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The Challenges of Functional Adult Literacy: A Descriptive Study on EFL Learners in Beqaa District

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Abstract: The world witnesses a rapid change as a result of the technological revolution that shapes people's daily lives. This new lifestyle demands from 21st-century students new skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and computer skills. However, it is noticeable that literate people in Lebanon lack these skills which hinder their success at the professional and social levels. In this way, functional literacy is needed to help the literate to read, write, do calculations, and solve technical problems in the social and professional context. Therefore, this research conducted descriptive research on 100 EFL literate in the Begaa using a questionnaire and a poll to test functional literacy level and to determine the challenges that prevent adult literates to act as functional literate in the 21st-century. The results affirmed that nearly half of EFL adult literates in the Beqaa district can act as functional literates, but the majority of them are at the intermediate level. The results also revealed that they need more improvements regarding developing English skills, technological skills, and numeracy skills. Thus, it is recommended to design training courses that develop functional adult literacy skills by presenting them in a procedure that depends on promoting communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and computer skills so that that the adult learners can substitute the gaps they missed in their educational systems and contribute in the sustainable development of the society

Keywords: 21st-century skills; functional adult literacy; EFL learners; Lebanon

1. Introduction

Globalization changed people's lifestyle and their way of thinking. 21st citizens need specific skills to be accommodated with fast global changes. Indeed, the cosmic economy and the requirements of modern times are in desperate need of a new kind of education. Therefore, in our modern era, new skills should be added to the educational system to accommodate the development of the modern era.

Thus, according to Fadel and Trilling (2013), education in the developed world is working to match 21st-century skills. They asserted that the current age is experiencing a gap as a result of poor learning that did not meet the labor market needs. Astor (2007) asserted that the twenty-first-century citizen needs routine skills, rebounding skills, and complex communication skills. The 21st-century skills were summed up as the four C's: communication, collaboration, and critical thinking, and computer skills (Fadel & Trilling, 2013).

The 21st-century learners do not only need literacy skills such as reading and writing, but they need other skills such as critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and multicultural awareness skills (National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), 2008; Wagner, 2008). Moreover, 21st-century learners need to know how knowledge is created more than on what knowledge is presented based on qualitative and quantitative tools (Evan et al., 2001). In this way, literacy is not the ability to read and write to have a certificate that allows people to have appropriate social behavior (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2004). Cocchiarella (2018) said that this type of literacy does not allow people to solve life problems.

Therefore, literacy alone is not enough for 21st learners. Functional literacy is defined as the ability to read and write and do the calculation to perform social skills and succeed in a job (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2004). In bilingual education, Cadiero-Kaplan added, functional learning focuses on "English for all" that teaches reading and grammar skills by focusing on decoding texts to answer specific comprehension questions. UNESCO (1996) announced that the function of education is to prepare the learners for the market. That means to reflect their learning practices to develop the economy. UNESCO also (2010) views literacy to be: the heart of basic education for all, and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality, and ensuring sustainable development, peace, and democracy. Thus, 21st-century literacy is more than just reading and writing, but it is how to learn and utilize scientific research on cognition and meta-cognition levels (Barber, 2012). "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn" (Toffler, n.d cited in, Ratcliffe, 2016)

Examining the literacy rates in Lebanon revealed certain noticeable gaps in utilizing functional literacy. The fourth meeting of the Global Alliance Literacy (GAL) (2017) said that UNESCO declared that 750 million adults in the world cannot read and write. Fortunately, according to Faour et al. (2014), the adult literacy rate in Lebanon is 95.4% for people who are above 15 years old and have at least a baccalaureate certificate. However, referring to Galey (2009), the highest illiteracy rate was in Beqaa is 16.8%. Moreover, Alaoui (2016) conducted a study that revealed that although the adult literacy rate in Lebanon is the highest in the Middle East, their ability to function effectively using information communication technology is low both with family and work environment which shows that graduated people are no longer able to read, write and do the calculation for functional skills.

Nevertheless, despite the global need for functional literacy, educational programs in Lebanon focuses on literacy more than on functional literacy. Personally, as my job as a coordinator and trainer, I interact daily with literate adults who are at least at the secondary level. I observed that many of them lack computer skills, net surfing skills, calculation skills, and writing skills that hinder them to perform their jobs proficiently.

