

A Functional Literacy Program for Saudi Arabian Illiterate Women

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Literacy program irrelevance to learners and societal real needs is a major problem confronting literacy and development efforts in Saudi Arabia. In an attempt to remedy this problem, this study investigates the appropriateness of an alternative functional literacy model that would complement the existing religious-alphabetical model. This study is based on the belief that an effective adult education program requires a thorough and systematic planning effort which logically begins with the identification of appropriate educational goals. The responses of 208 university professors, 337 literacy teachers, and 356 adult learners involved in this study were the basis for proposing necessary literacy policy changes. Moreover, in light of research findings and a thorough observation of current practices, numerous recommendations for implementing the proposed model and changes in delivery system were made.

Illiteracy has been a major impediment confronting all phases of development in the Saudi Arabian Society. Although this problem reigns unrivaled in all regions and among all subcultural groups (e.g., urban, rural, nomads), it is more evident among women, particularly old and middle-aged women in rural and nomadic areas (see Table 1). Recognizing the inherent potential danger of this problem, the General Presidency of Girls' Education (GPGE, founded in 1960) established a separate division called the Female Literacy Division that was assigned the authority and responsibilities of planning, organizing, inspecting, and coordinating all female literacy programs. Paradoxically, despite the availability of

highly-trained and well-qualified Saudi Arabian women educators, all these responsibilities were delegated to male personnel who, due to sex segregation, are not allowed to step into the female literacy center or even to secure direct contact with female literacy administrators or teachers.

Table 1. Saudi Arabian Illiteracy by Region and Sex (%)

Sex	North	Central	West	South	East	Total
Male	67	44	49	64	43	52
Female	92	76	77	95	67	81

Source: Almanah⁽¹⁾

In 1392 H (1974) the Female Literacy Division opened 47 literacy classrooms in major urban areas. As time passed, a large network of female literacy programs have spread with almost equal proportion throughout the kingdom. Available statistics show that at the present time a total of 4250 literacy teachers, mainly non-Saudis, are involved in teaching 55,602 female illiterates who are enrolled in all 18 district literacy centers (see Table 2). The available statistics also show that the highest quantitative development in literacy effort occurred during the last 10 years.

Despite quantitative expansion, the female literacy program, like all educational systems in Saudi Arabia, suffers from various problems. Among the major problems confronting the female literacy program are the irrelevance of curriculum to learners and societal needs, lack of continuous planning, and lack of periodic evaluation. These concerns and problems have been explicitly voiced by a number of Saudi Arabian educators and researchers, and in a number of educational conferences held in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere⁽²⁻⁵⁾.

Objectives

As a first step to remedy the irrelevance of literacy curriculum, this study attempts to propose selected goals for expanding the Saudi Arabian female literacy program from a mere limited religious and alphabetical program to a more functional oriented program that would satisfy learners' religious, basic literacy,

Table 2. The Distribution of Female Learners, Classrooms, Teachers, and Administrators in each School District for the Year 1402-1403 (1982/1983)(6)

District	Combating Stage*			Follow-up Stage*			Total class-rooms	Total learn-ers	Staff			
	Class-rooms	Learn-ers	Class-rooms	Learn-ers	Class-rooms	Learn-ers			Teachers	Administrators	Total	
Riyadh city	122	2206	112	2056	78	1208	57	743	360	87	447	
Riyadh district	159	1591	149	2472	114	947	88	681	476	54	530	
Jeddah	212	4047	168	2990	132	2120	94	1276	10,433	82	680	
Mecca	56	1100	47	880	42	638	32	408	3026	38	216	
Taif	44	815	35	668	25	336	21	317	2166	18	163	
Medina	56	1232	53	1006	32	530	24	341	3703	--	253	
Tabuk	22	465	21	367	5	93	4	65	990	--	69	
Jizan	99	1448	82	1115	67	549	47	437	3549	42	290	
AlBaha	31	691	24	362	18	226	9	87	1366	--	83	
Hayel	38	663	39	308	24	215	23	135	1321	5	137	
AlShamal	39	526	29	464	20	194	15	123	1307	14	121	
AlJouf	18	206	17	193	11	102	9	64	565	3	58	
AlQasseem	96	1062	90	619	60	390	58	302	2373	7	306	
Aseer	97	1260	97	1064	113	543	46	301	3168	16	314	
Najran	44	675	36	273	26	262	19	151	1361	13	142	
Eastern Province	115	1784	104	1641	82	1121	61	798	5343	62	541	
Al Ahsa	90	1494	77	1137	68	739	54	519	3889	74	348	
Hafer AlBatin	14	262	23	304	14	114	8	48	728	8	75	
Total	1357	21,527	1205	16,919	931	10,357	667	6800	55,602	4250	523	4773

