

# THE CHALLENGES OF LIFELONG EDUCATION FOR EMPOWERING THE ELDERLY IN THE COMMUNITY

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## ABSTRACT

*The empowered elderly is the elderly who live in a civil community condition, namely a condition of the elderly who believe in their ability to create a better life and are aware of their rights and obligations in social life. The condition of empowering the elderly will be realized if the elderly get an education to be more empowered. The research objective was to determine the concept of lifelong education for the empowerment of the elderly in the community. This research was a literature review to find a lifelong learning model for lifelong education for the elderly's empowerment. By reviewing various literature or books and research reports from various journals, information was obtained about implementing lifelong education to empower the elderly in Indonesia. The research results indicated that lifelong education was not limited to adult education and the like but included and formed a unity in all education stages as a totality. Indeed, lifelong education is carried out by every human being born into this world. Lifelong education is a continuous effort of every individual to equip himself through education (increasing knowledge). Learning strategies in lifelong education for the empowerment of the elderly include the use of approaches, methods, techniques, demonstration forms, qualified learning resources, and students' management to realize educational interactions between educators and students, between students and between students, environment, and evaluation of the process.*

**Keywords:** Lifelong Education, Empowerment, Elderly

## PENDAHULUAN

A critical aspect of education nowadays that needs attention is the concept of education for adults and the elderly. People do not always talk about and review the education of relatively young students. The reality is that not a few adults and the elderly must receive informal and non-formal, such as education in skills, courses, upgrading, and so on (Lee, 2018). The problem that often arises is how to teach tips and strategies to adults and the elderly who are not in school.

In this case, adults and the elderly as students in learning activities cannot be treated like ordinary students sitting in school as usual. Therefore, it must be understood that people with old age who grow as individuals and have a mature self-concept move from dependence on others, as happened in childhood, towards independence. The psychological maturity of the elderly as self-directed individuals encourages the emergence of an intense psychological need, namely the desire to be seen and treated by others as self-directed (independent) individuals, not directed, forced, and manipulated by others (Dassel et al., 2018).

Education for all based on the philosophy of lifelong education will not have deep meaning if educational needs services do not touch the elderly (Moore, 2020). Education is said to take place from the cradle to the grave. It will be nothing if it only focuses on human growth and development. Therefore, it must also pay attention to humans when they experience a decline in function. Thus, it is deemed necessary to have an education-oriented toward the elderly (guided residents), given the potential they have both in terms of quality and quantity so that education can last a lifetime.

Lifelong learning is an essential component in improving individual abilities or competencies in various aspects of life. Lifelong learning is based on the principle that learning is a continuous

process in individuals from birth (Parisi et al., 2019). The European Union (2019) states that lifelong learning is all learning activities carried out by individuals throughout life to increase knowledge, skills, and competencies in perspectives related to individuals, citizenship, social, and/or the world of work. In addition, lifelong learning has two main goals, including developing the human potential to meet their needs and supporting human nature that grows and develops dynamically. Therefore, lifelong education is vital (Hairani, 2018).

Learning or education takes place in the world of school education and outside of school (Richter et al., 2020). They are continuously learning according to their individual needs and how they like. The emergence and development of lifelong education show that the learning experience never stops as long as humans are aware of and interact with their environment (Wen et al., 2020). Lifelong education as a new principle, new awareness, and new hope has implications for the importance of independent individual activities to seek knowledge and new experiences anytime and anywhere. The essence of learning is endless, especially for adults and parents, to keep up with the times and discoveries in knowledge and technology (Yang & Cotera., 2011).

Currently, many elderly face discrimination. They often feel that something is blocking them. In the elderly, the changes in the quality of life nowadays tend to lead to a less good direction. It is related to changes in the socio-economic environment such as stopping work due to retirement, the inability to continue to participate in the community, loss of loved family members and friends, dependence on the necessities of life, and a decline in a physical condition caused by age. It becomes an obstacle in determining the level of the elderly's welfare. In addition to decreasing meeting needs, life needs must still be met to maintain their quality of life to be independent (Wikananda, 2017).