Meanwhile, it is not their fault alone. There are many observable reasons for this gap: First, having a look at our educational programs, especially at secondary and university levels, seem to focus more on knowledge skills (what) rather than on process skills (how) that prepare the literate students to the society and the job market. Another reason is the deficiency of training courses that keep the workers up to date. The third reason is the psychological factor that some people throw everything in the comfort zone and do not want to update their professional skills.

In this way, this research paper aims to study to what extent the EFL adult literate in the Beqaa region acquires functional literacy skills in their real-life situations depending on standard international methods. This research is addressed to adults whose age is from 16 to 65 years old because they represent 65% of Lebanese society and they are active members of the society (Ferday et al., 2014). This study chose EFL learners because English is a lingua franca, and it is largely needed to be functionally literate. It also chose the Bequa region, since it has the highest illiteracy rate in Lebanon referring to Galey (2009).

The significance of this research is it tests the functional literacy skills for EFL adult literate in Beqaa. In this way, it helps the researchers to know the strengths and weaknesses of literacy to develop more training programs to accommodate the learners with 21st-century skills. That is because as Silavwe et al. (2019) said that functional literacy skills help people to have self-sustainable development and share in economic development. Thus, government and non-government organizations should give more focus on developing functional literacy by holding sustainable development workshops. Perry et al. (2017) revealed the low-literate adults, the conflation of English learners and low literacy, and the omissions of writing and community considerations from discussions of functional literacy. Therefore, this research paper proposes the following questions:

- a. To what extent the EFL-educated adults in Beqaa are equipped with functional literacy skills?
- b. b. What are the challenges of functional adult literacy in Beqaa that should be improved? In this way, this research hypothesized that:

H1: EFL adult learners in Beqaa need functional literacy skills to accommodate them with 21st-century requirements.

2. Literature Review

This research paper examines functional adult literacy in Lebanon. This paper investigates how we could assess functional literacy for adult learners. Many studies were done to test the efficiency of functional literacy in the world. Teach for Bulgaria Project (2004-2009) made a study to assess literacy in non-governmental organizations in Bulgaria based on evaluating reading, writing, and numeracy skills. Cocchiarella (2018) said that the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) classified literacy into four levels: below level, basic literacy level (do simple tasks), intermediate literacy level (read, write and summarize), and professional literacy level (perform critical thinking levels). Silavwe et al. (2019) said that data can be conducted by evaluating functional reading in real life (phone messages, social media, recipes) and writing (reports, notes, messages...) Boudard and Jones (2003) illustrated that there are several standard tests to assess functional literacy in the 21stcentury: first, Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies reading mathematics, science, problem-solving collaborative problem solving, and financial literacy for 15 years old learners. Second, PIRLS assesses progress in international reading literacy by studying reading and online reading for 4th graders. Third, TIMSS is an international mathematics and science study. Fourth, PIAAC is a program for the international assessment of adult competencies as it assesses literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving in technology-rich environments for adults in households ages 16-65 (international), U.S. Adults in households ages 16-74, and U.S. Adults in prison ages 16-74.

Among these tests, this research paper adopts the PIAAC test design as it is concerned with testing adult literacy in several domains. The PIAAC survey measures adults' proficiency in key information-processing skills literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, and reading, and it gathers information and data on how adults use their skills at home, work, and in the wider community (National Education Center for Statistics, 2019).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013) revealed that the PIAAC test is designed into two parts: a background questionnaire and the direct assessment of cognitive skills. First, the PIAAC background questionnaire includes information regarding several factors regarding the education, social background, to what extent engagement literacy and numeracy, and ICTs skills are used in real life. The second part evaluates the cognitive skills in four sections: First, PIAAC defines literacy as the process of using understanding, evaluating, using, and engaging skills in written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge. Second, numeracy is defined as the ability to use, apply, interpret, and communicate mathematical information and ideas in their daily lives. Third, problem-solving in technology involves using technology, communication tools, and networks to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others and perform practical tasks to solve a problem in life and work. Fourth, reading comprehension is built upon comprehension of written printed materials ranging from words to sentence structure to paragraph construction. It consists of three parts: print vocabulary, sentence processing, and passage comprehension (OECD, 2013).