* The Saudi Arabian literacy education program is divided into two stages, a combatting stage and a follow-up stage. The duration for each stage is two years. Upon successful completion of both stages, the adult learner is awarded the elementary school equivalency diploma and is awarded SR. 500 which is equivalent to U.S. \$150. Up until 1982-83 statistics show that a total of 28,459 completed the program.

survival, health, home management, vocational, communications and human relations, social integration, civic, continuing education, intellectual, and recreational needs which in turn would tie the literacy program in with socio-economic, political, and technological development of the country. Moreover, this study attempts to evaluate the current fulfillment level of proposed goals.

Questions and Hypotheses

Basically, this study sought to answer eight research questions and to test eight null hypotheses that were advanced from the research questions. Specifically, the research questions sought to find answers as to how respondents from various regions (e.g., central, western, eastern), positions (e.g. university professors, literacy teachers and adult learners), social affiliations (e.g., urban, rural and nomadic), nationalities (e.g., Saudi, non-Saudi), academic orientations, (e.g., literary, scientific;, and gender (e.g., male university professors, female university professors), perceive the importance of the 12 proposed goals. Only two independent variables (position and religion) were investigated as to how they might influence respondents' perceptions regarding the current fulfillment level of the proposed goals. With respect to the eight null hypotheses, they were advanced to test whether or not independent variables (e.g., position, region, social affiliation, nationality, academic interest, university professors' gender) utilized in this study have a significant impact on respondents' perceptions regarding the importance and/or fulfillment level of the proposed goals. It was hypothesized that all employed variables had no significant impact on respondents' perceptions.

Method

A total of 208 randomly selected male and female university professors, 337 literacy teachers, and 356 female adult learners from the central, western, and eastern regions of Saudi Arabia participated in this study. College deans and directors of women education departments have assisted in data collection which stretched from May 1984 until the middle of July 1984.

A thoroughly pilot-tested (N=32), valid and highly reliable instrument (questionnaire) was utilized for data collection. Instrument overall internal consistency reliability was .96 which implies that scale items overall appear to be

homogeneous and measure some kind of common construct (functional literacy). The instrument included a background information sheet and a total of 12 goal scales. Each goal scale was further delineated by dividing it into smaller subgoals. All in all, the instrument had 72 subgoals. All goals and subgoals were derived from a thorough review of the philosophical (e.g., the goals of education in light of western and Islamic philosophies) and the practical (e.g., the goals of adult education in the United States, Arab region, African countries, Asian countries, and South America) literature⁽⁷⁻¹⁰⁾.

Respondents were basically asked to do three tasks. First, respondents were asked to fill out the background information sheet; second, to rate the importance of each subgoal on a scale of 5, 5 being extremely important and 1 extremely unimportant; and third, to rate the current fulfillment level of each subgoal on a scale of 5, 5 being extremely implemented and 1 being extremely unimplemented.

Procedures

When all data were collected, they were coded, tabulated, and analyzed utilizing the available computer facilities at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Cronbach alpha test was computed to test instrument reliability. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were computed to determine how respondents perceived the importance and current fulfillment level of all proposed goals. Goals having a mean value between 3.75 and 5.00 and below 1.00 SD were accepted as important goals to consider in expanding the literacy program. This statistical procedure was identically followed in analyzing respondents' perceptions regarding goals' current fulfillment level.

Moreover, T-tests or analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests (.05), depending on number of groups in each analysis, were computed to test whether or not independent variables employed in this study have a significant impact on respondents' perceptions concerning the importance and/or fulfillment level of proposed goals. When significant differences were detected among groups, the Scheffe test was computed to determine which group differed significantly from any group(s).

Results and Discussion

Findings indicated that 10 of the 12 proposed goals were, in general, considered important and acceptable goals for expanding the female literacy educa-

tion program. These 10 goals were the religious, health, basic literacy, communication and human relations, survival, home management, continuing education, social integration, civic literacy, and intellectual goals. These 10 goals, in most cases, enjoyed high mean importance and low within-group variations. Respondents were also in good agreement regarding prioritizing proposed goals as above ordered. Table 3, although present findings are based only on one investigated variable (position), gives an insight as to how respondents perceive the importance of proposed goals.

