

*Dare Rilwan Amusa*

*WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING  
CITIES IN LAGOS, NIGERIA*

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**Abstract**

The study sought to examine how women's education can be harnessed to achieve learning cities in Lagos state. The essay evaluates the influence of women's education on the achievement of learning cities in Lagos; finds out how to improve the participation in women's education; examines the form of women's education useful to achieve learning cities in Lagos state and assesses how learning cities can be achieved with women education. Three research questions were raised and answered by the essay. Findings of the study showed that to improve the patronage of women's education in Lagos state, there should be opportunities for women to have basic education, learning programs should be divided into sections (morning, afternoon, and evening), women should be allowed to choose their desire vocations, learning should be made free and accessible and inclusive for all gender and the study recommended that to achieve the learning city in Lagos through women education, there should be opportunities for all women to partake in basic education at their leisure time and their convenient time; women should be given opportunity to learn various entrepreneurship skills or trade as this would enhance their thinking skills and develop them economically and there should be a provision of employment opportunity for women to encourage the non-literate and the potential literate as a result of the new normal.

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*Keywords: women education; learning cities; learning communities*

**Introduction**

Developing learning cities and learning communities is one of the benchmark of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set aside by the world leaders to improve the lives of people in various communities and cities before 2030. At the same time it's not enough to make the promise but to develop effective plans to achieve it is paramount. Meanwhile, various governments and leaders have been paying lip service to the goals while some are trying to meet them, but there is no visible result yet. When it's looking like all hope has been lost since 2030 is just like a day ahead, there is a need for us to approach the development goal with a fresh idea. This could mean educating people from their various homes and convenient places. The only link that could help in doing that is women's education which is an aspect of adult education. Women are that powerful gender that can propagate the importance of education, development, entrepreneurship, well-being, equity and inclusion rapidly. Their education would bridge the gap of gender equality, economic empowerment, justice, no poverty, zero hunger, economic growth and fulfillment of every other goal in the SDG.

Female has so many roles in the development of the nation when compared to men (Walby, 1992). The women retain certain economic opportunities in the social system in the pre-colonial era. The contribution of women to a society's transition from pre-literate to literate likewise is undeniable. Therefore, women education is key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. Various research such as Walby (1992) and Kolb (2013) have shown that education can improve agricultural productivity, enhance the status of girls and women, reduce population growth rates, enhance environmental protection, and widely raise the standard of living. There are more than enough evidence to show that women could be used to achieve lifelong learning in the society. Nevertheless the literacy rate of men to women is still far compared to the UNESCO standard. Although, 68% of the Nigerian population is literate, and the rate for men (75.7%) is higher than that for women (60.6%) (Ojo & Sarumi, 2019). Therefore if women are given series of education required by them, they would be useful in achieving the feat of learning cities. These has necessitated the research to examine how women education can be harnessed to achieve the feat of life-long learning and learning city in Lagos state, Nigeria.

According to Jordan, Longworth & Osborne (2013) the concept of a "learning society" as appealed to UNESCO Member States means to re-organise their educational structures on two basic premises: (1) all agencies become providers of education; and (2) all citizens are engaged in learning, taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the learning society i.e all sectors; public administration, industry, communications, transport – must take part in promoting education. Local and national communities are in themselves eminently educative institutions. As Plutarch said, "the City is the best teacher" (Jordan, Longworth & Osborne, 2013, p. 19). And especially when the city is capable of remaining within human proportions, it does indeed contain immense educational potential with its social and administrative structures and its cultural networks not only because of the vitality of the exchanges that go on, but also because it constitutes a school for civic sentiment and fellow-feeling.

Achievement of sustainable development goals before the deadline of 2030 is a benchmark for all nations. Although, various governments and leaders have been paying lip service to the goals while some are trying to meet them, but there efforts are not yielding yet in Africa. With the deadline approaching while it seems that nothing has been achieved, there is a need for approach the development goal with a fresh idea or eye. Studies like Kolb (2013) and Adamu (2013) have showed that to achieve a giant feat in education, women education should be given adequate consideration. This is because women are the most underrated but powerful gender that can echo the rationale for education, development, entrepreneurship, well-being, equity and inclusion rapidly. Their education would therefore improve the gap of gender equality, economic empowerment, justice, no poverty, zero hunger, economic growth and fulfillment of every other goal in the SDG. It appears that there are forms of women education that can help in the achievement of learning cities. It also seems that if women education is carefully harnessed, it will bring about all round development in the state and the whole nation. It is based on these foregoing that the essay want to examine how women education can be harnessed to achieve learning cities in Lagos state.

