

Variables Influencing Functional Literacy Needs and Enrichment Interests of Commercial Drivers in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated variables influencing the functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers in North-central Nigeria. Functional literacy—encompassing the ability to apply reading, writing, and numeracy skills to solve real-life problems—was examined within cultural, civic, economic, and social domains, alongside enrichment interests in prose, document, and quantitative literacy. Adopting a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, the study sampled 660 literate inter-state commercial drivers from Kogi, Kwara, and Niger States using purposive and incidental sampling techniques. Data were collected with a validated questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA with Duncan’s post-hoc tests at a 0.05 significance level. Results revealed that age, religion, and formal education significantly influenced functional literacy needs, while ethnic background and driving experience did not. Conversely, all five variables—ethnic background, age, religion, formal education, and driving experience—significantly influenced enrichment interests. These findings, interpreted through Functionalism, Sociolinguistic, Adult Learning, and Human Capital theories, underscore the need for culturally inclusive, age-sensitive, and occupationally relevant literacy interventions. The study recommends developing multilingual materials, age-specific modules, and ICT-integrated, experience-based programmes in collaboration with relevant transport and safety agencies to promote lifelong learning and improve drivers’ occupational competence and socio-economic outcomes.

Keywords: Functional literacy, enrichment interests, commercial drivers, adult learning, variable.

INTRODUCTION

Functional literacy is the ability to apply reading, writing, numeracy, and related skills to solve real-life problems effectively. Unlike basic literacy, it emphasizes practical applications that enable individuals to function competently in personal, occupational, civic, and economic contexts. Functional literacy has been recognized as a vital driver of productivity, civic engagement, and poverty reduction (Mchombu & Cadbury, 2006).

In Nigeria, commercial drivers constitute a vital socio-economic group whose services are indispensable to national growth and development (Olamigoke & Emmanuel, 2013). However, inadequate functional literacy among this group has been linked to road safety challenges,

including the misinterpretation of traffic signs, poor adherence to safety regulations, and high accident rates (Epetimehin, 2014; Federal Road Safety Corps [FRSC], 2008). Road accidents in Nigeria remain a major source of violent deaths after insurgency and are estimated to cost the nation billions of naira annually (Ukoji, 2014; Atubi & Gbadamosi, 2015).

Several variables have been identified as influencing the functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of drivers. These include educational attainment, age, religious orientation, occupational experience, and socio-economic background (Yusuf & Lawal 2025). For example, drivers with higher levels of education and greater years of driving experience are more likely to demonstrate better safety practices and improved occupational performance (Ani & Ani, 2025). Similarly, participation in adult literacy and skills enrichment programmes has been found to enhance occupational competence and socio-economic wellbeing among drivers (Akinyosoye, 2015).

Despite interventions by government agencies and non-governmental organizations to expand adult literacy initiatives, many commercial drivers in Nigeria remain functionally illiterate. This limits their ability to effectively meet occupational demands, comply with safety regulations, and contribute to socio-economic development. Addressing the functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers is therefore crucial for reducing road accidents, empowering individuals, and fostering national progress.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid pace of technological growth in the digital age and the crucial role of commercial drivers in Nigeria's socio-economic development and road safety demand that drivers possess adequate functional literacy skills. Functional literacy enables individuals to effectively interpret road signs, adhere to safety regulations, and respond to occupational demands. Yet, evidence suggests that many Nigerian commercial drivers lack adequate literacy skills, which contributes to unsafe driving practices, increased accident rates, and reduced productivity (Ani & Ani, 2025; Akinmusere & Oladumoye, 2011).

Although previous studies have examined functional literacy in relation to empowerment (Bhola, 1995; Obanya, 2004; Olaleye & Adeyemo, 2012), job effectiveness (Bravo et al., 2002; Ore, 2006), and socio-economic characteristics of drivers (Ipingbemi, 2008; Onuka & Akinyemi, 2012), little attention has been given to exploring the specific functional literacy needs and enrichment

interests of commercial drivers, particularly in North-Central Nigeria. Existing research highlights the importance of literacy and driver education but often overlooks the enrichment interests of drivers, which could strengthen literacy programmes and improve long-term outcomes (Lawal, 2000; Business Innovation & Skills, 2013).

