedo, F. U. (2015). Non – formal education in the context of Education for All (EFA): —Issues and Prospects. *Journal of Educational Studies and Management* 3(1&2), 47-56.
- Oyitso, M. O. & Orobator, O. F. (2005). Skill acquisition programmes as empowerment tools for women in Edo State. *CARESON, Journal of Research and Development* 4(1), 167-177.
- UNESCO (2006). Education for All; Literacy for life; EFA global monitoring report, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org>.