Impact of training in older adults:

Open the case of the Hall of Elders

Impact of education in seniors: the case of Senior Open Classroom

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the importance of active aging and the influence of learning throughout life of older adults. This study described the extent to which the participation of seniors in a program called "Open Classroom for the Elderly" influence them to have a more satisfactory vision of life and their ability to learn and modify their family habits. This program was offered at the University Pablo de Olavide of Seville, Spain. A mixed approach was used to collect data from 105 subjects, the results demonstrated how attending this training program has changed their lives in each of the variables studied.

Keywords: formal education; university programs for seniors; active and healthy aging; quality of life; learning throughout life.

Summary

The Senior Survey (2010) stated that in Spain 60% of people start new activities after retirement. One of the demands of this new generation of seniors is a quality university education. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of training in the elderly, in a formal educational context, taking into account the social and psychological dimensions. The work is structured in two sections: theoretical foundations and empirical framework.

Theoretical foundation

This section is organized into four chapters. The first, called "Approaching the concept of old age", is a review of the definitions of old age and origin of the various terms used to designate this evolutionary stage in life and its implications. An approach used in this study was to look at the elderly through history, mainly in Europe, and to address the current and future vision of it. A review of legislation and relevant documents both internationally and of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia (Spain) about this vital life stage was performed. Aging was explained utilizing various theoretical models that were found in the literartue, devoting a section to retirement, that in fact represents a turning point in the lives of people, specially those over 65 years old, which is the official beginning of old age stage.

The second chapter, "Old age as an object of study", presents an evolutionary research on the study of old age and aging by a summarization of the work carried out in Geriatrics and Gerontology Psycho-gerontology. The psychological and social dimensions were studied in depth, incorporating family life and the participation of older adults because these two dimensions were the factors studied in this investigation.

"Learning throughout life" is the third chapter of this study, which presents a reflection on learning throughout life and its evolution from the beginning of adult literacy. Describes in detail the theoretical approaches utilized in adult learning. The symbiosis between quality of life and active aging is presented in this chapter, as well as addressed the gerontology, as scientific and professional area dedicated to socio-educational intervention with and for older people.

The fourth and final chapter of the theoretical foundations, called "Training programs for older adults," analyzed in depth the various programs for older adults with their respective characteristics with focus on university programs. The university programs for older adults were a described based on of the formative models used for training. Finally, and in depth thorough analysis was performed of the "Open classroom for the elderly" at the University Pablo de Olavide in Seville, where the research for this study was conducted that included the most relevant legislation on adult education in Spain especially in Andalucía.

Empirical framework

The research focused on an analysis of the influence of the training received by students who attended the” Open Classroom for the elderly” at the University Pablo de Olavide. The objectives of the study revolved around the psychological and social dimension of older adults, highlighting first the personal aspect, and second the family aspect and participation aspect that were influenced by their participation in this project. From these three aspects or dimensions, fifteen specific objectives were developed for this study. The objective that was related to the personal aspect aimed to describe the self-image and self-perception that adults had. The objective that focused on the family aspect, tried to investigate the importance of elders as family support. The last objective related to the social aspect, analyzed the participation of seniors in the Open Classroom for the elderly. Therefore, the main objective of this research was to describe is there was a relationship between the personal, family aspects and the participation of older adults in the Open Classroom for the elderly at the University Pablo de Olavide.

The methodology used was of a mixed nature. From a quantitative perspective, the selected method of research design was a quasi- experimental, called causal-comparative or “ex-post-facto” design or single case and the choice to analyze the sample used was a casual non-probability statistical method.

The results showed, in general, how the attendance to this educational training program for older adults at the university level is related to:

Personal aspect, improves self-esteem, self-perception and the sense of belonging to the same group and diminishes the feeling of rejection. Also, they consider that there was qualitatively difference with respect to those over the previous generation.

Family aspect, have improved their relations by providing more objectivity when it comes to solving problems and enabling them to discover that training throughout life is as important as its work in the family.

Social aspect, they are proud to belong to the Open Classroom and the University, increasing its expectations for training throughout life and creating a need for further training when his participation in the training program.