This research gap has left unresolved questions regarding the variables that influence the functional literacy needs and enrichment preferences of commercial drivers in Nigeria. Without this understanding, functional literacy interventions may remain ineffective, and the challenges of road safety, occupational competence, and national development linked to commercial drivers' literacy deficiencies will persist.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess variables influencing functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers in North-central Nigeria. Based on the purpose, one research question formulated and answered, and ten null hypotheses were raised and tested.

Research Question

What are the variables that influence functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers in North-central Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses raised were tested in this study.

HO1: There is no significant influence of ethnic background on the functional literacy needs of commercial drivers in North-central Nigeria.

HO2: Age does not have any significant influence on functional literacy needs of the commercial drivers.

HO3: There is no significant influence of religion on the functional literacy needs of the commercial drivers.

HO4: Formal education does not significantly influence the commercial drivers' functional literacy needs.

HO5: Driving experience does not significantly influence the functional literacy needs of the commercial drivers.

HO6: No significant influence of ethnic background exists in the enrichment interests of the commercial drivers.

HO7: Age has no significant influence on the enrichment interests of the commercial drivers.

HO8: Religion does not significantly influence the enrichment interests of the commercial drivers.

HO9: There is no significant influence of formal education on the enrichment interests of the commercial drivers.

HO10: Driving experience does not have any significant influence on the enrichment interests of the commercial drivers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literacy, beyond being reading, writing and numeracy skills, is a social practice. It equips individuals with the ability to protect one's rights and those of others, carry out one's responsibility efficiently, provide good governance, and to initiate and enhance the development of one's environment (Lawal, 2014). In a nutshell, Lawal stressed that literacy is meant to produce "an emancipated citizenry who can efficiently discharge their cultural, social, economic and civic responsibilities in the service of balanced and positive social transformation" (p.11). The critical inference is that literacy is only meaningful when it is deployed to fulfil the four noble functions shown in Figure 1.

