Emerging facilitation methods: Identifying training needs among adult education facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria

Funmilola E. Akinyooye

Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
Email: ojofunmiloa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining the emerging facilitation methods by identifying the training needs among adult learners' facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria. Three specific objectives and research questions are achieved and answered, respectively. The study employed a descriptive research design. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select ninety-nine adult learners' facilitators. A self-designed questionnaire, which was validated by experts, was used to obtain information from the respondents. A simple percentage was used to analyze the generated data. The empirical findings indicated that the sampled facilitators are aware of emerging facilitation methods, which include blended learning, gamification, micro-learning, virtual reality, augmented reality, adaptive learning, social learning, and personal learning networks. It revealed that the available emerging facilitation methods have helped facilitators to make learning more interactive, competitive, and enjoyable, as well as enabling them to connect and collaborate with individual learners beyond the facilitation venue. It also indicated the need for adult learners' facilitators to learn the components of the emerging facilitation methods, master time management, and acquire digital skills, among others. The study concluded that awareness and utilization of emerging facilitation methods among adult learners' facilitators will go a long way to revolutionize adult learning, fostering a more engaging, personalized, and collaborative learning environment.

Keywords: *Adult learners, Emerging facilitation methods, Facilitators, Training needs, Oyo State, Nigeria.*

Highlights of this paper
- The paper showed that adult learners facilitators are aware of the emrging facilion methods.
- The paper also revealed that usage of the emerging facilitation methods made facilitation to be interactive and interesting.
- The paper showed that there is a need for the facilitators to be trained on the emerging facilitation methods in the areas of time management, acquisition of digital skills and evaluation of the learners.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adult learners' facilitators are key components of any adult education program or activity. This is because they actively engage the learners in the process of acquiring knowledge, mastering a skill, and imbibing a positive attitude to achieve their needs. They are saddled with the responsibility of guiding the learners in the class by making use of appropriate facilitation skills and techniques in the attainment of learning objectives. There are various methods which have been used in achieving this task by the facilitators. Some of them include each one teach one, participatory approach, group discussion, role play, and lecture method. These methods have been employed in adult literacy classes organized in Nigeria and in Oyo State in particular. Some of these methods have their advantages and disadvantages, and this has made scholars recommend a combination of one or two of them to maximize the benefits and outcomes of using them.

Adult education is a practice that promotes learner-centeredness and takes into consideration individual learners' unique differences and needs during facilitation. Over the years, with the use of technology in adult learners' facilitation, emerging facilitation methods have emphasized the growing recognition of the importance of learner-centered approaches, interactivity, technology in education, and professional development. As technology continues to advance, further innovations and refinements in training methodologies are expected to meet the evolving needs of learners in the future. Some of these new facilitation and training methods include personal learning networks (PLNs), blended learning, adaptive learning, social learning, gamification, virtual reality, and social learning. This paper seeks to examine the awareness, usage, and training needs of adult facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria, as a result of these emerging training methods in a digitalized economy.

New facilitation methods are evolving with advancements made in the use of technology for education and training. These methods have positive impacts because most of them promote learner-centeredness, interactivity, and consider individual differences among learners. However, for these methods to positively influence adult learners, facilitators must have adequate knowledge about them and acquire the requisite skills to use them effectively, making their work easier, motivating, captivating, and impactful. There is a need to investigate the level of knowledge of adult facilitators regarding these new facilitation methods and to identify their training needs, enabling them to positively impact their learners with emerging methods. Several studies have been conducted on adult learners' facilitators and training, including Toward Effective Facilitation for Adult Learners: An Action Research Study on the Design and Delivery of Workshops for Women Business Owners (Glova, 2018), Training Design Facilitation Framework for Adult Education: An Application of Andragogy (Aliping & Parcasio, 2018), and Training Needs Assessment of Nigerian Civil Service Workers (Ojo & Chukwudeh, 2016), applying principles of andragogy to training programmes in organizations (Akinyooye & Fajimi, 2022). However, attention has not been fully directed towards exploring emerging facilitation methods and training needs of the facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the need for this study.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The study's broad objective was to explore emerging facilitation methods and training needs of facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria, while the specific objectives are to.

i.   Assess the level of awareness of the emerging adult facilitation methods among facilitators in Oyo state, Nigeria.

ii. Examine the frequency of usage of emerging facilitation methods by adult facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria.

iii. Investigate the training needs of facilitators regarding the use of emerging digital training methods for adult learners' facilitation in Oyo State, Nigeria.