Therefore, 21st students cannot accommodate with literacy alone just to read and write. Functional literacy becomes a must to accommodate the learners with the 21st-century skills to read, write and do calculations for real-life social tasks. Hence, many bilingual adults are considered literate in the Begaa region as they are above the secondary level, but many of them lack functional literacy.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

Functional literacy is a must for the 21-st learner who should be equipped with collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and computer skills (Fadel & Trilling, 2013). These skills enable them to read, write, do calculations and solve technological problems in real life and work context (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2004). Thus, this research paper conducted the following descriptive research to study to what extent EFL adult literate in the Begaa district is considered as functionally literate. This design allows the researcher to describe the current problem by testing the data quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.2 Participants

This research paper focuses on EFL adults in the Bequa region. The population is characterized by the following: their age is from 16 to 65 years old and at least they are at the secondary stage. In addition to that, they should be English educated since the Lebanese educational system is bilingual and English is the global language that helps learners to functional literates (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2004). Hence, to get accurate results, this research determines precisely the appropriate sampling technique and the method sampling size.

First, according to McLeod (2014), there are four types of probability sampling; random sampling, stratified sampling, opportunity sampling, and systematic sampling. This research chooses the sample randomly from the population as it randomly distributes the questionnaires to the target population.

Second, this research studies the sample size required for this research study. There are no accurate studies of the population size. Hence, to calculate the number of EFL adult literates in the Beqaa, the researcher depended on these results: the number of Lebanese people is 519,607 people (IDAL, 2016). Moreover, adult people whose age is between 16 and 65 years old represent 65% of the population (Faour et al., 2014). According to Galey (2009), the percentage of literate people in Bequa is 83%. According to CERDP (2004), 42% of adult literates in Beqaa are English educated. Calculating these percentages revealed that the population size is approximately 117,737 person which is very large.

Therefore, according to Rough guide sampling (2020), the study adopted the sample size for prevalence studies (*see figure 1*). It states, "we can calculate the margin of uncertainty around the findings of the study using confidence intervals. A confidence interval gives you a maximum and minimum plausible estimate for the true value you were trying to measure" p. 3.

	Size of population								
Margin of error	>5000	5000	2500	1000	500	200			
±10%	96	94	93	88	81	65			
±7.5%	171	165	160	146	127	92			
±5%	384	357	333	278	217	132			
±3%	1067	880	748	516	341	169			

Figure 1. Sample size for prevalence Studies (source: (Sample Size: A Rough Guide, 2020)

Accordingly, since our population (117,737) is greater than 5000 persons, the sample size should be between 96 (10%) and 384 (5%). To conduct my study, I distributed 1000 questionnaires randomly to EFL adult literate in Beqaa district. After 2 weeks, the researcher received 60 responses. Then, I conducted a poll to get 100 responses which is the required sample size. (*see table 1*).

Table 1. Sample Distribution

Tools	Number of participant		
WhatsApp broadcast functional literacy	256		
WhatsApp broadcast	109		
Functional literacy 2			
WhatsApp group cycle 2 teachers	255		
WhatsApp group cycle 3	255		
WhatsApp group اللقاء الثقافي البقاعي	74		
WhatsApp group المنتدى الثقافي البقاعي	67		
shared by participants	100		
private message on Facebook messenger	50		
Total number of members	1166		
Excluded participants (same persons who are in two or more groups)	Around 150		
Total number of receivers	1000		
After 2 weeks, the questionnaire responses	60		
After 1 week, the poll responses	100 responses		

3.3 Instrument

This descriptive research aims to evaluate adult functional literacy in Beqaa. It was conducted online because of COVID-19 quarantine. This research paper used two data tools: questionnaire and poll. First, the researcher shared the questionnaire with an introductory message about the research to 1000

people. After two days, the study sent a message to remind them to fill in the questionnaire. Then, after two weeks, I released a poll and I left it open for one week only until 100 responses were received.

Questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed on google forms. It aims to assess adult functional literacy according to global trends. Thus, it depends so much on the PIAAC test design as this test depends deeply on assessing 21st-century skills and it is a standard reliable test since it was conducted in 40 countries. However, this study did not take the PIAAC test as it is since it is exclusive and it was not permitted to be done in Lebanon. Thus, this study took the test design and designed different questions according to OECD skill surveys (2013). It focuses on real-life tasks referring to Silavwe et al. (2019). It uses different types of questions (short answer, multiple-choice, sentence, and paragraph) (OECD, 2013). According to the content, this questionnaire used a mixed-method design. It has 5 sections: (see the appendix)

Section 1: It assesses qualitatively the participants' background information (age, job, education, training programs) and the use of functional literacy skills (reading, writing, numeracy, computer) in their work or real life.