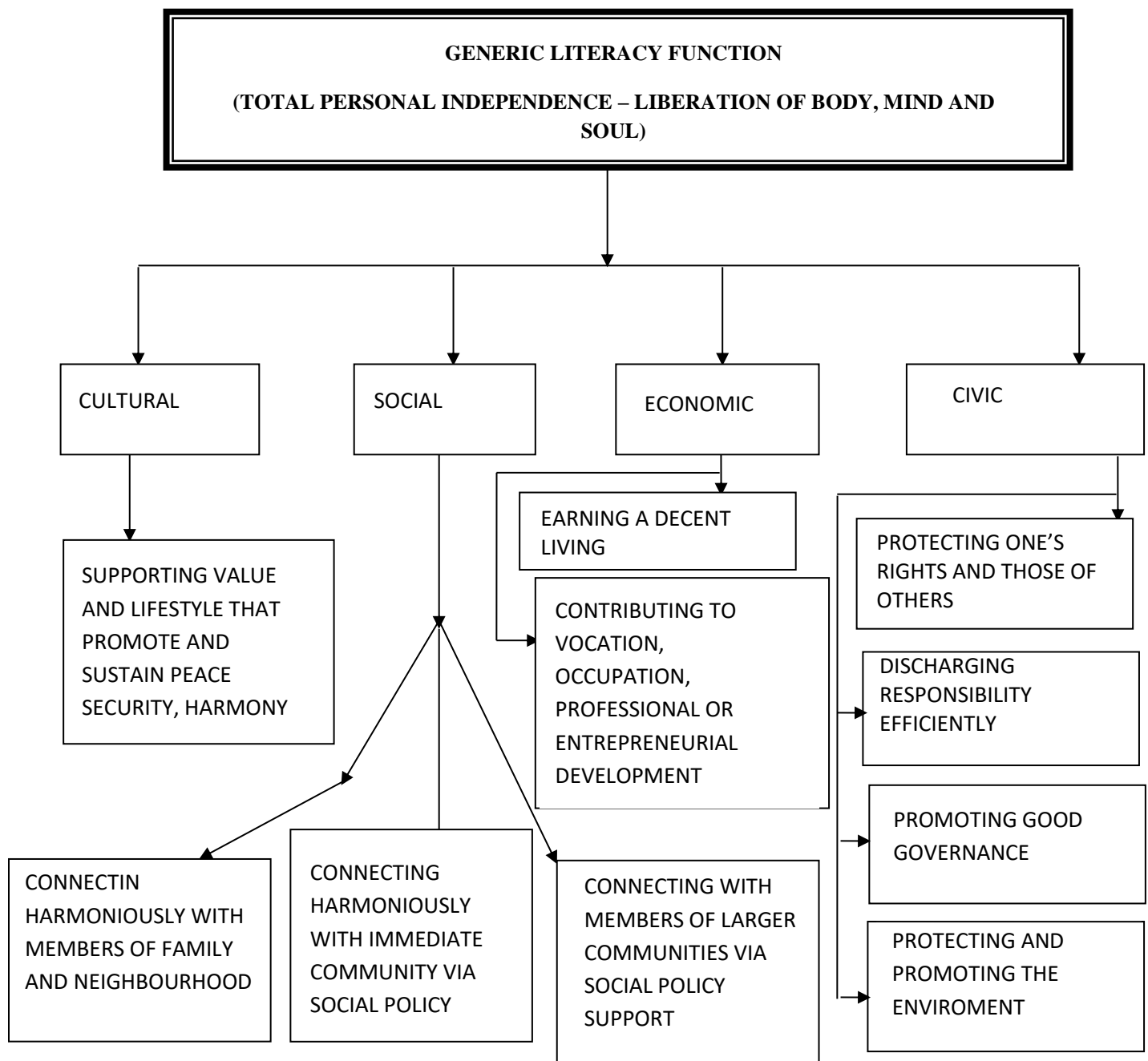


Figure 3: Functions of Literacy (Lawal, 2014)

The effectiveness of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy lies on their application in solving both personal and all-encompassing problems. In addition, knowing how to read, write and

calculate to be able to function adequately and efficiently in the community and in the larger society is referred to as functional literacy. It is a concept that goes beyond the knowledge of literacy or literacy skills; it has to do with a practical use or application of such inevitable skills on one's daily routine.

Functional literacy extends beyond the basic ability to read and write; it encompasses the application of literacy skills to solve daily problems and enhance personal, occupational, and societal development (Lawal, 2014; Ayodele & Adedokun, 2013). It plays cultural, social, economic, and civic roles that enable individuals to function meaningfully in their communities, protect rights, discharge responsibilities efficiently, and promote social transformation. Scholars (Edem et al., 2011; Hahn et al. 2017) affirm that functional literacy is vital for improving health, reducing poverty, and supporting socio-economic growth.

Commercial drivers, a critical socio-economic group, require functional literacy to perform effectively in their profession. Studies (FRSC, 2008; Abass, 2010; Akinyosoye, 2015) identify poor literacy and limited education as major contributors to road traffic accidents, which claim thousands of lives and cost Nigeria billions annually (Atubi & Gbadamosi, 2015; Epetimehin, 2014). Functional literacy equips drivers with the ability to interpret road signs, understand safety codes, and adopt defensive driving techniques, thereby reducing accidents and enhancing productivity.

Several programmes, including the UNIVA Functional Literacy Programme, demonstrate that equipping adult workers with literacy skills significantly improves income generation, occupational performance, and community development (Adedokun, 2011; Adelore & Majaro-Majesty, 2008). Functional literacy's dimensions—basic skills, life skills, socio-economic skills, and lifelong learning—emphasize its role in vocational efficiency, health practices, civic responsibility, and continuous self-development (Hahn et al. 2017).