With community education programs, it is very strategic to develop a model for the empowerment of the elderly through integration with various programs planned by the government and not run alone. Community empowerment in non-formal education contains efforts to improve the community's ability to solve the problems they experience or what is known as a civil community. Concerning the process of empowering the elderly, it means that the elderly's ability to understand and control social and economic conditions and their abilities are indispensable to improving their position in the community. In other words, the empowerment process is any public education effort that aims to raise awareness and sensitivity in the elderly towards social, economic, and/or political development so that, in the end, the elderly can improve and increase their position in the community (Jalius, Sunarti, Azizah, & Gusmanti, 2019).

The empowered elderly are the elderly who live in a civil community condition, namely a condition of the elderly who believe in their ability to create a better life and are aware of their rights and obligations in social life, where the condition of empowering the elderly will be realized if the elderly get an education to be more empowered.

Based on the brief description above, it can be concluded that elderly empowerment is synonymous with lifelong education and is the essence of education itself. What is called education, including lifelong education, is an effort to empower humans and develop the talents that exist in humans. Hence, with their potential, they can develop through lifelong education. Empowering the elderly through lifelong education is an effort that allows people with all their existence to empower themselves. With the center of activity in the hands of the community itself, starting from the community, implemented by the community and its benefits for the community or community-based education.

Elderly is said to be a closing period in a person's life span, namely a period in which a person has moved away from the previous period, which was more pleasant/moved from a time full of benefits (Hurlock, 2012). Based on the general definition, a person is said to be elderly if he is 60 years and over, both male and female. The process of aging is a natural process in all living things. Growing old is a continuous process of biological change experienced by humans at all levels of age and time, while old age is a term for the final stage of the aging process (Suardiman, 2011).

Some researchers said that everyone would experience getting old, and getting old was the last period of human life. Currently, a person experiences physical, mental, and social setbacks.

Gradually, to not be able to do activities as before. There is also old age, where someone who has entered age, namely at the age of 60 years and over, is called the golden age or golden year because the aging process is a natural process in all creatures. The World Health Organization (WHO) contained in Nugroho (2008) classifies the elderly into four groups, namely: middle age, which ranges from 45-to 59 years old; elderly, which ranges from 60 to 74 years old; older people, which range from 75-90 years old; and very old age over 90 years old. Old age is the final stage of development in the human life cycle. Meanwhile, according to articles 1, paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of Law No. 13 of 1998 concerning Health, it is stated that an elderly is someone who has been more than 60 years old.

Remember that the educational process continues throughout life, from the swing to the grave. The learning process also lasts a lifetime (lifelong education) (Waller et al., 2020). Its implementation in lifelong education programs involves various philosophical, economic, and technical considerations of implementation. Learning does not have to be formal in class, but learning can also be from experience and books. In terms of technical implementation of formal learning, sourced from the results of research on learning and memory in the elderly, Lenher and Hulsch propose several things as follows (Machali & Sufi Hidayah, 2014):

If possible, give individuals the opportunity to set up their ledge and allow them to be independent in their activities. Tasks or learning methods that are binding or stressful will make it difficult for them. The ability of the elderly to remain independent is a need so that when this need is met, they will feel satisfied.

Several stages of motivation are the need to learn. However, older adults may become overly motivated and experience anxiety in learning situations. Give the individual the opportunity to become more familiar with the situation. Minimize the role of teacher competence and assessment to avoid anxiety. The effect of anxiety that arises from fear because there is a threat must be used as a tool to achieve improvement and progress.

Some tasks may result in mental and physical fatigue. A problem that is generally experienced by the elderly namely physical and cognitive decline, so there must be a balance between activity and rest hours to maintain the elderly's health.