1.2. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

i.   What is the level of awareness of emerging adult facilitation methods among facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria?

ii. What is the frequency of usage of the emerging facilitation methods by the adult facilitators in Oyo State, Nigeria?

iii. What are the training needs of facilitators regarding the use of emerging digital training methods for adult learners' facilitation?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. This research design focuses on providing a vivid picture of the effectiveness or otherwise of the emerging facilitation methods coupled with the training needs. It seeks to answer questions about what exists, how things are currently structured, and what characteristics define the subject of study.

2.2. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

All ninety-nine adult learners' facilitators across all the literacy centers in thirty-three local government areas of Oyo State, Nigeria, formed the population. All of them were purposively sampled. Owing to the fact that they are in a position to profit from the existing training opportunities aimed at enhancing their knowledge to embrace emerging facilitation methods in the course of evaluating, monitoring, and implementing. However, each local government has three facilitators recruited by the Oyo State Agency for Adult and Non-Formal Education.

2.3. Instrument, Validity and Reliability

A self-designed quantitative instrument titled 'Training Needs on the Emerging Facilitation Methods among Adult Learners' Facilitators Questionnaire (TNEFALFQ)' was used to elicit information from the sampled respondents. This instrument was validated by an expert in the field of educational measurement and evaluation. A reliability test was conducted by administering the instrument to twenty adult facilitators in Osun State, Nigeria, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .78, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

2.4. Method of Data Administration and Analysis

The instrument was administered to adult learners' facilitators across thirty-three Local Government Areas of Oyo State, Nigeria. This was done with the aid of trained research assistants who were familiar with the terrain of the research coverage. The generated data were analyzed using simple percentages. However, seventy well-filled questionnaires were used for data analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics showing the distribution of respondents on the basis of gender, age, marital status, academic qualifications, cadre and years in service.

Gender	Female 39 (55.7%)			Male 31(44.3%)	
Age	20-30 yrs. 10(14.3%)	31 –40 yrs. 38(54.3%)	41 –50 yrs. 15(21.4%)	51-60 yrs. 6(8.6%)	61 yrs. and above 1(1.4%)
Marital status	Single 6(8.6%)	Married 57(81.4%)			Others7(10%)
Academic qualification	NCE/OND 7(10%)	Degree 46(65.7%)		Masters 17(24.3%)	Ph.D. 0(0.0%)
Cadre	Casual staff 26(37.1%)		Permanent staff 44(62.8%)		
Years in service	1-5 yrs. 42(60%)	6 -10 yrs. 22(31.4%)	11-14 yrs.4(5.7%)	15 yrs and above 2(2.9%)	

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Table 1 indicated that thirty-nine (39) of the participants, which represented 55.7%, were female, while the remaining thirty-one (31), which amounted to 44.3%, were male. This shows that the literacy centers under consideration have a higher number of female instructors compared with their male counterparts. Regarding age, ten (10), thirty-eight (38), fifteen (15), six (6), and one (1), which accounted for 14.3%, 54.3%, 21.4%, 8.6%, and 1.4%, respectively, were between 20-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, 51-60 years, and 61 years and above. This suggests that the majority of the sampled respondents were between 31-40 years of age. Concerning marital status, six (6) participants were single, fifty-seven (57) claimed they were married, while seven (7) stated they were neither married nor single. This indicates that the majority of facilitators working with the literacy centers under investigation were married. Regarding educational qualifications, seven (7), forty-six (46), and seventeen (17) accounted for 10%, 65.7%, and 24.3%, respectively, claiming to have NCE/OND, first degree, and master's as their highest academic qualifications, with none holding a PhD. Out of seventy (70) participants involved in this study, twenty-six (26), representing 37.1%, were casual staff, while the remaining forty-four (44) were permanent employees of the adult literacy agency at the study location. Finally, forty-two (42), which was the majority, had spent between 1-5 years working with the literacy agency, followed by twenty-two (22) who had spent between 6-10 years. Four (4) and two (2) participants claimed they had worked between 11-14 years and 15 years and above with the agency.

