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Study on elderly learners' needs and obstacles in network learning by "3C products"

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Abstract

This study treats elderly learners that participate in the distant program of the Open University of Kaohsiung as the samples. Through literature review, questionnaire survey, individual interviews, and perception reaction feedback after using 3C products, this study explores elderly learners' general needs and obstacles in network learning by 3C products, and offers conclusions and suggestions to improve the functions of 3C products, and thus, effectively assists elderly learners to practice efficient online program learning through 3C products and tools. In addition, it realizes how the educational institutes of adult lifelong learning, such as the Open University of Kaohsiung, employ blended learning modules, which integrate "network" and "face-to-face instruction" to assist with the adaptive participation of the elderly in learning activities, successful operation of 3C products, and participation in a face-to-face program to satisfy their learning needs and accomplish their learning goals.

Keywords: elderly learner, network learning, 3C products, learning need, learning obstacle.

Research Purposes

1. This study intends to explore the learning characteristics of elderly learners.
2. This study aims to learn the needs of and obstacles in network learning with "3C products" for elderly learners.
3. According to the research results, this study attempts to propose feasible strategies to help elderly learners effectively use "3C products" to overcome their learning obstacles, meet their learning needs, and achieve their learning goals.

Research Method

This study first employs literature review to collect important literature, such as books, journals, magazines, and papers on learning characteristics, as well as the needs of and obstacles in using "3C products" for the network learning of the elderly; summarizes and analyses such literature to form the basic concepts; summarizes the opinions and suggestions of scholars and experts, and develops a "Questionnaire on the Application of "3C Products" by the Elderly to Network Learning". This study investigates the elderly learners of the Open University of Kaohsiung through the questionnaire, and based on the statistics and analysis of the data collected, learns the status quo of the needs of and obstacles in using "3C products" for the network learning of the elderly. Copies of the questionnaire are distributed via paper and electronic forms.

Research Results

According to the calculation results of Figure 1, the path value of learning needs and obstacles of elderly learners using "3C products" for network learning is -0.06, which reaches a significant level, indicating that there is negative correlation between learning needs and obstacles.

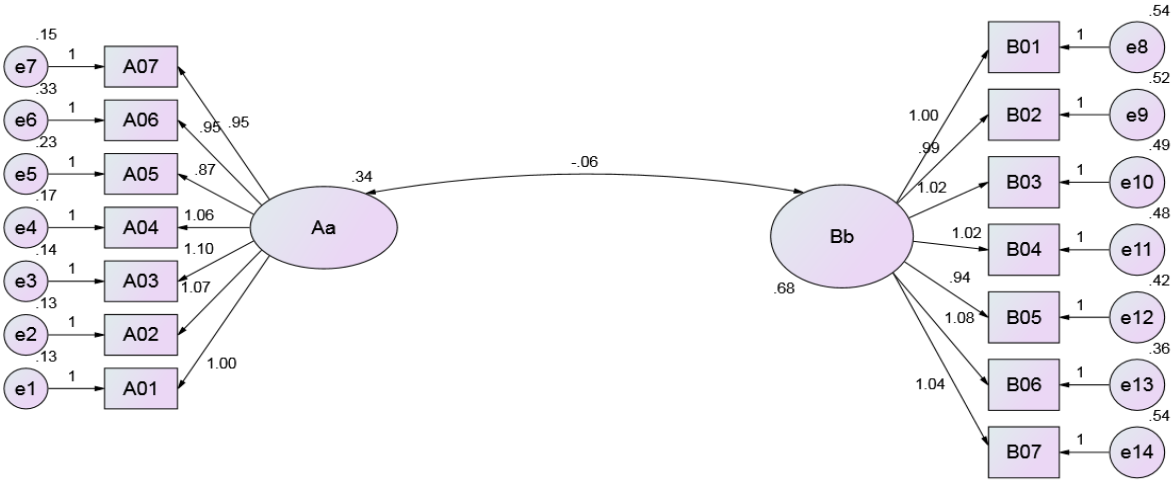

Figure 1. Statistical model of the learning needs and obstacles of elderly learners using "3C products" for network learning.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The results of this study show that "Never too late to learn" is more than a slogan, but a practice advancing with the times. "Knowledge is power". Higher education backgrounds bring about more learning opportunities, richer knowledge, and technologies, as well as more effective solutions to problems and obstacles in study and life. Hu (2015) pointed out that education for elderly learners could be conducted via the following steps: establishing an atmosphere beneficial for study→ creating a mechanism for mutual planning→ diagnosing learning needs→ developing education goals→ designing a model of learning experiences→ guiding learning activities based on appropriate technologies and teaching materials→ assessing learning outcomes and re-diagnosing learning needs. Therefore, by stressing the learning needs of the elderly, improving the design specifications and operating models of 3C products, and providing suitable network learning systems and aids, one can effectively help elderly learners use 3C products, enjoy gaining knowledge online, solve various problems and obstacles, and successfully find the treasure of wisdom in life.

The institutions and instructors engaged in the education of the elderly shall first understand the basic knowledge of elderly learners, and diagnose and analyze their learning needs and possible obstacles during network learning, in order to determine suitable course targets, plan learning guidance, re-plan existing courses and teaching materials, ask elderly learners to preview at home, and encourage them to finish preview tasks before the face-to-face classes. Second, according to the physical and metal statuses of elderly learners, digital network teaching materials shall be prepared, and learning records can be maintained to help guide students. Third, mind maps covering the key points of a course shall be developed, and classroom discussion topics shall be prepared. Fourth, they shall encourage and help elderly learners to study online audio and video materials. Lastly, they shall encourage elderly learners to express their opinions via digital learning tools. Education is a process to constantly improve experience, thus, it is worthwhile for elderly learners to enrich their life experiences via continuous learning.

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