Table 3. Perceptions of University Professors, Literacy Teachers and Female Adult Learners Concerning the Importance of the Proposed Goals (N = 901)

Goal scale	University professors (N = 208)			Literacy teachers (N = 337)			Literacy learners (N = 356)		
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
Religious	4.43	.56	1	4.56	.51	2	4.69	.44	1
Literacy	4.19	.72	3	4.50	.55	3	4.52	.55	3
Survival	4.01	.86	6	4.36	.79	5	4.43	.75	4
Health	4.35	.58	2	4.59	.49	1	4.57	.59	2
Home management	4.10	.61	4	4.34	.66	7	4.34	.73	7
Employment	3.39	.93	12	3.96	.89	11	3.92	1.05	11
Communications and human relations	3.95	.71	7	4.39	.58	4	4.42	.61	5
Social integration	3.84	.79	9	4.30	.65	8	4.34	.74	8
Civic literacy	3.85	.84	8	4.23	.70	9	4.31	.80	9
Continuing education	4.09	.67	5	4.34	.63	6	4.34	.72	6
Intellectual	3.76	.80	10	4.07	.69	10	4.10	.87	10
Recreation	3.47	1.02	11	3.70	.90	12	3.86	1.01	12

Only two goals (e.g., employment and recreation) were not fully accepted or supported as important goals to consider in expanding the female literacy program. Six of the lowest and most controversial 14 subgoals were classified under the employment and recreation goal categories. Arabic conservative culture that rejects female employment probably accounted for the rejection of the employment goal category. Differences in recreational orientation among respondents due to differences in age, gender, educational level, and life experience, probably accounted for high variation in respondents' perceptions regarding the tance of the recreation goal category.

With respect to goal current fulfillment level, findings showed that respondents downgraded the current fulfillment level of all proposed goals (see Table 4). The response of the 555 subjects who responded to the second part of the questionnaire (their perceptions about goals current fulfillment level) showed that all goals, even the religious, basic literacy, and health goals which are supposed to be the focus of the current program, have not been fully implemented.

Table 4. Perceptions of University Professors, Female Literacy Teachers, and Female Adult Learners Concerning the Attainment Level of the Proposed Goals (N= 555)

Goal scale	University professors (N = 115)			Literacy teachers (N = 231)			Literacy learners (N = 209)		
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
Religious	2.93	.84	1	3.75	.82	1	3.92	.78	1
Literacy	2.78	.78	2	3.72	.77	2	3.71	.72	2
Survival	2.10	.98	9	2.99	1.16	8	3.08	1.07	6
Health	2.32	.83	4	3.57	.85	3	3.59	.85	3
Home management	2.16	.77	7	2.54	.99	10	2.57	1.03	10
Employment	1.98	.80	10	2.27	1.11	11	2.31	1.16	11
Communications and human relations	2.21	.74	6	3.32	.77	4	3.33	.75	4
Social integration	2.42	.67	3	3.22	.82	5	3.23	.83	5
Civic literacy	2.27	.73	5	3.06	.94	6	3.01	.94	8
Continuing education	2.15	.73	8	3.01	.82	7	3.06	.87	7
Intellectual	1.93	.72	11	2.75	.77	9	2.77	.88	9
Recreation	1.93	.76	12	2.10	.93	12	2.24	1.07	12

Hypotheses testing results showed that position, gender, region, and nationality were found significantly operating variables affecting respondents' perceptions, regarding the importance of proposed goals. Specifically, female literacy teachers and learners assigned significantly higher importance ratings to all proposed goals than did university professors. Female university professors gave higher importance ratings to nine goals than did male professors. Eastern region respondents assigned significantly higher importance to all proposed goals than did central and western respondents. And non-Saudi teachers assigned higher importance ratings to eight goals than did Saudi teachers. The long history of sex segregation, Arabic conservatism, university professor intellectual orientation as opposed to teachers' and learners' practical orientation, female university professors' closer contact with female population, female professors' enthusi-

gradually sweeping feminist movement in the Arab world, the high urbanization, industrialization in the eastern region, non-Saudi teachers previous learning experiences in their home countries, and their vested interest (financial wise) in seeing the literacy program expanded probably have contributed to the exertion of these significant differences between or among respondents.