## **Research methodology**

### **Aims and objectives**

This study attempt to evaluate the influence of women education towards the achievement of learning cities in Lagos state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out how to improve the participation in women education in Lagos state
2. Examine the form of women education that can be used to achieve learning cities in Lagos state
3. Assess how learning cities can be achieved with women education.

### **Research questions**

The study seeks to provide answers to the following questions;

1. How can patronage of women education be improved in Lagos state?
2. What form of women education can lead to achievement of learning cities?
3. How can learning cities be achieved with women education in Lagos state?

### **Research hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub> Women education do not significantly affect the achievement of learning cities

### **Research methods**

Lagos State was chosen because of its cosmopolitan and unique nature. It is unique because it was formally the federal capital of Nigeria, and so all the ethnic groups of Nigeria are adequately represented in Lagos State because it is also the commercial nerve center of Nigeria. Lagos Mainland is one of the largest local government therefore it would be considered for the study. Lagos Mainland local government has a total population of 629,469 with the women population of 303,036 (Lagos State Government, 2019). Convenient sample technique was used to pick a total sample of 150 women from six different constituent wards out of 11 wards in Lagos Mainland Local Government. The items in the questionnaire would analyzed with the use of simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the hypothesis.

### **Scope or delimitation of study**

The study was restricted to women that are age 18 and above in Lagos state as a whole but it was limited to Lagos Mainland local government area because of some constraint such as large population involved in carrying out the survey.

### **Concept of women education**

This section illustrates the role of women's education and how it helps to achieve life-long learning. Women's education is considered as the key factor in achieving lifelong learning. It is noted that education provides better employment opportunities and enhances development. Similarly, according to Chaudry (1995) educated women have demonstrated a better ability to keep control of their husband's expenditures and to maintain their own economic independence, to improve household management, and be more able to save money and generally contribute more to the development of nation. In this

study, the basic component of the theoretical approaches is lifelong learning and women education furthermore lifelong learning is seen as a form of education that enhance all round development in the citizens of a nation. Any form of education given to women that can help in promoting such development is women education. In this context, humanistic theory of learning propounded by Abraham Maslow (1943) would be considered. Humanistic theory involves learning consciously through watching and observing the behaviour of others and what results from that behaviour. This theory says that individuals have free will and they can actively develop their unlimited potentials and reach the phase of self-actualisation. Therefore, human beings are self-motivated to improve themselves and they always want to improve their competencies because they want to reach the self-actualisation phase. This is where lifelong learning comes into play, self-improvement becomes a continuous process for as long as they learn and live. As people are eager to improve themselves, they also end up improving the immediate society and the nation at large.

The field of adult education has been identified and defined in various ways. Most definitions, however, include all learning by adults, from the casual incidental learning that may occur in the natural societal setting to the systematic learning accomplished in a formal instructional setting. The most accepted definition of adult education is the one giving by UNESCO in 1972 which defines the term *“as the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development”* (Jarvis, 1999, p. 9.). In so many instances, adult education can be interchanged with lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is also seen as education which starts from cradle to grave in the life of individuals. This implies that it could be in any form of education with learning value or intention for the adults which includes men and women.

Women's education can be regarded as a kind of knowledge given to women for enhancing their self-respect and self-dignity. This knowledge can be in form of formal, non-formal and informal education, it can also be in form of adult education, community development, workshops, seminars, conferences and training. Women's education is for making women to become economically independent and self-reliant (Bhasin, 1992). Women as mothers, are educators within their families, what they learn, they pass on to their children and their future generations (Osuala, 1987). *“Women need an education which will not only help them in the search and acquisition of new skills and knowledge, but also help them to acquire and strenghten values like justice, equality, honesty, truthfulness and solidarity. Education should help women to develop an analytical and questioning mind and a scientific approach in understanding the realities around them.”* (Adamu, 2013, p. 2.). There is compelling evidence that the education of girls and women promotes both individual and national well-being. In developing countries there is strong link between a

woman's education and her employment and income. When women are deprived of an education, individuals, families, and children, as well as the societies in which they live, suffer. When women are adequately educated, everyone benefits including the nation.