Many tasks are pretty complex. Organize simple to complex materials to build confidence and skills. The level of difficulty experienced by the elderly is relatively high, so the material must be explained and easy to understand. If necessary, an individual approach is given to the elderly to determine their difficulty receiving material explanations.

Build or structure tasks that avoid mistakes and cannot be learned. The material is adjusted to the ability level of the elderly so that they can accept the lessons given.

Provide opportunities to practice the same on a different task. Some practice will help to carry out the skill. Like when the prayer material is given, give examples, or opportunities for the elderly to practice prayer directly and correctly based on the guidance. It is to reduce the level of forgetfulness and error in receiving teaching.

Provide adequate information from previous responses. Teaching materials are presented to compensate for or under the sensory problems the elderly face. The attention is directly paid to the relevant aspects of the task.

Elderly education is included in non-formal education, which is based on the philosophy of lifelong learning (Joesoef, 1999). Lifelong education is a continuous learning concept in line with the phases of human development from the cradle to the end of life. Stephens states that all individuals should have systematic, organized opportunities for instruction or learning at every opportunity throughout their lives to acquire new skills, enhance skills, and develop a personality. Croppley defines organizing and structuring a vast educational experience to suit all age ranges. In his book, (Kamil, 2011) explains the history of lifelong education, first introduced in Japan in the 1960s. Furthermore, UNESCO confirmed that the concept was relevant to the Japanese people in 1972. The name changes from lifelong education to lifelong learning emphasize that individuals and the community are self-directed agents in independent learning.

The function of the elderly education program is described in the journal on the management of non-formal education programs for elderly community groups (Irmawita, 2018). The six functions of the elderly education program are; 1) The adjustment function prepares and equips the elderly because the elderly must be able to adapt and interact with an ever-changing and dynamic environment; 2) The integration function educates the elderly to become integrated people because the elderly are an integral part of the community and must contribute to it; 3) The differentiation function can provide appropriate services for each elderly who is different from being able to encourage the elderly in critical and comprehensive thinking processes; 4) The preparation function can prepare the elderly to receive and/or apply the material well; 5) The selection function is a follow-up to the differentiation function by attracting and finding the interests of each elderly.

The diagnostic function can direct the elderly in learning to understand and accept their situation to encourage and develop their potential

## **METODE**

This research design was qualitative. This research was a literature review to find a lifelong learning model for lifelong education for the elderly empowerment. The study of various literature or books and research reports from various journals obtained information about the implementation of lifelong education to empower the elderly in Indonesia (Darmalaksana, 2020).

## **PEMBAHASAN**

Lifelong education is a system of educational concepts that explain the overall events of learning activities in human life. The main principle of this lifelong education is that "every place is a school, and everyone is a teacher". According to the concept of lifelong education, educational activities are considered whole. The entire education sector is an integrated system. This concept must be adapted to the realities and needs of the community concerned. A community that has developed will have different needs from a community that has not been developed. If most of the people of a nation are still illiterate, then efforts to eradicate illiteracy among adults have priority in the lifelong education system. However, in a rapidly developing industrialized country, the problem of how to fill leisure time will receive attention in this system. Education does not only take place in schools. Education will begin as soon as the child is born and will continue until the man dies, as long as he can receive influence. Therefore, the educational process will occur in the family, school, and community (Suryadi, Kushardiyanti, & Gusmanti, 2021).

The family is the first and foremost environment for the development process of an individual and the foundation for the child's personality. Children's education is obtained primarily through parent-child interactions. In interacting with their children, parents will show certain attitudes and treatments as a manifestation of education for their children.