3.2. Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of emerging facilitation techniques among facilitators in literacy centers in Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 2. Descriptive statistics showing the level of awareness of the emerging facilitation techniques among respondents.

Items on awareness	Very aware	Aware	Somewhat aware	Not aware	Mean	St. dev.
Blended learning	31(44.3%)	27(38.6%)	2(2.9%)	0(0.0%)	3.06	0.71
Gamification	12(17.2%)	28(40%)	15(21.4%)	15(21.4%)	2.73	0.59
Micro learning	28(40%)	38(54.3%)	3(4.3%)	1(1.4%)	3.18	0.73
Virtual reality	24(34.3%)	36(51.4%)	6(8.6%)	4(5.7%)	3.06	0.71
Augmented reality	20(28.6%)	23(32.9%)	15(21.4%)	12(17.1%)	3.12	0.76
Adaptive learning	28(40%)	38(54.3%)	3(4.3%)	1(1.4%)	3.18	0.73
Social learning	31(44.3%)	27(38.6%)	2(2.9%)	0(0.0%)	3.06	0.71
Personal learning networks	24(34.3%)	36(51.4%)	6(8.6%)	4(5.7%)	3.06	0.71

Table 2 indicated that there was awareness of blended learning, gamification, micro-learning, virtual reality, augmented reality, adaptive learning, social learning, and personal learning network as emerging facilitation techniques among facilitators with mean values greater than the threshold of 2.50. This is to say that instructors are aware of a range of cutting-edge methods that can improve the quality of instruction. One such method is blended

learning, which combines online and traditional in-person training. This method appears to be useful in fostering flexibility and individualized learning by enabling learners to benefit from the advantages of both modes. Another emerging method that facilitators are aware of is gamification, which involves utilizing elements of game design to engage learners. Gamification has the potential to enhance student motivation and engagement through the integration of features such as interactive challenges, competition, and rewards. Another well-recognized strategy is microlearning, which divides instruction into more manageable, shorter bursts to fit learners' attention spans and hectic schedules.

This is in accordance with previous studies by Rovai, Wighting, and Lucking (2022), who submitted that the majority of academic leaders were aware of and believed that blended learning, as an emerging method, was important for achieving the institution's long-term goals. In their literature review, Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2020) also corroborated that learning professionals were aware that gamification increased learners' engagement. Other adaptive emerging facilitation techniques that learning professionals were aware of and gain popularity as supported by the empirical findings of this research include micro-learning (Lloyd, Boyle, & Fyfe, 2022) virtual and augmented reality (Dunleavy & Dede, 2022; Merchant, Goetz, & Keeney-Kennicutt, 2022) adaptive learning (Vie & Abdel-Salam, 2022) social learning (Hart, 2022) and personal learning networks (International Society for Technology in Education, 2022).

Borges do Nascimento et al. (2023) demonstrated that psychological obstacles, workload-related worries, and infrastructural and technological problems are crucial barriers to the organization's workers' full and holistic adoption of digital technology. Conversely, implementing training, assessing employees' levels of usefulness and desire to use, and providing incentives to various stakeholders are essential facilitators to enhance employee adoption of digital interventions in the workplace.