Ibara, Ely and Kolb (2013) suggested three actions to support women formal education which may be rooted through the education of the girl-child or education at later life (lifelong learning). These positions are the same idea that can help in redefining women education in a country with high level of illiteracy especially as it affects women literacy like Nigeria. The ideas are as follows; *“(1) educate women and men second-generation gender bias; (2) create safe “identity workspaces” for women to support transition to bigger roles; (3) anchor women’s development efforts in a sense of leadership purpose rather than in how they are perceived”* (Ibara, Ely & Kolb, 2013)

Education is central to the development of women leadership role. Second generation gender bias has to do with making both sexes understand the importance of making male and female use their inbuilt ability for the development and upgrade of the society to which they belong and by implication developing themselves and their immediate family. Added to this is the fact that there is the need to make both genders know who they are, know their weaknesses and strengths. Giving an individual relevant role to which he or she is most suitable without bias will help in achievement of goals in organizations. When a woman is educated it is assumed that the whole nation will feel the impact of achievement, when woman assume position of leadership she ensures that her weakness does not overturn her strength. Education is the bedrock of all developments therefore, there is the need to create enabling environment for women to benefit at all levels and for all categories of women.

Women education is an integral part of adult education which can be used in the realization of the sustainable development goal in the society. In the context of today’s world, women play different roles from business entrepreneurs to corporate executives, policymakers and political leaders, functioning in different capacities and being actively involved in the struggle for social change up till this moment. Women’s organizations have emerged in acting as social actors that promote more equitable participation in all spheres of society while providing effective links among women, governments, and other stakeholders. Gran (2019) opined that women play the largest role in decision-making about family meal planning and diet which initiative helps in preserving child health and nutrition. It is the mother in the family who most often urges children of both genders to attend and stay in school. The role of women is at the front end of the chain of improvements leading to the family’s, the community’s long-term capacity. It’s also eminent to discuss the role of women in the development of learning cities which can also enhanced national development.

UNESCO defined learning cities as a city that effectively mobilizes its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; revitalizes learning in families and communities; facilitates learning for and in the workplace, extends the use of modern technologies; enhances quality and excellence in learning and fosters a culture of learning throughout life (Faure et. al. 1972). An overview of what a city should do be-

fore it can achieve the learning city shows that aside from individual government participation, there is a need for individual active participation. This implies that except if everyone in the city is aware of the benefit of achieving such, they may not participate actively. Meanwhile, UNESCO submitted that for a city to achieve all the feats of a learning city, there must be adequate planning, involvement of everyone in the city in such developmental project, initiation of the process with celebration which would bring more awareness, accessibility of the project by everyone, monitoring and evaluation of the project and adequate funding of the project.

For example, to achieve learning feat through women education, there must be adequate planning with the women in the community because they must all see the benefit of such, otherwise, they may not trust the process. After they have all agreed to participate then the planning process can commence. This involves arranging various meeting with them to know the type of education (basic, functional, vocational, digital, apprenticeship etc) they need at that particular time and give them such education. After they have been given such education, it is believe that they will propagate such to their family, neighbour and everyone they know in the city for them to also be involved in it. Women who easily inform their friends about the program, they would ensure that their immediate family participate in the development program, celebrate the commencement of the program in a larger way.

### **Lifelong learning (women education) in Nigeria - discussion of findings**

The Lagos metropolitan area is a major educational and cultural centre in Sub Saharan Africa. With all the resources government has put in place to improve life-long learning in Lagos state. One would assume that every citizens would be literate by now and thereby contribute their quota to the development of the learning cities and other developmental area but it seems that this is not enough making the time to achieve the sustainable development goals unachievable.

Information on the demographic section of the questionnaire revealed that 32% of the total participants were between 18-30 years of age, 30% of the participants were between 31-40 years, 20% of the participants were between 41-50 years of age and 18.7% of the respondents were 51 years and above. This implies that, majority of the participants were between 31-40 years of age. 26% of the total participants have no formal education, 36% of the participant have basic education, 24.7% have secondary education while 13.3% of the participants have ND/Degree. This suggested that majority of the participants were in service for 6-10 years. 25.3% of the total participants were single, 56.7% of the participants were married, and 18% of the participants were divorced.

Table one shows that 13.3% of the respondents opined that the patronage of women education can be improved by giving all female opportunity to have basic education, 20% opined that the patronage should be improved by dividing learning programme into section (morning, afternoon and evening), 16.7% of the respondents also opined that the patronage of women education could be improved by organizing learning programs in various centres or areas, 20% opined that the patronage could be improved by allowing people to choose different vocations. Also 13.3% are of the opinion that the patronage

could be improved by making learning free and accessible while 16.7% opined that making learning inclusive for all gender would improve patronage of women education.