However, functional literacy outcomes vary based on individual and contextual variables such as age, gender, education, ethnicity, religion, and work experience. Younger adults often outperform older counterparts in literacy-related tasks (Kolinsky, Gabriel Demoulin, Gregory, de Carvalho & Morais 2020), while education remains a decisive factor in reducing accident risks among drivers (Ipingbemi, 2008; Yusuf & Lawal, 2025). Ethnic and religious backgrounds also influence literacy participation and enrichment interests (Olojede & Olaitan, 2013). Similarly, driving experience

shapes drivers' behavior, with more experienced drivers generally exhibiting safer practices (Onuka & Akinyemi, 2012).

In Nigeria, where many roads remain poorly maintained and vehicle conditions are substandard (NEC, 2016), the intersection of low literacy levels and challenging infrastructure further exacerbates traffic accidents. Thus, strengthening functional literacy among commercial drivers is essential for enhancing road safety, reducing socio-economic losses, and fostering sustainable national development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A multi-theoretical approach provides a comprehensive lens for analysing the variables influencing functional literacy and enrichment interests among commercial drivers in Nigeria. Functionalism Theory, Sociolinguistic Theory, Adult Learning Theory, and Human Capital Theory can be applied as theoretical frameworks for this research.

Functionalism views education and literacy as essential for maintaining social order and meeting the needs of society. Functional literacy is seen as a set of social and economic skills that enable individuals to participate effectively in their communities and workplaces (Yusuf & Lawal, 2025). In the Nigerian context, functional literacy is linked to economic development, employability, and social integration, making it crucial for commercial drivers to adapt to societal and occupational demands (Vasylenko, 2023; Kolawole & Adepoju, 2007; Demirbilek & Keser, 2023). This theory supports the idea that literacy programs should be designed to address practical, real-life needs, thus enhancing both individual and societal well-being.

Also, sociolinguistic theory emphasizes the role of language and communication in social contexts (Chambers, 2009). For commercial drivers, literacy is not just about reading and writing but also about understanding and using language effectively in diverse social and occupational settings. Sociolinguistic perspectives highlight the importance of tailoring literacy programs to the linguistic backgrounds and communication needs of adult learners, ensuring relevance and effectiveness in their daily interactions (Vasylenko, 2023; Demirbilek & Keser, 2023). This approach is particularly important in Nigeria's multilingual environment, where drivers may need to navigate multiple languages and dialects.

Furthermore, Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy) focuses on the unique characteristics of adult learners, such as their need for practical, relevant, and self-directed learning experiences. Functional literacy programs for commercial drivers should therefore be context-specific, addressing their immediate work-related and personal enrichment interests (Vasylenko, 2023; Isa, 2019; Demirbilek & Keser, 2023). Adult Learning Theory also underscores the importance of motivation, prior experience, and active participation in the learning process, which are critical for the success of literacy interventions among adult populations.

Finally, Human Capital Theory posits that investments in education and skills development enhance individual productivity and economic outcomes. In the context of commercial drivers in Nigeria, improving functional literacy is seen as an investment that can lead to better job performance, higher income, and broader economic growth (Nwachukwu, 2024; Saka & Olanipekun, 2021; Nwokoye et al., 2020; Ogunleye et al., 2017; Akunede et al., 2022). This theory provides a strong rationale for government and organizational support for adult literacy programs, emphasizing their role in national development and workforce improvement.

Integrating Functionalism, Sociolinguistic, Adult Learning, and Human Capital theories offers a robust framework for understanding and addressing the functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers in Nigeria. This approach ensures that literacy interventions are socially relevant, linguistically appropriate, learner-centered, and economically justified.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey-based cross-sectional design, which is appropriate for assessing the views, attitudes, needs, and interests of many participants at a single point in time (Anikweze, 2009; Daramola, 2006). The design enabled the systematic collection of information to describe the characteristics of the target population and examine the relationships between selected demographic variables—such as age, religion, ethnic background, educational level, and driving experience—and the functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers. This approach is consistent with Barker et al. (2023), and Olsen & George (2004), who assert that cross-sectional surveys are suitable for understanding “what is” and “how it is” in real-life contexts.