Likewise, data showed that position and region were significant variables affecting how respondents perceived the current fulfillment level of proposed goals. Specifically, female literacy teachers and learners consistently assigned significantly higher implementation ratings to all proposed goals than university professors did. And eastern region respondents assigned significantly higher implementation ratings for 10 goals than did central and western region respondents. Literacy teachers' and learners' clearer understanding about program content, classroom activities, extracurricular activities, and their vested interest in the continuation of the literacy program probably influenced them to place significantly high implementation ratings on all goals than university professors. The fact that eastern region teachers had higher level credentials, more teaching experiences, attended more adult training programs, and mainly taught in literacy programs because they enjoy teaching adults probably made them more qualified and interested than teachers from the other two regions to impart more knowledge, skills, and attitude to literacy learners. The second explanation for these significant differences, on the part of eastern region respondents, proceeds on the assumptions that eastern region literacy programs perhaps have more facilities, equipment, supplies, enjoy lower teacher-student ratios, and receive greater attention from district personnel, supervisors and inspectors, which collectively might have facilitated and improved goal attainment level in this region.

Last, data indicated that social affiliation and academic orientation exerted no significant impact on respondents' perceptions concerning the importance of goals.

Conclusions and Implications

The major conclusions and implications of this study are highlighted in this section.

1. Survey respondents were willing and ready to accept the religious, basic literacy, survival, health, home management, communication and human relations, social integration, civic literacy, continuing education, and intellectual goals as a basis and a guideline for expanding the female literacy program.

2. In light of rank ordering results one can conclude that survey respondents agree on continuing the policy of the General Presidency of Girls' Education that focuses on the traditional, religious, basic literacy, and health goals.

3. Survey respondents, especially in the western and central regions, were dissatisfied with the current attention given to implement proposed goals. This implies that female education departments, especially in the central and western regions, should investigate the reasons why their programs failed to achieve these goals.

4. Eastern region respondents are more willing to accept the proposed goals than respondents from the central and western regions. The implication of this conclusion is that the eastern region is perhaps the most appropriate region for implementing the first trial functional literacy program merely because such a program, as data indicates, would receive wider acceptance from this area's learners, teachers, and university professors.

5. There is a lack of conflict among urban, rural and nomadic adult learners concerning the importance of proposed goals. The implication of this conclusion is that a unified functional literacy program would be appropriate to meet the needs of all urban, rural, and nomadic adult learners.

6. There is a lack of conflict between teachers and learners concerning the importance of proposed goals.

7. There is a conflict between Saudi and non-Saudi literacy teachers concerning the importance of proposed goals. This conclusion implies that perhaps intensive adult education training programs and exposure to the concept of functional literacy would narrow the gap between the two groups' perceptions, and thus minimize the occurrence of conflict among literacy teachers.

8. There is no conflict between literary-oriented and scientific-oriented pro-

fessors' perceptions concerning the goals of female literacy education. This conclusion implies that Saudi Arabian literary and scientific professors tend to behave similarly in educational policy-setting situations.

9. Female university professors are more willing to accept educational reforms, changes, and innovations than male university professors are. This implies that the current policy of the General Presidency of Girls' Education of appointing male university professors as policy and curriculum advisors may not be appropriate since the perception of male professors concerning literacy goals are quite deviant from learners' and teachers' perceptions. A more healthy policy then, would be to appoint female university professors as advisors since their stand on all proposed goals coincides more closely with perceptions held by teachers and learners.

Recommended Strategy for Implementing the Proposed Program

This section is concerned with proposing a strategy for expanding the program and implementing proposed goals.

1. The first step in implementing the proposed program requires an entire revision of all currently utilized textbooks in order to integrate all 10 accepted proposed goals into the revised curriculum. To achieve this goal of integrating proposed goals into the curriculum, a representative committee of Saudi and non-Saudi women functioning under the jurisdiction of the General Presidency of Girls' Education should be formed immediately in order to plan a strategy for integrating the proposed goals into the literacy curriculum. This committee should include literacy experts, curriculum experts, psychologists, sociologists, religious experts, physicians, Arabic language experts, scientific-oriented professors, literacy teachers, and textbook authors.

2. Since 10 of the proposed goals are perceived important to consider in expanding the female literacy program it is recommended that the General Presidency of Girls' Education should integrate them into the general literacy goal statements. Such integration would signify a commitment on the part of the General Presidency of Girls' Education to provide all human and nonhuman means to accomplish these goals.

