



The effectiveness of growth-oriented training for adults aged 35 to 45 in promoting self-coherence and lifelong learning

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Abstract

Aim: The current study aims to examine the effectiveness of growth-oriented education specifically designed for adults aged 35 to 45 years in enhancing self-coherence and lifelong learning.

Method: A quasi-experimental method with a pre-test-post-test control group design was employed for the study. The population consisted of women aged 35 to 45 years working in healthcare centers in Islamshahr city in 2022, from which 30 individuals (15 in the experimental group and 15 in the control group) meeting the inclusion criteria were conveniently selected. The Antonovsky's Sense of Coherence (1993) and Kirby et al.'s (2010) Lifelong Learning questionnaires were used to measure the dependent variables. Univariate covariance analysis was used for data analysis.

Results: The results showed that the implementation of the educational package significantly increased self-coherence ($F=11.18, p<0.01$) and lifelong learning ($F=10.88, p<0.01$).

Conclusion: Therefore, it can be concluded that growth-oriented education for adults aged 35 to 45 years is effective in enhancing self-coherence and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Growth-oriented, developmental tasks, adult education, self-coherence, adult learning.

Introduction

Growth and learning in adulthood are important areas of study in psychology and educational sciences. In adult education, there is an emphasis on developing an adult's capabilities to engage in the process of change. Thinking and learning are important factors in creating awareness of behaviors and new skills. Therefore, individuals' entry into the process of change requires more fundamental learning processes (Boström et al., 2018). Since each stage of life has its unique characteristics, it seems logical that the context of growth should be examined when analyzing individuals' lifestyle at a specific stage (Zadworna-Cieślak, 2020). Research indicates that only by considering the nature of growth can a complete picture of satisfaction with life, health, and psychosocial functioning of individuals at different stages of adulthood be presented (Eng & Jiacheng, 2012). For each developmental stage, there are social expectations. Developmental psychologists interpret these social expectations as developmental tasks. Specifically, many recent theoretical and empirical studies emphasize the practical application of developmental tasks of each period and their achievement in the subsequent life stage (Infarna et al., 2020).

Learning in adulthood includes learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live with others. These four pillars identify the broad spectrum of lifelong learning (Bilt, 2018). Learning to know means mastering the tools of knowledge, which can lead to the enjoyment of discovery and wisdom. Learning to do enables individuals to handle various and often unpredictable situations and work in group activities. Learning to be means the growth of independence, the ability to think logically, and proficiency in debate, so that individuals can best confront different situations in their lives. The principle of learning to be is based on human development arising from self-awareness and relationships with others. Learning to live with others involves developing patience and tolerance, non-violence, and valuing differences among humans (Roshe, 2017).

Therefore, creating valuable experiences in life, promoting cognitive and emotional growth for benefiting from life experiences, and achieving transformation and autonomy-driven guidance in adult education, formulating self-coherence to understand and manage stressful experiences, finding meaning in life, and motivating continual learning in adults, and ultimately improving adults' interpersonal relationships in the workplace and family demonstrate the necessity for revising adult education. On the other hand, a review of research in adult education shows a serious lack of attention to the developmental characteristics of adults in this age group's education. Hence, to achieve the aforementioned objectives, content and operational mechanisms for education tailored to the needs of the adult community should be reviewed and redesigned. Based on the aforementioned, this research will attempt to develop an educational package for adults that is based on the developmental needs of the adult period and facilitates a positive transformation path in them. The effectiveness of implementing this package on self-coherence, parent-child relationships, and lifelong learning will be investigated.

Method

A quasi-experimental method with a pre-test-post-test control group design was employed for the study. The population consisted of women aged 35 to 45 years working in healthcare centers in Islamshahr city in 2022, from which 30 individuals (15 in the experimental group and 15 in the control group) meeting the inclusion

criteria were conveniently selected. The Antonovsky's Sense of Coherence (1993) and Kirby et al.'s (2010) Lifelong Learning questionnaires were used to measure the dependent variables. Univariate covariance analysis was used for data analysis.

Results

The results showed that the implementation of the educational package significantly increased self-coherence ($F=11.18, p<0.01$) and lifelong learning ($F=10.88, p<0.01$).

Conclusion

The current research aims to examine the effectiveness of a development-focused educational package for ages 35 to 45 in enhancing self-coherence and lifelong learning. The findings of the research indicated that the implementation of the educational package significantly increased self-coherence and lifelong learning.

A crucial concept in the process of adulthood, especially when entering and completing middle age, is self-coherence, which is concerned with understanding and control. The sense of coherence relates to a stable overall orientation regarding the perception and control of the environment for meaningful and appropriate behavior or action and is connected with other aspects of adult life (Lindblad et al., 2016). Social and educational factors play a significant role in enhancing self-coherence. Individuals' experiences in life, their life structure, and their experiences in playing social roles are effective in feeling coherence, and in this context, what an individual learns from life structure and those parts of themselves that develop in the course of playing social and family roles are closely related to learning (Jeucks et al., 2017). Hence, any learning for performing social and family duties can develop a sense of coherence. One of the educational topics included in the package that affects self-coherence is acceptance towards unresolved life issues and unfulfilled desires. Research shows that this topic is effective in self-coherence. Akbari Moghaddam (2017) conducted research to examine the efficacy of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in increasing self-coherence, family adaptability, and self-compassion in married women. Statistical findings showed that ACT is effective on family coherence and adaptability. Moreover, the mean of the variables indicates that ACT leads to increased family coherence and adjusted adaptability scores. Other results showed that ACT is effective on self-compassion and components of self-judgment and over-identification. Also, the mean of the variables indicates that ACT causes an increase in self-compassion, self-judgment, and over-identification components. Using ACT, individuals are able to experience unpleasant internal events simply in the present and become capable of separating themselves from reactions, memories, and unpleasant thoughts, thereby increasing their self-compassion.

As introduced in the educational package, the teachings were conducted through activities and group experiences. Experience means a two-way interaction of the individual and the environment in the sense of being influenced by and influencing it, which is evident in transformative, self-determining, and progressivist learning theories. In fact, this principle is primarily due to the concepts of progressivists in lifelong learning. Specifically, it can be said that the broad view of progressivists on education and training is accepted in lifelong learning, as it considers education and training as a lifelong process that has been a long battle against the limited definition of learning as merely "study" (Stuck, 2012). Lifelong learning must be progressive and its manifestation should be seen in theory and practice. One of the important aspects considered by progressivists like Dewey and Lindeman was experience and

the reconstruction of the concept of experience. According to progressivists, experience has both active and passive components. Experience is not just what happens to a person, but also what the person does. More precisely, experience involves the interaction of the individual with the environment. In this interaction, the individual is influenced and influences (Rahimi Pasand, 2016). Mari (2012) in a study titled "Heutagogy and Lifelong Learning," showed that the use of a heutagogical approach helps develop the capacity and ability of the learner and prepares learners for changes in work environments and other contemporary life environments.

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