Section 2: It evaluates the participants' literacy. It has 4 tasks that evaluate respectively these skills: understanding (preschool), evaluating (chart), using (recipe), and engaging (advice). Tasks 1 and 2 were corrected quantitatively over 10 points while tasks 3 and 4 were corrected qualitatively by selecting randomly 10 answers.

Section 3: It evaluates the participants' numeracy skills. It has 5 tasks that demand doing simple and complex calculations (thermometer, wind power, birthrate, sales on shops, container). It was corrected over 20 points.

Section 4: It evaluates quantitatively (over 20 points) the participants' problem-solving skills in technological problems. It has 11 multiple choice questions about technological problems.

Section 5: It evaluates the participants' reading skills: vocabulary prints and sentence construction. It has 10 multiple choice questions that were corrected quantitatively over 20.

Section 6: It evaluates the participants' written skills. It has two questions: The first one is to choose a suitable vocabulary to complete the context. It was corrected quantitatively over 10 points. The second one is to write a short paragraph. It will be evaluated qualitatively by choosing randomly 10 paragraphs.

Hence, this questionnaire tests the background information qualitatively and the cognitive part quantitatively (over 80 points) and qualitatively (questions, 3 and 4 in the literacy part and the paragraph writing). After analyzing the results, the sample was grouped into four levels according to their scores in the questionnaire as Cocchiarella (2018) suggested: below level (who did not respond at all), basic level (1-30 pt.), intermediate level (31-60 pt.) and advanced level: (61-80 pt.).

Poll: It is an opinion one-question-survey. I write it in the Arabic language so that all participants can answer it. I distributed it to the same people who received the questionnaire, and I left it open for one week until I get 100 responses as the sample size of this research demands.

This poll tests the participant's opinions towards the questionnaire, so its major aim is to determine the problems that face functional literacy. Hence, it divides the participants into the following five levels: (see the appendix)

Level 1: did not respond at all

Level 2: did not answer the questionnaire but answered the poll by choosing " I did not try," or " I did not like to answer".

Level 3: did not answer the questionnaire but answered the poll by choosing: "I tried, but I did not succeed because of language, or technological problems.

Level 4: answered the questionnaire with help after several tries

Level 5: answered the questionnaire successfully without help.

In this way, the data collection tools assess the 4 c's of the 21 skills: first, they assess collaboration as the poll and the questionnaire tests the participants' awareness to collaborate in the research study. Second, they test critical thinking as the type of questions used in the questionnaire demand high-order thinking skills. Third, they evaluate computer skills as the methodology was done totally online using social media tools (Facebook, WhatsApp, email, etc.). Fourth, it tests the participants' communication as the questionnaire evaluates written communication skills and depends on the participants' opinion.

In conclusion, the questionnaire and the poll were the two major data tools in this research that assess to what extent the EFL adult learners in the Bequa district are equipped with functional literacy skills and the problems that prevent them from acting as 21-century citizens.

4. Results and Analysis

This descriptive research aims to investigate to what extent the EFL adult learners in Beqaa are equipped with functional literacy skills and the challenges they face. The questionnaire and the poll analyses revealed their functional literacy level. It opens the door for strategic planning in future education as it determines the strong points that educators should rely on and the weak points that are recovered.

Questionnaire Analysis: The questionnaire gives a demography analysis for the research sample and it uses a mixed-method design for analyzing the data.

Background information: This section analyzes the sample demography. This sample is representative of the research objectives as 90% of our sample lives in the Bequa district. It also represents adult age groups: 35% are between 36-45 years old; 26.7% are 26-35 years old; 23.7% are 16-25 years; 15% are 46-55 years. Moreover, the status did not affect the results as 50% of our sample is single and 45% married with children. However, females (88.3%) are greater than males (11.7%) which could be considered as one of the research limitations.

According to education, the participants have the same languages as 99% of them their native language is Arabic and their second language is English. Furthermore, all the participants are literate as 53.3% of them have a bachelor's degree, 23.3% are in the master or Ph.D. stage, 1.7% are university students, the others were either in technical or secondary schools. They have different specializations (languages, science, nursing, technology, and business...). Furthermore, 30% of the sample studied the old curriculum while the majority studied the new curriculum. According to work, the participants are from different majors as they fluctuate between teaching, engineering, health, do not work, and humanitarian manager. 50% of them have a relationship between their education and job, while 36% did not have and the others sometimes. 66.7 % of them attend training programs and 78.3% of them

affirmed their need for training programs in different majors especially developing communication skills, presentation skills, computer skills, methodology, etc.