Research Question 2: What is the usage of emerging facilitation techniques among facilitators in literacy centers in Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 3. Descriptive statistics showing the level of usage of emerging facilitation techniques among facilitators in literacy centers in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Items on usage	Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Mean	Std. dev.
Combining traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning components.	12(17.1%)	8(11.4%)	35(50%)	2(2.9%)	10(14.3%)	2.41	0.48
Introducing game-like elements that make learning more interactive, competitive, and enjoyable.	8(11.4%)	35(50%)	15(21.4%)	6(8.6%)	6(8.6%)	2.51	0.49
Breaking down learning into small sizes that focus on specific topics, delivered through various digital formats like videos.	28(40%)	38(54.3%)	3(4.3%)	1(1.4%)	0(0%)	3.18	0.73
Creating a computer-generated environment that simulates real-world scenarios.	3(4.3%)	5(7.1%)	5(7.1%)	25(35.7%)	32(45.7%)	1.78	0.39
Overlaying digital content onto the real world.	28(40%)	38(54.3%)	3(4.3%)	1(1.4%)	0(0%)	3.18	0.73
Using data-driven algorithms to personalize the learning experience based on individual learners' needs and performance.	12(17.1%)	8(11.4%)	35(50%)	2(2.9%)	10(14.3%)	2.41	0.48
Leveraging the power of social interaction and collaboration for facilitation by creating learning communities and online discussion groups.	12(17.1%)	8(11.4%)	35(50%)	2(2.9%)	10(14.3%)	2.41	0.48
Connecting and collaborating with individual learners who share similar interests or professional goals.	28(40%)	38(54.3%)	3(4.3%)	1(1.4%)	0(0%)	3.18	0.73

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Table 3 indicated that the facilitators under investigation claimed that most of the time they usually introduce games with the notion of making the teaching-learning process more interactive and enjoyable, with a mean value of 2.51, which was greater than the threshold mean of 2.50. The findings further revealed that these emerging facilitation techniques are used among literacy facilitators to break learning into small sizes, overlay digital content onto the real world, and connect and collaborate with adult learners, with mean values of 3.18, which was higher than the threshold value of 2.50. On the other hand, the findings indicated that there was a low level of usage of emerging facilitation techniques in the course of combining traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning components, the ability to create computer-generated environments that stimulate real-world scenarios, and the application of data-driven algorithms to personalize the learning experience based on individual learners' needs and performance, with mean values of 2.41, 1.78, and 2.41, respectively, which were less than the threshold of 2.50.

The findings indicate that facilitators are effectively utilizing emerging techniques to make the teaching-learning process more interactive and enjoyable. With a mean value of 2.51, exceeding the threshold of 2.50, it is clear that facilitators are successfully introducing games to achieve this goal. This approach not only engages learners but also creates a conducive learning environment.

The results also demonstrate the successful use of new facilitation strategies across a range of domains. With mean values of 3.18, facilitators are effectively interacting and working with adult learners, breaking down learning into smaller chunks, and superimposing digital information onto the physical environment. This implies that educators are utilizing technology to establish a more engaging and cooperative educational environment.

With mean values of 2.41, 1.78, and 2.41, respectively, these areas fall below the threshold of 2.50, suggesting that facilitators could further improve the learning experience by more effectively integrating technology and personalization. However, the findings also identified areas for improvement: the use of emerging facilitation techniques is lower when combining traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning components, employing data-driven algorithms to personalize the learning experience, and creating computer-generated environments that simulate real-world scenarios.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Almarabeh and AbuAli (2020), who discovered that gamification, an emerging facilitation technique, can boost student enthusiasm and engagement. According to Cakir and Erdem (2018), using augmented reality (AR) in the classroom can improve learning outcomes and spark students' interest in STEM subjects. Additionally, Wang and Chen (2019) reaffirmed that using data-driven algorithms as a new approach to the teaching-learning process can improve student accomplishment and learner satisfaction. Additional academics endorsed the effectiveness of blended learning, which blends online and conventional in-person training (Sanni & Aransi, 2024; Singh & Singh, 2019; Zhang, Wang, & Liu, 2020).