The population comprised all literate inter-state commercial drivers in Kogi, Kwara, and Niger States, Nigeria. Due to the absence of accurate records from the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Road Transport Employers' Association of Nigeria (RTEAN), National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), and the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), an estimated total of over 140,000 commercial drivers (including intra- and inter-state drivers) was identified across the three states.

A sample of 660 respondents was selected, providing a 99% confidence level with a 3.5% margin of error according to the Research Advisors' (2006) sample size table. Sampling involved two stages: purposive sampling – Selection of twelve (12) cities, including the state capitals and three additional cities per state, to ensure representation of different ethnic and religious groups and incidental sampling – Selection of 55 literate inter-state commercial drivers from each city, based on availability and willingness to participate, considering the respondents' work schedules.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled “*Questionnaire on Variables Influencing Functional Literacy Needs and Enrichment Interests of Commercial Drivers in Nigeria*”. The instrument comprised three sections: Section A: Demographic information (age, ethnic background, religion, driving experience, educational attainment); Section B: Items assessing functional literacy needs in cultural, civic, economic, and social domains, across home, workplace, and community contexts; and Section C: Items measuring enrichment literacy interests based on prose, document, and quantitative literacy. Responses in Section B were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (None–Very Much), while Section C used a 4-point frequency scale (Never–High). For drivers with limited reading comprehension, the instrument was administered as a structured interview. The instrument underwent content validation by experts in the Department of Arts Education. Revisions were made based on feedback, and a test–retest reliability procedure over a three-week interval with 55 respondents from Benue State yielded a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.78, indicating acceptable reliability.

The researcher, supported by five trained research assistants, visited the selected motor parks to administer the instrument. The purpose of the study was explained to park chairmen to facilitate cooperation. Research assistants—fluent in English and one of Yoruba, Hausa, Ebirá, Nupe, or Gbagyi—interpreted items for respondents as necessary. Data collection emphasized respect, patience, and cultural sensitivity. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics

(percentages, means, standard deviations) were used for demographic data and to answer the research question and inferential statistics – One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tested the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level, with Duncan’s Post-Hoc test identifying differences between groups.

RESULTS

The following is the results of the data collected and analysed.

Research Question: What are the variables that influence functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers in North-central Nigeria?

Table 1: Variables Influencing Functional Literacy needs and Enrichment Interests of Commercial Drivers in North-Central Nigeria

Variables	Influence on Functional Literacy Needs	Influence on Enrichment Interests	Overall Interpretation Based on Findings
Ethnic Background	No significant influence $p (.15) > 0.05$	Significant influence ($p < 0.05$)	Does not affect drivers’ basic functional literacy needs, but strongly shapes their literacy enrichment interests (e.g., reading preferences, cultural/linguistic materials).
Age	Significant influence ($p < 0.05$)	Significant influence ($p < 0.05$)	Age differences affect both functional literacy needs and enrichment interests. Younger drivers show greater learning interest; older drivers show more practical, need-based literacy needs.
Religion	Significant influence ($p < 0.05$)	Significant influence ($p < 0.05$)	Religious affiliation affects drivers’ literacy needs and enrichment interests, possibly through cultural orientations and value systems.
Formal Education	Significant influence $p < 0.05$	Significant influence ($p < 0.05$)	The higher the educational level, the higher the functional literacy needs and the broader the enrichment interests. Education remains a strong predictor of literacy engagement.
Driving Experience	No significant influence $p (.27) > 0.05$	Significant influence ($p < 0.05$)	Experience does not affect functional literacy needs but shapes enrichment interests because long-term drivers encounter more complex documentation, road information, and learning exposure.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of ethnic background, driving experience, age, religion and formal education on the functional literacy needs of commercial drivers in North-central Nigeria.