3. A permanent female higher literacy council which would function under the jurisdiction of the General Presidency of Girls' Education must be officially established through a government legislative act. This council would include appointed literacy experts, curriculum experts, religious experts, home economists, psychologists, sociologists, scientists, language experts, and literacy teachers. The function of this council would be to legislate curriculum changes, supervise literacy programs, and undertake needed literacy research.

4. In addition to the female higher literacy council, it is recommended that a committee including two literacy teachers, two administrators, two female literacy teachers, and two literacy learners should be established in every evening literacy center. These program-based committees might be a useful mechanism for communicating the opinions, problems, and concerns of the groups represented to the female higher literacy council.

5. The practice of housing literacy programs in elementary school buildings should be eliminated since elementary school arrangements, furniture, facilities, and equipment are not conducive to adult psychology and learning. Instead, it is recommended that special literacy centers should be established in every town, village, and nomadic settlement (*hijrah*). These literacy centers should be designed to promote physical and psychological comfort.

6. Since the success of this new functional literacy program will ultimately depend on teachers' and administrators' performances, it is recommended that intensified efforts should be made on staff training and development. It is the author's thesis that without a strong understanding of the rationale for adopting this new functional literacy program, and without the dedication of the staff to program goals as well as the knowledge of how to implement them, the program is destined to fail.

7. Theory Y type administrative behavior that emphasizes trust, openness, cooperation, collaboration, collective planning, delegation, distant supervision, and positive communication should, in general, govern administrators' and teachers' relationships. These administrative behaviors would most likely boost teachers' morale and satisfaction which, in turn, may improve teachers' productivity.

8. Since counseling and guidance is a neglected area in the Saudi Arabian

educational system, particularly in the literacy system, it is recommended that a counseling and guidance division operated by a qualified counselor should be established in every literacy council. The function of this division would be to assist learners to overcome problems related to a fear of learning, academic achievement, attrition, teacher-learner conflict, emotional problems, program adjustment, finances, family planning, time management, marriage, divorce, children, etc.

9. Special tutorial services should be made available for female adult learners who might have learning problems.

10. Special arrangements should be made to familiarize learners with their community health agencies, banking institutions exclusively for women, public libraries, public TV and radio stations, recreational and physical fitness centers, commercial centers, and industrial centers.

11. It is recommended that TV and radio stations should allocate daily time spots of at least an hour to air literacy lessons and other topics relevant to the proposed goals.

12. Special short weekend seminars that address religious, health, home management, civic literacy, family planning, and other functional literacy themes should be conducted on a continuous basis in every literacy center in order to accommodate the needs of those illiterates who for some reason are unable to attend literacy programs during the week.

13. It is recommended that the literacy program's extracurricular activities should be expanded. In expanding these activities, it must be taken into account that activities should be geared as closely as possible to the achievement of proposed goals. Recommended extracurricular activities would include Koranic interpretation clubs, stitching and tailoring clubs, child care clubs, cooking clubs, drawing clubs, health care clubs, Arabic poetry clubs, etc. Other activities could be added or varied as dictated by students' needs and interests.

14. It is recommended that teachers should be warm and friendly, and also aware that many people attending adult education classes are timid and sensitive about their lack of learning, especially in basic areas. These adults need praise

for improvement and encouragement when they become frustrated. They need opportunities to experience success in order to develop what Glasser (1965) referred to as a "success identity."⁽¹¹⁾ Moreover, it is recommended that teachers should stress regular attendance and completion of assignments.

15. Traditional teaching methods (e.g., lecturing) that ignore the value of learners' active participation should not be overemphasized. Instead, it is recommended that these traditional methods should be utilized in conjunction with more interactive methods of teaching (e.g., discussion groups, buzz groups, demonstrations, problem solving, etc.). These interactive and most spontaneous and natural ways of learning reduce the hearing and visual problems involved in adult learning, improve learners' communication and human relation skills, and assist learners to acquire higher intellectual skills of comprehending, integrating, synthesizing, evaluating, and applying. Moreover, these interactive methods of learning promote group cohesiveness, promote the application of the androgical principles, and above all are more compatible with learners' self-concept, learners' potential, field dependent cognitive style, and the democratic and humanistic educational values adhered to by adult educators.

16. It is recommended that a multimedia approach of teaching should be stressed, involving the use of booklets, charts, pictures, maps, films, recordings, diagrams, realia, etc. The value of the multi-media approach is that it caters to the needs of learners who might have different cognitive learning preferences (auditory or visual).