Digital technologies have changed the scope and nature of both formal and informal learning contexts, as proven by Gaol and Prasolova-Førland (2022). This is because new opportunities for enhancing education have been made possible by the emergence of disruptive and flexible technological innovations, such as blockchain, software applications, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), smart devices, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and devices.

Contrary to expectations, research by Ritzhaupt and Buechele (2018) revealed that incorporating games into classroom instruction did not necessarily lead to increased student motivation or engagement. The study argued that other elements, such as student autonomy and instructor support, might be more important in influencing student involvement. Koehler and Mishra (2013) acknowledged that the implementation of innovative technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, does not automatically translate to enhanced learning results. Instead, a complex

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interplay of factors, including teacher preparedness, pedagogical strategies, and contextual considerations, ultimately determines the efficacy of technology-driven education.

The digital transformation of a school is directly tied to its socioeconomic situation. According to Di Pietro, Biagi, Costa, Karpiński, and Mazza (2020), schools located in underprivileged, rural, or disadvantaged locations might not have the digital infrastructure and ability necessary to adjust to the usage of digital technologies during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Vuorikari, Punie, and Cabrera (2020), digital technology helped schools automate administrative procedures and lighten the workload of administrators. Digital data has the potential to change the way education is conducted and has been shown to influence the creation of knowledge about schools.

Educational accomplishments may be impacted by the socioeconomic status of the students as well as their sociocultural surroundings (Punie, Zinnbauer, & Cabrera, 2006). Students who had access to computers at home reported feeling more confident and used them more frequently at school than those who did not (Trucano, 2005). Accordingly, socioeconomic status affects home computer access (OECD, 2015), which in turn affects ICT experience, a critical component of academic success (Punie et al., 2006). Additionally, parents may differ in their capacity and availability to assist their children in their educational journey depending on their socioeconomic background (Di Pietro et al., 2020).

Research Question 3: What are the training needs for the emerging facilitation techniques used by facilitators in literacy centers in Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 4. Descriptive statistics showing the training needs on the emerging facilitation techniques usage among facilitators in literacy centers in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Items on training needs	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. dev.
Need to learn the components of the emerging facilitation methods	32(45.7%)	27(38.6%)	5(7.1%)	5(7.1%)	6(8.6%)	3.52	0.88
Need to master time management while facilitating with the emerging methods for effective delivery.	37(52.9%)	31(44.3%)	0(0.0%)	1(1.4%)	1(1.4%)	3.72	0.90
Need to acquire digital skills to enable me use the digital platforms for facilitation using the emerging methods	37(52.9%)	30(42.9%)	1(1.4%)	1(1.4%)	1(1.4%)	3.71	0.90
Need training on how to control adult learners during facilitation with the new methods	37(52.9%)	31(44.3%)	0(0.0%)	1(1.4%)	1(1.4%)	3.72	0.90
Require more skills in evaluating adult learners while using the new methods.	32(45.7%)	27(38.6%)	5(7.1%)	5(7.1%)	6(8.6%)	3.52	0.88

Table 4 indicated that the facilitators under investigation concurred that there are training needs in emerging facilitation techniques. The empirical outcomes revealed training needs in the pressing and trending components of emerging facilitation methods, ways of managing time while facilitating with these methods, channels for acquiring digital skills to enable facilitators to use digital platforms for facilitation, effective control of adult learners while using emerging facilitation methods, and digital skills in evaluating adult learners, with mean values of 3.52 and 3.72, which are greater than the threshold mean of 2.50.

The facilitators under investigation have concurred that there is a need for training in emerging facilitation techniques. This aligns with Ojo and Chukwudeh (2016), who stated that most training for Nigerian civil workers does not meet their needs because of the top-down approach of such training. It is therefore important to first identify

the training needs before embarking on any training exercise. Ojo and Chukwudeh (2016) advocated for appropriate evaluation of the needs of staff who require the acquisition of skills or increased knowledge in the course of performing their duties. This is also applicable to adult facilitators who may need to learn how to use emerging facilitation methods. There must be a proper analysis of the areas where they need to improve.

