

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

LIFELONG LEARNING AMONGST WORKING PROFESSIONALS: ADULT LEARNING MINDSET AND PROCESS

TAN SIEW INN WENDY, PSYCHOLOGY

Abstract

Lifelong learning is necessitated by rapid technological disruptions as working adults continuously upskill to stay relevant in the changing employment landscape. The recent COVID pandemic has exacerbated this situation with widespread retrenchments. Yet research on adult learning, fragmented with multiple theories focusing different aspects of learning, is ill-equipped to guide lifelong learning efforts. This study aims to generate a holistic model on adult learning to help adults learn more effectively. Building on existing work on self-directed learning and workplace learning conditions, it asks the following questions: What is the adult learning mindset that motivates and sustains lifelong learning? What is the learning process that integrates both actual learning and learning how to learn? Lastly, what is the relationship between learning mindset, learning process and workplace learning conditions in helping working professionals grow and develop?

To answer these questions, this research effort has 3 studies. Study 1 consists of qualitative semi-structured interviews with 25 professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs) to generate a conceptual model on adult learning mindset and process in the workplace. Study 2 employs quantitative surveys with 300 PMETs to validate this conceptual model empirically, whilst study 3 is a longitudinal study with 85 PMETs to examine learning process as a continuous and coherent phenomenon.

Study 1 has been completed and findings from this study suggest that learning mindset is multi-faceted - experimentative, courage, curiosity, persistence and proactive initiative; beyond the popularly conceived growth mindset. The spiralling clusters of input – reflect – apply – feedback learning activities informed by metacognitive review constitute the learning process of working adults to continuously deepen and broaden their learning of new skills as well as expand their cognitive perspective, sense of identity and self-empowerment. The workplace creates a conducive environment for learning by providing ample feedback, application opportunities, organization resources and guidance from managers.

**Friday
11 Dec 2020**

10am

**Venue:
TEAMS Meeting**

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(continued.....)

These findings from study 1 inform studies 2 and 3. Study 2 will test the conceptual model derived from study 1 with a larger number of working adults to create a parsimonious model to refine our understanding of the relationship between learning mindset and process in the workplace. The interplay between input – reflect - apply – feedback processes and metacognitive ability will be examined in study 3, along with how individual factors influence the learning and growth of working adults. By answering these questions, this research effort seeks to help (a) adult learners sustain lifelong learning habits by improving their mindset and learning process; (b) adult educators to design more impactful learning interventions and; (c) policy makers to create conditions to motivate and sustain lifelong learning as a habit.

Proceedings

Duration	Session
5 mins	Chair Welcome & Introduction of Panel
30-45mins	Presentation by Student
15 mins	Q&A (by audience – faculty / students)
Break	Audience to leave the meeting
30 mins	Q&A by Panel
15 mins	Chairperson to ask candidate to leave the meeting Private Panel Discussion and Decision on the Qualifying Examination
15 mins	Candidate invited back by Chairperson Feedback and Outcome of Qualifying Examination

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