Table 1: How can patronage of women education be improved in Lagos state? (Research Question#1) (N=150)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of Respondent</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
By giving all female opportunity to have basic education.	20	13.3
By dividing learning programme into section (morning, afternoon and evening)	30	20
By organizing learning programs in various centres or areas	25	16.7
By allowing people to choose different vocations	30	20
By making learning free and accessible	20	13.3
By making learning inclusive for all gender	25	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: own data, 2022*

Table 2 shows that 33.3% of the respondents opined that basic education would lead to the achievement of learning cities, 20% suggested that functional education could lead to the achievement of learning cities, 16.7% of the respondents also suggested that entrepreneurship education could lead to the achievement of learning cities in Lagos, 16.7% opined that vocational skills could lead to the achievement of learning cities in Lagos state while 13.3% are of the opinion that digital literacy skills could lead to the achievement of learning cities in Lagos.

Table 2: What form of women education can lead to achievement of learning cities? (Research Question#2) (N=150)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of Respondent</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Basic education.	50	33.3
Functional education	30	20
Entrepreneurship education	25	16.7
Vocational skills	25	16.7
Digital literacy	20	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: own data, 2022*

Table three shows that 30.7% of the respondents opined that sustainable development goals can be achieved through improving literacy rate of women, 17.3% suggested that giving necessary vocational skills to women would help in achieving sustainable development goals, 18.7% of the respondents also suggested that given equal and free access to all form of education would help to achieve sustainable development goal in Lagos, 16.7% opined that sustainable development goals can be achieved by encouraging people to

learn outside the formal education while 16.7% are of the opinion that sustainable development goal can be achieved by encouraging more female in education sector.

Table 3: How can sustainable development goals be achieved with women education in Lagos state? (Research Question#3) (N=150)

Response	Number of Respondent	% of respondents
By improving literacy rate of women	46	30.7
By giving necessary vocational skills to the women	26	17.3
Given equal and free access to all form of education	28	18.7
By encouraging learning outside the formal education	25	16.7
By encouraging more female in education	25	16.7
Total	150	100

Source: own data, 2022

Table 4 showed the Pearson Product Moment Correlation for women education and the achievement of learning cities. The Pearson product moment correlation index obtained is positive at 'r' = 0.802. The significance or p-value = 0.000 which is less than predetermined alpha=0.05. This result indicated that Women education significantly affect the achievement of learning cities. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4: Relationship between women education and achievement of learning cities

		WOMEN EDUCATION	ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING CITIES
<b>Women Education</b>	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.802** .000
	N	150	150
<b>Achievement of Learning Cities</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)	.802** .000	1
	N	150	150

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: own data, 2022

Findings from research question one shows that in order to improve the patronage of women education in Lagos state, there should be opportunities for women to have basic education, learning programme should be divided into sections (morning, afternoon and evening), various learning programs should be organized in various centres or areas, women should be allowed to choose different vocations they desire, learning should be made free and accessible and inclusive for all gender. This is also corroborated by UNESCO



which defined learning cities as a city that effectively mobilizes its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; revitalizes learning in families and communities; facilitates learning for and in the workplace, extends the use of modern technologies; enhances quality and excellence in learning and fosters a culture of learning throughout life (Faure et. al., 1972).

Findings from research question two showed that basic education, functional education, entrepreneurship education, vocational skills and digital literacy can lead to the achievement of learning cities in Lagos, Nigeria. If they can be invested in and made use of accurately, the feat of learning cities would be achieved in Lagos, Nigeria. Kolb (2013) also corroborated the study with the suggestion that those educations will give women insight into themselves and their generations. When a woman is educated it is assumed that the whole nation will feel the impact of achievement. Education is the bedrock of all developments therefore, there is the need to create enabling environment for women to benefit at all levels and for all categories of women.

Findings from research question three shows that to achieve sustainable development goal through women education in Lagos state, the literacy rate of women must be improved, necessary vocational skills must be given to the women, equal and free access to all form of education must be provided for women and learning outside the formal education must be encouraged.

## **Conclusion**

It's eminent to note that achievement of learning cities is not a difficult task but it requires necessary planning, funding, monitoring and evaluation of various project. To achieve learning the feat of learning city in Lagos, there should be adequate planning for a program that will encourage the participation of women in all spheres of life and it should be compartmentalized into different sections and time to encourage participation of all. When women are being encouraged to see it as there program and they accept it as one, then there would be adequate result in their various homes, families, households and at the long run the cities and nation at large.

The study recommends that in order to achieve the learning city in Lagos through women education, there should be opportunities for all women to partake in basic education at their leisure time and their convenient time. Women should be given opportunity to learn various entrepreneurship skills or trade as this would enhance their thinking skills and develop them economically. Since women occupy a large space in the world, the state should set a day aside to celebrate women who are literate to encourage the non-literate women. There should also be provision of employment opportunity for women in order to encourage the non-literate and the potential literate as a result of the new normal.

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