This consensus is reinforced by empirical outcomes, which revealed specific areas where training is required. These areas include the pressing and trending components of emerging facilitation methods, effective time management while facilitating with these methods, and the acquisition of digital skills to utilize digital platforms for facilitation.

Moreover, the findings highlight the need for training in managing adult learners while using emerging facilitation methods and developing digital skills to evaluate these learners. The mean values of 3.52 and 3.72, which exceed the threshold mean of 2.50, underscore the significance of addressing these training needs. This suggests that facilitators recognize the importance of updating their skills to effectively incorporate emerging facilitation methods into their practice.

According to a review by Pan, Ke, and Xu (2022), which looked at how learning games might support mathematics instruction in K–12 settings, students' performance increased when they played the games. One promising pedagogical approach in STEM education that may result in higher learning gains is the incorporation of digital games into the classroom (Martinez, Gimenes, & Lambert, 2022). According to Talan, Doğan, and Batdı (2020), the impact of educational games both digital and non-digital on academic success was moderate, with non-digital games having a greater effect. According to Su, Zhong, and Ng (2022), AI technology successfully improved students' attitudes toward learning. Arztmann, Hornstra, Jeuring, and Kester (2023) found that digital games had a favourable impact on STEM-related behaviour and motivation in another meta-analysis.

Skills such as problem-solving and pattern-exploration abilities (Higgins, Huscroft-D'Angelo, & Crawford, 2019), metacognitive learning outcomes (Verschaffel, Depaepe, & Mevarech, 2019), literacy abilities, computational thinking abilities, emotion regulation abilities, and collaborative inquiry abilities (Su et al., 2022) were among the more specific positive learning gains that were reported. ICT use has also been shown to improve students' creativity in a number of studies (Quah & Ng, 2022). Finally, it was discovered that students' lifetime learning abilities might be improved by digital technology (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, & Suman, 2022).

Kumar, Singh, and Kumar (2022) supported that 85% of facilitators reported a need for training in emerging facilitation techniques, particularly in digital facilitation skills. Smith (2020) reported that facilitators who received training in emerging facilitation techniques showed significant improvement in managing adult learners and evaluating their learning outcomes. In contrast, Lee, Kim, and Lee (2023) reiterated that proficiency in digital skills did not require additional training in emerging facilitation techniques. Johnson (2022) claimed that the effectiveness of emerging facilitation methods depends more on the facilitator's interpersonal skills than their technical skills.

According to Bado (2022), teachers who divided their lesson plans into three phases—pre-, during, and post-game—were able to maximize their students' involvement and learning outcomes. For example, instructors focused on lectures and gaming instruction during the pre-game phase. During the game phase, they addressed technological problems, monitored class activities, and provided content scaffolding. Teachers planned debriefing exercises during the post-game phase to ensure that the gameplay had improved students' learning results.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from this study have shown the need to use emerging facilitation methods in adult literacy classes because of the positive impact this may have on the efficiency of the facilitators. The areas of need of the facilitators

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must first be identified in order to provide adequate training needed to equip them with appropriate skills to use these methods. This will no doubt help the adult learners achieve better results in the literacy classes.

This study concludes that there is a pressing need for training facilitators in emerging facilitation techniques, particularly in digital skills, time management, learner control, and evaluation, to mention a few. The following recommendations are therefore made based on the findings of the study:

NMEC and all relevant literacy agencies should organize programs to raise awareness of the emerging facilitation methods for the adult facilitators.

Adult facilitators across the country should practice and use the emerging facilitation methods to achieve better results in the facilitation process.

Adult Education agencies and private literacy administrators should organize frequent training sessions for facilitators in their areas of need, which include knowledge content, methodology, time management, digital skills, and evaluation processes, while utilizing emerging facilitation methods.

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