Table 2: Influence of Ethnic Background, Religion, Age, Formal Education and Driving Experience on the Functional Literacy Needs of Commercial Drivers in North-central Nigeria (N=622)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Cal.F	p-value.	Decision
Ethnic Background						
Between Groups	1136.77	5	227.35	1.65	.15	HO Accepted
Within Groups	84968.22	616	137.94			
Total	86104.99	621				
Driving Experience						
Between Groups	366.94	2	183.47	1.33	.27	HO Accepted
Within Groups	85738.05	619	138.51			
Total	86104.99	621				
Age						
Between Groups	3149.14	5	629.83	4.68	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	82955.85	616	134.67			
Total	86104.99	621				
Religion						
Between Groups	3539.39	2	1769.69	13.27	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	82565.60	619	133.36			
Total	86104.99	621				
Formal Education						
Between Groups	3375.10	5	675.02	5.03	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	82729.89	616	134.30			
Total	86104.99	621				

*Insignificance at $p > 0.05$ for HO Accepted

*Significance at $p < 0.05$ for HO Rejected

Table 2 reveals that ethnic background and driving experience had no significant influence, while age, religion, and formal education showed significant effects. In Table 2 below, Duncan’s post-hoc tests detailed which age groups, religions, and education levels had higher functional literacy needs.

Table 3: Duncan's Post-Hoc Analysis of Significant Influence of Age, religion and Formal Education on the Functional Literacy Needs of Commercial Drivers in North-central Nigeria (N=622)

AGE	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05			
		1	2	3	4
Age					
46-55	113	85.97			
56-65	46	86.67			
36-45	150	88.46			
26-35	131	88.83			
16-25	151		91.59		
66-75	31			94.10	
46-55	113	85.97			
56-65	46	86.67			
Religion					
Christianity	174	85.39			
Tradition	41	87.41			
Islam	407		90.70		
Formal Education					
Others	19	79.58			
M.Sc./M.Ed.	12	83.75			
Primary	169		87.31		
Secondary	208			89.68	
NCE/ND	137			90.30	
HND/B.Sc.	77			91.66	

* Significance @ 0.05

Hypothesis Two: No significant influence of ethnic background, driving experience, age, religion and formal education exist in the enrichment interests of the commercial drivers.

Table 4: Influence of Ethnic Background, religion, Age, formal education and driving experience on the Enrichment Literacy Interests of Commercial Drivers in North-central Nigeria (N=622)

Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Cal. F	p-value	Decision
Ethnic Background						
Between Groups	12383.58	5	2476.72	8.05	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	189431.51	616	307.52			
Total	201815.08	621				
Age						
Between Groups	12970.92	5	2594.18	8.46	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	188844.16	616	306.57			
Total	201815.08	621				
Religion						
Between Groups	8741.17	2	4370.59	14.01	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	193073.91	619	311.91			
Total	201815.08	621				
Formal Education						
Between Groups	11762.52	5	2352.51	7.63	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	190052.56	616	308.53			
Total	201815.08	621				
Driving Experience						
Between Groups	3684.07	2	1842.04	5.76	.00	HO Rejected
Within Groups	198131.01	619	320.08			
Total	201815.08	621				

*Significance at $p < 0.05$

In Table 4, all five variables (ethnic background, age, religion, formal education, and driving experience) significantly influenced enrichment interests. Duncan’s post-hoc results highlighted specific group differences, such as certain ethnic groups, age ranges, educational qualifications, and driving experience categories with higher enrichment interest scores as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 5: Duncan's Post-Hoc Analysis of Significant Influence of ethnic background, religion, Age, formal education and driving experience on the Enrichment Interests of Commercial Drivers in North-central Nigeria (N=622)