Implementing functional literacy skills in their life/job was highly considerable. Regarding reading skills, reading emails (60%), reading books (55%), and reading instructions (48%) take the highest rates. According to writing, writing emails (58.3%), write reports (50%), and fill in forms (41%) are the most used. Numeracy skills are used in preparing charts (60%), doing simple calculations (38%), and using simple algebra (28%). Finally, computer skills are used widely to get information for work (81%), use MC word (71.7%), and use emails (65%). Moreover, the majority affirmed that the lack of computer skills affected their work and they need more training programs regarding using technological tools.

These results indicated that the research sample was representative of the population. It revealed that they are from different age groups; they are literate and work in different majors. It also revealed that they use functional literacy skills in their life/work at the simple or middle level. However, they have technological problems that affect their work.

The Quantitative Analysis: The quantitative analysis analyzed the participants' scores which were distributed over 80 points as follows: literacy (10 points), numeracy (20 points), problem-solving technological problems (20), reading skills (20), and paragraph construction skills (10 points). The quantitative analysis revealed that the grades range between 19-61 points, the mean is 42 points and the average is 40.7. Therefore, referring to figure 2, the majority of the participants are at the intermediate level as it indicates 83.3% (score: 31-60) while 13.3% are at the basic level (score1-30), and 3.3% are at the advanced level (score: 61-80). Moreover, examining the questionnaire revealed that the most relevant problems were in numeracy, writing, and technology.

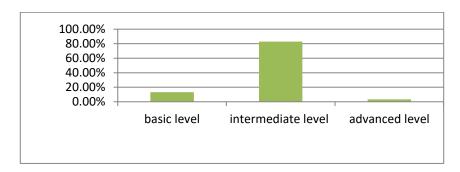


Figure 2. Functional literacy level for EFL adult literates in Beqaa

Moreover, figure 3 revealed that 75% of the learners can deal with technological tools. This result revealed that people who are equipped with technological skills are only the ones who respond to the questionnaire. This asserted the poll results as it excluded those who did not answer the questionnaire.

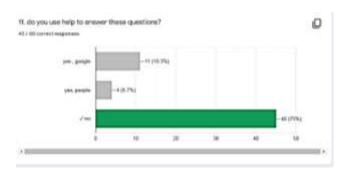


Figure 3. Technology use

Furthermore, the quantitative analysis revealed that the participants are from different cognitive levels as the last question analyzes the time used to fill in the questionnaire. It revealed that 43.3% need 20-30 min, 23.3% need 10-20 min, 15% need (40-60 min), 13% need (30-40 min), and the others need more than one hour. This indicates that the majority of them (43.3%) are equipped with critical thinking skills as they finished it in the appointed time.

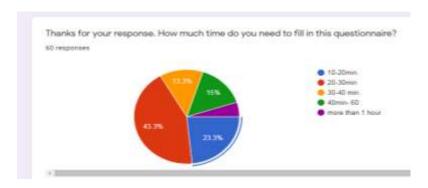


Figure 4. Time

The quantitative analysis revealed that 83% of EFL adult literates in Beqaa have an intermediate level in functional literacy skills. They have different cognitive levels and they are equipped with technological and critical thinking skills.

The Qualitative Analysis: Tasks 3 and 4 analyzed learners' responses to literacy skills, and writing a paragraph was analyzed qualitatively. To do so, this study analyzed 10 samples from the questionnaire by using systematic sampling (Mc Combes, 2019). This study analyzed the sixth questionnaire responses (6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 54, and 60) according to three criteria: B(bad), G (good), or VG (very good). Table 2 revealed that the participants are at the intermediate level as good level is the dominant one (frequency 5) while bad (3) and very good (2).

Table 2.	Qualitative	analysi	s results

questionnaire	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60
Literacy 3	VG	VG	G	VG	В	G	G	VG	VG	В
Literacy 4	VG	В	G	VG	В	G	G	G	G	В
Writing	G	В	В	VG	В	G	G	G	В	В
Result	VG	В	G	VG	В	G	G	G	G	В

Poll Analysis

The poll was opened for one week until I received 100 responses as indicated in the sample size. They were distributed as follows: 86 responses on the poll and 14 responses as a private message from those who have not internet to open the link. Figure 5 indicates the functional literacy levels for EFL adult literates in Beqaa. It revealed that 14% are at level 1 (did not have the internet yet), 12% represented level 2 (did not try to answer), 24% represented level 3 (tried but failed because of language problems, technical problems, or poor connection), 9% represented level 4 (shared after several tries and help). The highest level was for level 5 while 41% (shared only in this questionnaire). Therefore, we conclude that only levels 4 and 5 of the adult literates in Beqaa were able to act as functional literate

who represent 50%, while the others were not able either because of technological problems, language, poor connection or they are uninterested.