17. The current rigid testing practice should be eliminated. In lieu of this practice, an alternative strategy that stresses schools attendance, class participation, homework assignment completion, and informal tests (e.g., oral, take-home, or just one final exam.) should be adopted. This change in testing strategy should minimize high student dropout rates.

18. A reasonable-sized library containing simplified religious, governmental policies, health, history, geography, and other books should be established in every literacy center.

19. The General Presidency of Girls' Education should provide newly enrolled semiliterate female adults with a free, easy-to-read magazine that addresses national news, health concerns, and community and women's concerns.

Notes

- (1) **Aisha M. Almana**, "Economic Development and Its Impact on the Status of Women in Saudi Arabia," unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Colorado, 1981, p. 156.
- (2) **Hassan, D. Algurashi**, "Proposed Goals for Adult Basic Education Programs in the Western Province of Saudi Arabia as Perceived by Teachers and Administrators," Unpublished Ed.D. Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, 1982, pp. 1-11.
- (3) UNESCO. *Educational Goals*. Paris, France, 1980, pp. 1-70.
- (4) **Mohammed Abdullah Hammad**, "The Educational System and Planning for Manpower Development in Saudi Arabia," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1973.
- (5) **Abdulaziz A. Alsunbul**, "The Goals of Women's Literacy Education in Saudi Arabia as Perceived by Saudi Arabian University Professors, Female Literacy Teachers, and Female Adult Learners," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1984, pp.29-38.
- (6) **General Presidency of Girls Education**. "A Statistical Report", distributed by the Literacy Education Division Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 1402-03 (1982-83), pp. 3-4.
- (7) **Syed Muhammad Al-Attas**, (Ed.) *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*. (Hodder and Stought, 1974), p. 23.
- (8) **John L. Elias**, and **Sharon B. Merriam**, *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education* (Krieger Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 1-170.
- (9) **Saylor Calen**, **William Alexander** and **Arthur Lewis**. *Curriculum Planning for Better Teaching and Learning*, 4th ed. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), pp. 157-95.
- (10) **Omar Mustaffa Kedah**, "The Development and Situation of Illiteracy in the Arab States," *Literacy Discussion*, 8 (3), Autumn 1977, p. 14.
- (11) **Daniel L. Obrien**, "Strategies for Change in Adult Education to Prevent Adult Attribution," Unpublished Ed.D. Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, 1977, p. 89.

برنامج محو أمية وظيفي مقترح لتطوير برامج محو الأمية
النسوية في المملكة العربية السعودية
عبدالعزیز بن عبدالله السنبلی
أستاذ تعليم الكبار والتعليم المستمر المساعد، قسم التربية،
كلية التربية، جامعة الملك سعود، الرياض، المملكة العربية
السعودية .

تعتبر مشكلة عدم ملاءمة ومناسبة مناهج محو الأمية للحاجات الحقيقية للمتعلّقات والمجتمع من أهم العقبات التي تواجه جهود التنمية وتعليم الكبار في المملكة العربية السعودية، وكمحاوله لعلاج هذه المشكلة تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقصي مدى أهمية ومناسبة برنامج محو أمية وظيفي مقترح لتطوير برامج محو الأمية الأبجدية المعمول بها حالياً. وهذه الدراسة منطلقة من إيمان الباحث بأن برامج محو الأمية الناجحة تتطلب تخطيطاً منظماً ودقيقاً، ولا بد لهذا التخطيط المنظم والدقيق أن يبدأ بعملية تحديد أهداف مناسبة وواضحة نرجو تحقيقها عند تطبيق البرنامج. وعلى هذا فإن بؤرة الحديث في هذا البحث هي تحديد أهداف تعليمية مناسبة تهدف إلى ربط برامج محو الأمية بخطة التنمية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية. والهدف الثاني من هذا البحث هو تحديد الأهداف التي تم تحقيقها فعلاً في البرامج المعمول بها حالياً.

ولقد شارك في هذا البحث ٢٠٨ أساتذة جامعيين، ٣٣٧ مدرسة من مدرسات محو الأمية و٣٥٦ طالبة من المنخرطات في برامج محو الأمية. وكانت إجابتهن الأساس الذي تم عليه عملية وضع الاقتراحات والتوصيات المتعلقة بعملية تطوير برامج محو الأمية وتطبيق البرنامج المقترح.