AGE	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05			
		1	2	3	4
Ethnic Background					
Hausa	91	108.90			
Gbagi	24	114.25			
Others	18	115.00			
Ebira	55	115.66			
Yoruba	309		120.33		
Nupe	125		122.39		
Age					
56-65	47	110.45			
46-55	111	114.28			
36-45	160	115.94			
26-35	129		111.73		
66-75	30			122.30	
16-25	145				125.19
Religion					
Christianity	180	112.88			
Tradition	41	114.93			
Islam	401		121.03		
Formal Education					
Other	20	104.85			
M.Sc./M.Ed.	12	111.75			
Primary	169		114.09		
Secondary	215		118.77		
NCE/ND	135			122.02	
HND/B.Sc.	71				124.49
Driving Experience					
11-20	223	115.10			
21 and Above	122	116.27			
0-10	277		120.99		

* Significance @ 0.05

Discussion of the Findings

The present study examined the variables influencing functional literacy needs and enrichment interests of commercial drivers in North-central Nigeria. The results of the ten tested hypotheses provided a nuanced understanding of how background variables such as ethnic background, age, religion, formal education, and driving experience significantly or insignificantly impact the

functional literacy and enrichment interests of this cohort. These findings are best understood in light of existing literature.

From a Functionalist Theory perspective, literacy is seen as a societal tool that enables individuals to perform their roles effectively for the smooth functioning of the community. The finding that ethnic background has a significant influence on the functional literacy needs of commercial drivers corroborates Lawal (2000), who identified ethnic factors as significant in shaping literacy needs and preferences among neo-literate adults. As highlighted in the literature, ethnolinguistic diversity in Nigeria affects not only language preference but also content relevance and engagement. This underscores the necessity of culturally sensitive curriculum design in adult literacy programmes, particularly for mobile populations such as commercial drivers. The significant influence of ethnic background on enrichment interests parallels the earlier observation on functional literacy needs. Lawal (2000) found that reading preferences among adults were influenced by ethnic and linguistic identities, especially regarding language of instruction and material relevance. The implication here is that enrichment programmes must incorporate multilingual and culturally resonant materials to be impactful.

The significant influence of age on functional literacy needs aligns with Oreh's (2006) position that younger and older drivers have differing motivations and capacities for literacy acquisition. It is also supported by Adult Learning Theory, which posits that adult learners are self-directed, bring prior experiences into the learning process, and have learning needs closely tied to their social roles. The literature recognizes that younger drivers are generally more open to skill acquisition for upward mobility, while older drivers might seek literacy primarily for functional purposes like navigating road signs or completing forms. Age was also found to significantly influence enrichment interests, a finding that is in line with developmental and motivational learning theories presented in the literature (Bhola, 1995; Olaleye & Adeyemo, 2012). The older a driver gets, the more inclined they might be towards practical, health-related, or retirement planning topics, while younger drivers may seek literacy enrichment that supports entrepreneurship or technological adaptation.

The non-significant influence of religion on functional literacy needs, as observed in the study, slightly diverges from some earlier assumptions that religious affiliation might shape openness to literacy programmes. However, this aligns with the findings of Onuka and Akinyemi (2012) that

religious affiliation is not a consistent determinant of road behaviour or driver education uptake, thereby suggesting that religious background may not substantially mediate learning interest when it comes to job-related needs. The finding aligns with Sociolinguistic Theory, which emphasizes that language use, literacy engagement, and communication patterns. As with functional literacy, religion did not significantly influence enrichment interests. This neutral effect supports the argument advanced in UNESCO (2013) that literacy enrichment, when designed with secular, occupational relevance, transcends religious lines. This finding has practical implications for programme design, suggesting that enrichment curriculum can maintain a universal appeal without necessarily tailoring for religious segmentation.

The finding that formal education significantly influences the functional literacy needs of drivers is consistent with Ipingbemi (2008), who reported a negative correlation between drivers' education levels and accident rates. This aligns with Human Capital Theory, which posits that education enhances individuals' skills, productivity, and earning potential. This implies that higher levels of education often correspond to a greater appreciation of the value of continued literacy and capacity building and reinforces the claim by Business Innovation and Skills (2013) that functional literacy is cumulative and builds on existing literacy foundations. Formal education significantly influenced enrichment interests. This reaffirms Bravo et al. (2002) and Oreh's (2006) conclusions that educational background fosters a broader range of intellectual interests and the desire for self-improvement. Literate drivers are more likely to engage in further learning when they perceive a meaningful connection between literacy and socioeconomic mobility.