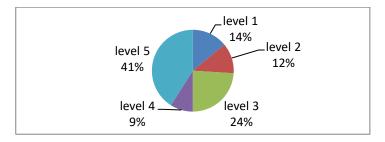


Figure 5. Poll Results

Overall, the qualitative data affirmed the quantitative data. They both revealed that the participants were at the intermediate level. The poll revealed that 50% of the EFL learners in Begaa were functional literate adult literates, but 83% of them were at the intermediate level as the questionnaire revealed. They also asserted that participants have problems in using and engaging literacy in communicative tasks, as well as they, face language problems that hinder them to communicate effectively. The most frequent problems are in numeracy skills and problem-solving technical problems. These results indicated that those who have technical problems and language problems were directly excluded from the questionnaire which also affirmed the poll results. Therefore, these results affirmed the research hypothesis which asserted that:

H1: EFL adult learners in Beqaa need functional literacy skills to accommodate them with 21st century requirements

4. Discussion

Functional literacy is one of the basic requirements for 21st-century skills. However, although Lebanon has a high literacy rate, functional adult literacy in the Beqaa district was not given attention. Our educational system did not allow the learners to read, write, and do a calculation in real-life contexts where they need critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and computer skills to live successfully in the 21st century. This research provides answers to the status of functional adult literacy in Begaa and its weaknesses that should be taken into consideration for achieving sustainable development aims.

Thus, this descriptive research provides us with the status of functional literacy in Begaa by answering the first research question: To what extent the EFL-educated adults in Begaa are equipped with functional literacy skills? The poll and the questionnaire analyses revealed that 50% of the adult literate in the Begaa were considered as functional literate and 83.3% of them were at the intermediate level. These results asserted that literacy was not considered as the ability to read and write to have a certificate, but it should allow people to read and write and do calculations to function appropriately in authentic real-life situations (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2004; Cocchiarella, 2018)

Moreover, this research answers the second research question which investigates the challenges that EFL adult learners face to implement functional literacy in their daily lives. On one hand, the poll analysis revealed that 50 % of the sample could not do the questionnaire because they have language problems, technological problems, or net surfing problems. It also revealed that they use the skills at the simple and middle level in their life/job. On the other hand, the questionnaire revealed that the participants have problems in doing calculations and in writing. These results asserted that OECD (2013) design determines accurately the elements of functional literacy that educators should take into account to accommodate the learners in the world with 21st-century skills. These results go along with ALaoui's (2016) study that revealed that although the adult literacy rate in Lebanon is the highest in the Middle East, their ability to function effectively using information communication technology is low.

These results also asserted UNESCO's (1996; 2010) report that the function of education is to prepare learners for the market. Thus, as the literates in this research did not show advanced levels, it is recommended to more training programs to accommodate them with 21st-century skills and to equip them with the missed skills as Silavwe et al. (2019) said that functional literacy skills help people to have self-sustainable development and share in the economic development.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This research paper recommends that EFL adult literate people in the Beqaa region need training programs in learning English in the social context, updated information technology programs, and implanting numeracy in real-life problems. These programs should be designed in a way to develop the 4c's of the 21st-century skills: collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and computer. In this way, we can fill in the gaps that the adult learners had missed in their educational systems and contribute to the sustainable development of society. This asserted what Toffler, (cited in, Ratcliffe, 2016) said the illiterate of the 21st century are people who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

Nevertheless, although this research gives us considerable results, there is no work that is empty from problems. It uses a sample with a minimum confidence level (10%). This is attributed to several reasons: firstly, I could not conduct it face to face because it was done during the quarantine period due to COVID-19. Second, the poor infrastructure and the economy in the Lebanese community distract the adults from working on continuous self-development.

Finally, this work provides the first step in presenting the gaps of functional literacy to develop the 21st-century skills for EFL adult literate people in Beqaa. However, it is like finding a straw in a heap. Thus, more research is needed to highlight the efficiency of the training courses that deal with teaching English, math, and computer in a new way to achieve 21st-century skills aims.

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