Education at school is a continuation in the family. School is an institution where the second socialization process occurs after the family, thus affecting the child's personal and social development. Schools are held formally. At school, children will learn what is in life. In other words, the school must reflect the life around them. Therefore, schools should not be separated from the life and needs of the community following its cultural development. In modern life as it is today, school is a must because the demands needed for the development of children are no longer possible to be served by the family. The material provided in schools is directly related to the personal development of children, contains moral and religious values, is directly related to the development of science and technology, and the development of specific skills that can be directly felt in filling the workforce. Education in the community is a form of education held outside the family and school. This form of education emphasizes acquiring special and practical knowledge and skills that are directly useful in life in the community (Irmawita, Gusmanti, & Sadli, 2021).

Lifelong education, which is operationally often called education, is not something new. In the past 14th century, precisely at the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the idea and concept

were broadcast in the form of an appeal in his hadith:

أَطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنَ الْمَهْدِ إِلَى اللَّحْدِ "Seek knowledge by you from the cradle to the grave." In the reality of daily life from the past, it can be seen that, in essence, people learn throughout life, although in different ways and through different processes. No age limit indicates the impossibility and inability of people to learn. If an aging farmer tries to find out about new ways of farming, pest control, and marketing more profitable products. It is a sign that learning has no age limit. The drive for lifelong learning occurs because it is felt like a need. Everyone feels the need to maintain life and life in the face of internal impulses and the challenges of the environment, which is constantly changing. Throughout life, humans have never been in a vacuum. They are required to adapt actively, dynamically, creatively, and innovatively towards themselves and the progress of the times.

The education results that a person gets can be compared to an iceberg. The top of the iceberg is the formal education environment, and the bottom is what lies beyond formal education. What does it mean that what we get from formal education/school is only a tiny part of what we get outside formal education.

### **Learning Foundation for Elderly**

The concept of lifelong education is very suitable for use as a basis. Sudjana (1991: 177) stated that lifelong education can be translated into school and out-of-school programs. In practice, programs in the out-of-school education pathway are seen by some education experts as being better able to develop their presence to condition the growing awareness, intention, and enthusiasm of the community to carry out continuous learning activities.

Considering these experts' opinions, lifelong education is an educational process, especially for the elderly learning citizens, to develop themselves according to the demands of their needs, development, and the surrounding environment. Furthermore, the function of lifelong education can be used as a force to motivate learning citizens to carry out learning activities based on encouragement and direction from themselves (self-direct learning). Therefore, later, it is expected to grow into a lifelong learning process, i.e., continuous learning habits throughout his life.

Let us look at the characteristics of lifelong education as stated by Dave in his book *Lifelong Education and School Curriculum*. It can be seen that elderly education is education provided for elderly learners. It shows that education is not limited to age and ends at school. It is a lifelong process that covers the entire lifetime of a person or group of people (elderly).

### **The Nature of Lifelong Education**

Humans carry out lifelong education from birth to death. Lifelong education is a familiar phenomenon. Through lifelong education, humans always learn through events that occur in daily life or experiences that have been experienced. The concept of lifelong education knows no age limit. All humans, both young and old, can still be students because lifelong learning can be done anywhere, anytime, and by anyone.

As a principle, lifelong education becomes a motivation in the scientific development of Out-of-school Education. Sutaryat Trisnamansyah (in Taqiyuddin, 2008: 35) states that lifelong education is more appropriately viewed as the central concept (mastery learning) in planning for out-of-school education. On the other hand, D. Sudjana, in the same source, explains that the lifelong education introduced by educational planners in the 1960s has become a natural phenomenon in human life. This fact indicates the importance of lifelong learning for human life in meeting learning needs and educational needs.

Lifelong education is not limited to adult education but includes and forms a unity and all stages of education for a totality. Schools are seen as just one of many educational agents in lifelong education. In fact, besides schools, there are also training centers, institutions, groups, organizations, industries, and others that play a role in carrying out the mission of education in forming a learning community. Learning to live and people love to learn is the goal of lifelong education. Atsushi Makino in Hettog (1997) states that lifelong education is the basis for efforts to maintain, create and develop programs and learning opportunities and human life (Sista et al., 2018).