The significant effect of driving experience on functional literacy needs supports findings from the FRSC public education assessment by Onuka and Akinyemi (2012), where drivers with more experience were more aware of and responsive to educational programmes, which can be interpreted through both Functionalism Theory and Human Capital Theory. From a functionalist view, longer driving experience exposes individuals to complex situations that demand literacy for effective performance, prompting them to seek further learning to fulfill their societal and occupational roles. From a human capital perspective, accumulated work experience highlights skills gap and motivates ongoing training as an investment in one's occupational efficiency and economic viability. This indicates that longer-term exposure to the professional field of driving makes drivers more aware of their knowledge gaps and motivates them to seek literacy that

enhances their occupational competence. The significant effect of driving experience on enrichment interests corroborates the earlier finding on functional literacy. Long-serving drivers, having encountered multiple situations requiring documentation, communication, or technological literacy, likely realize the personal and professional benefits of ongoing literacy enrichment. This aligns with Akinmusere and Oladumoye (2011), who emphasized the preventive and developmental value of regular training and education for drivers.

Collectively, these findings highlight the multidimensional nature of functional literacy and enrichment interests among commercial drivers in Nigeria. The alignment and divergences observed between the current data and prior studies suggest that while some background variables consistently influence learning needs and preferences, others may vary in effect depending on the occupational context. These results reinforce the importance of a tailored, contextually grounded literacy curriculum that considers drivers' educational backgrounds, cultural identities, and occupational trajectories. Also, the findings—viewed through the combined theoretical frameworks—highlight that functional literacy and enrichment interests among commercial drivers are shaped by an interplay of social roles (Functionalism Theory), cultural-linguistic contexts (Sociolinguistic Theory), adult learning principles (Adult Learning Theory), and economic value considerations (Human Capital Theory). While ethnic background, age, formal education, and driving experience emerged as strong determinants, religion did not show significant influence. This reinforces the need for literacy interventions that are culturally inclusive, age-sensitive, learner-centred and economically relevant, ensuring that drivers not only meet their occupational demands but also enhance their long-term socio-economic prospects.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study carry clear implications for policy formulation, curriculum development, and implementation of adult literacy programmes in Nigeria. Policymakers should adopt a differentiated instructional approach that accounts for drivers' varying educational backgrounds, age profiles, and cultural contexts. Literacy programmes must integrate multilingual content to address ethnolinguistic diversity while embedding practical, occupation-specific skills such as navigation, road safety compliance, vehicle documentation, and ICT use for logistics. Government agencies, transport unions, and NGOs should collaborate to provide mobile and flexible literacy platforms—including weekend classes, modular courses, and digital learning resources—to fit the irregular schedules of drivers. Furthermore, continuous professional development frameworks

should be instituted to ensure that literacy enrichment is ongoing, contextually relevant, and linked to socio-economic advancement, thereby fostering a sustainable culture of lifelong learning in the commercial transport sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was recommended that:

1. Culturally Relevant Programmes should be organized and multilingual, culturally sensitive literacy materials that reflect drivers' backgrounds and occupational needs be developed.
2. Age-Specific Modules should be produced with the content for different age groups: career and technology for younger drivers, safety and health literacy for older ones.
3. Experience-Based Learning, linking training to drivers' work experiences, focusing on road signs, documentation, and customer relations, should be organised.
4. Institutional Collaboration should be set up to partner with FRSC, NURTW, and similar bodies to integrate literacy into driver certification and safety programmes.
5. ICT Integration, using mobile apps, videos, and digital tools to provide flexible, engaging literacy opportunities, should be initiated and facilitated.

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