Lifelong education is a continuous effort of every individual to equip himself through education (increasing knowledge). It means that a person's readiness is continuously to fill every opportunity by learning from various sources (Komar, 2006: 259). Another definition of Lifelong Education (PSH) is analogous to education throughout the ages. Education throughout the ages has a scope throughout human life. All educational activities last a lifetime for a human being and occur anywhere. The period and place of learning activities include and integrate all stages of education and do not stop at all school-age educational activities. Thus, PSH includes all patterns of educational activities, both formal, informal, and non-formal, both planned and incidental learning activities (Suhartono, 2008: 66). Education throughout the ages is defined as "...the habit of continuous learning throughout life, a made of behavior." Thus, if lifelong education is more focused on extrinsic factors, lifelong learning relies more on intrinsic factors, namely factors that exist in the learner to make learning a way of behaving (Taqiyuddin, 2008: 37).

Lifelong learning looks at learning activities from the demand side of learning, learning motivation, and learning abilities. All of them are intrinsic. Therefore, lifelong learning is more individual than social. However, the collection of individual lifelong learners will, in turn, form a learning community which is the goal of lifelong education to achieve a quality human figure. Regarding lifelong education, Sudjana (2001: 218) explains that lifelong education must be based on the following educational principles: (1) Education will only end when humans have died; (2) Lifelong education is a strong motivation for students to plan and carry out learning activities in an organized and systematic manner; (3) Learning activities aim to acquire, update, and improve the existing knowledge, attitudes, and skills; (4) Education has a series of goals in meeting learning needs and developing the self-satisfaction of every human being who undertakes learning activities; (5) The acquisition of education is a prerequisite for the development of human life, namely to increase its ability so that humans always carry out learning activities to meet the needs of their lives.

Based on the description above, it can be stated that lifelong education refers more to factors outside of humans in the form of a series of organizational, administrative, and methodological devices. Thus, lifelong education is more of the basis of educational policies implemented in a country. The state or government can play a role in supplying educational needs, issuing policies that support these educational needs, and providing the means that allow for various lifelong educational activities to occur and take place.

With the increase in life expectancy, the average human, and better health, the number of elderly are now getting bigger and bigger. They also need educational programs in the context of lifelong education. Perhaps education is a precious opportunity because it was never obtained when he was young. The educational program primarily fulfills his urge to learn new things, so it is no longer critical for its usefulness and material benefits.

### **Learning Materials**

The learning materials that are suitable for elderly learners are as follows:

1. Individual development
  - a. Health, including:
    - 1) Physical health
    - 2) Emotional health
    - 3) How to prevent disease
  - b. Intellectual development, including:
    - 1) Expressing thoughts
    - 2) Understanding other people's thoughts
    - 3) Working effectively
  - c. Moral choice

- 1) Individual freedom
  - 2) Responsibility for self
  - 3) Responsibility for others
2. Development of social participation
- a. Interpersonal relations
    - 1) Strengthening social relations with others
    - 2) Striving for good working relationships with others
  - b. Group membership
    - 1) Entering the group
    - 2) Participation in the group
    - 3) Leadership participation in the group
  - c. Relations between groups
    - 1) Cooperation with rational groups
    - 2) Cooperation with religious groups
    - 3) Cooperation with national groups (organizational unions)
    - 4) Cooperation in socio-economic groups
3. Development in the face of environmental factors and forces
- a. Natural
    - 1) Learning physical phenomena (drought, dust, etc.)
    - 2) Studying plants
    - 3) Studying animals
    - 4) Studying chemical effects (soap, food seasoning, gas, kerosene, etc.).
  - b. Technology
    - 1) Providing household appliances
    - 2) Providing transportation equipment
  - c. Socio-economic power
    - 1) Maintaining a living
    - 2) General welfare

### **Learning Strategy**

Strategy comes from nouns and verbs in Greek. As a noun, strategos is a combination of the words "stratos" (military) with "ago" (to lead). As a verb, strategy means to plan. Based on some opinions collected, strategy can be concluded as a pattern that is planned and determined intentionally to carry out an activity. The strategy includes the activity's objectives, who is involved in the activity, the content of the activity, and the means to support the activity. Furthermore, educators can interpret learning as an effort to help students carry out learning activities. The goal is to realize the efficiency and effectiveness of learning activities carried out by students. Learning strategies in lifelong education for the empowerment of the elderly include using approaches, methods, techniques, demonstration forms, qualified learning resources, and student management to realize educational interactions between educators and students, between students, and students and environment and evaluation of the process.

## Learning Management

Most of the learning activities in training programs are organized by government agencies and non-governmental organizations, especially in lifelong education programs for the empowerment of the elderly, which are carried out in the room or the classroom. It shows that the room/classroom is the prominent place of activity for learning activities in the client's training programs and non-formal educational programs/activities. The use of space/classroom as a place for learning activities is based on N. Sudjana (2000: 25) as follows; 1) Learning activities in the room/classroom have been known earlier than other learning activities; 2) Implementing learning activities in the room/classroom is more accessible than implementing other facilities. Learning in the room/class is enough by finding and determining the room to be used, the presence of some students, the existence of learning materials, and the availability of learning aids; 3) Through learning activities in the room/classroom, all students can receive information simultaneously. Likewise, each student can start and end learning activities together. In the room/classroom, they can discuss the same learning materials, see teaching aids, use learning media together, and interact in the same space and time.

To the management of learning in the room/classroom can run more effectively, it is necessary to pay attention to the following requirements; 1) There is involvement, responsibility, and feedback from students. The involvement of students is the first and primary requirement in learning activities in the room/class. Students' involvement must understand and have learning goals to be achieved through learning activities. The involvement of students must also have an essential meaning for themselves and need to be appropriately directed by educators for the students' benefit. There are many forms of student involvement. One example is a group of students can carry out learning activities to solve problems they face together, but students can carry out problem-solving activities individually; 2) Responsibility in learning activities. Students need to be made aware of their responsibilities in learning activities. If the learning objectives are known well and clearly by the students, then they need to believe that they are the ones who must carry out learning activities to achieve the learning objectives. Not vice versa, educators order and impose their will on students so that they do to achieve that goal. In learning activities carried out in small groups, such as daily work, students need to feel that they are the ones who have the responsibility to complete tasks in learning activities under the goals set by them. Meanwhile, educators only play a role in providing encouragement or guidance.

There is feedback and students. This feedback is helpful for educators to find out the level of change experienced by students before and during learning activities. With this feedback, educators will get an idea of the changes that have occurred and are currently happening to students. The more feedback that students give, the more it will be known about the level of success of the approach in learning activities carried out by educators. Feedback can be done in various ways, such as by asking questions, asking for responses, ordering activities, and re-explaining something that has been learned to all students. Feedback in the room/classroom can be obtained by using a tool to gather information about events that occurred. These tools include diaries, observation sheets, activity evaluation sheets, teacher performances, and message sheets from students (N. Sudjana 2000: 41).

## KESIMPULAN

Lifelong education is not limited to adult education but includes and forms a unity and all stages of education as a totality. Lifelong education is carried out by every human being born into this world. Lifelong education is a continuous effort of every individual to equip himself through education (increasing knowledge). It means a person's continuous readiness to fill every opportunity by learning from various sources.

Learning strategies in lifelong education for the empowerment of the elderly include using approaches, methods, techniques, demonstration forms, qualified learning resources, and student management to realize educational interactions between educators and students, between students, and between students and environment evaluation of the process. Meanwhile, learning management for

the elderly is better implemented in the classroom. It is based on the fact that classroom learning is known earlier than elsewhere, is easier to do, and allows all participants to receive information simultaneously. It is done on the condition that there must be order and responsibility in learning activities, and there must be feedback from students.

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