Older Adults’ Education/Learning

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[Course Title: Course Code]

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[Date of Submission]

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**Introduction**

Optimal aging refers to one’s capacity to function normally in different domains of activity including social, physical, spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and functional. Optimal aging is characterized by doing things possibly to the extent of one’s satisfaction despite the fact how much the medical conditions restrict the situation. Optimal aging is studied considering cognitive function, learning capacity, physical functioning, activity, and other variables. Education or learning in older adults is a significant aspect of optimal aging studies due to its implications. The current paper comprises an annotated bibliography of six selected peer-reviewed papers that include research on older adults with one or more variables associated to reflect on some important aspects related to optimal aging.

**Annotated Bibliography**

1. Ryu, H., Lim, D. H. H., Kim, J., & Kwon, I. (n.d.). *Skill Utilization of Older Workers in South Korea: The Effect of Diverse Types of Learning Experiences and Organizational Learning Supports*. 5.

The study examines the influence of various types of learning experiences and related organizational supports on skill utilization in older workers in South Korea. The context of this study is that the birth rate in the country is very low, and the workforce is likely to confront a shortage of workers. The need arises that older workers be accommodated in the industry. 1247 older workers comprising baby boomers and traditionalists were analyzed using stepwise regression. It was found that proficiency levels and skill use of older adults were significantly affected by their education level, work flexibility, active learning strategies, years of work experience, and participation in non-formal education. The study concluded that learning and skill use in older adults are influenced by different variables and that Korean organizations should facilitate them for different types of learning.

1. Bjursell, C. (2019). Inclusion in education later in life: Why older adults engage in educational activities. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, *10*(3), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela20192>

The study aims to find out the reason older adults engage themselves in education activities. It is based on two previous empirical studies. The first consists of a survey done by two hundred and thirty-two Swedish pensioners. The second consists of stories by fifty-three Swedish pensioners. In both studies, data revealed that older adults participated in education to stay active and socialize. However, a closer look at their narratives disclosed that most of them enrolled just because some of their relatives, friends, or ex-colleagues had also enrolled. The conclusion was that certain social factors can be the underlying reason for an individual's choice for learning in old age.

1. Arce Rentería, M., Vonk, J. M. J., Felix, G., Avila, J. F., Zahodne, L. B., Dalchand, E., Frazer, K. M., Martinez, M. N., Shouel, H. L., & Manly, J. J. (2019). Illiteracy, dementia risk, and cognitive trajectories among older adults with low education. *Neurology*, *93*(24), e2247–e2256. <https://doi.org/10.1212/WNL.0000000000008587>

The study was conducted to examine whether older adults having low education are more prone to dementia or rapid cognitive decline due to illiteracy. A selection of 983 older adults was made whose neuropsychological measures were administered. Their medical, cognitive, and functional data were studied. The connection of literacy with dementia was evaluated by Cox proportional hazards and logistic regression. The effect of literacy on cognition was studied by latent growth curve models. Results proclaim that illiterate older adults were three times more susceptible to dementia, but cognitive decline was not associated with literacy. It was concluded that dementia risk might be due to a lower range of cognitive function.

1. Jean, K. R., Lindbergh, C. A., Mewborn, C. M., Robinson, T. L., Gogniat, M. A., & Miller, L. S. (2019). Education Differentially Buffers Cognitive Performance in Black and White Older Adults. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, *74*(8), 1366–1375. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gby116>

The objective of this study was to explore if increased education could give increased cognitive capabilities to the Black Americans. A sample comprising 522 older adults was analyzed by keeping education and race as between-participant factors and the dependent variable taken as the global cognition. Further, five cognitive domains (delayed memory, attention, language, constructional ability, and immediate memory) were selected as dependent variables to conduct a multivariate analysis of covariance. Results indicated that the Black Americans showed lower cognitive functioning, and they evidenced more than twice the White Americans the effect of education on global cognitive function. It was suggested that they should get education directed towards non-memory domains, attention, and global cognitive function.

1. Park, S., Choi, B., Choi, C., Kang, J. M., & Lee, J.-Y. (2019). Relationship between education, leisure activities, and cognitive functions in older adults. *Aging & Mental Health*, *23*(12), 1651–1660. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2018.1512083>

The objective of the study was to know the connection between cognitive function and life activities as well as evaluating the relationship between leisure activities and education in older adults. A sample of 210 Korean older adults was selected. They recorded their leisure activities, working, and education. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses measured the cognitive function. Results revealed that education has a positive correlation with cognitive function. Education also served as the moderator between cognitive function and leisure activities. Further, results showed that the relationship between cognitive function and leisure activities varies according to the educational level and the type of leisure activity. It was concluded that educational levels and lifestyles of older adults must be considered while examining their cognitive function.

1. Zhu, X., Qiu, C., Zeng, Y., & Li, J. (2017). Leisure activities, education, and cognitive impairment in Chinese older adults: A population-based longitudinal study. *International Psychogeriatrics*, *29*(5), 727–739. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610216001769>

The study aimed at finding the connection between risk of developing cognitive impairment and leisure-time activities, simultaneously investigating the effect of educational level on this connection, in older adults belonging to China. A follow-up longitudinal study was conducted on 6586 participants. Their participation in non-exercise physical activity and cognitive activities was measured through a self-reported scale. The association of incident cognitive impairment with leisure activities was examined through Cox proportional hazard models. Results indicate that 1448 participants acquired cognitive impairment during a five-year follow-up. Decreased risk of cognitive impairment was associated with increased participation of older adults in the leisure activities. It was also noted that educated older adults gained more beneficial effects on cognitive function by leisure activities. It was concluded that cognitive impairment can be better avoided through late-life activities of leisure within the elderly people in China. Further, the educated elderly people are safer from the acquisition of such impairments than their counterparts.

**Conclusion**

All six studies were conducted on the older adults sorting out the relationship of education, cognitive function, old age, and other variables. The common thing in all was to establish facts that could help physicians to provide useful interventions and eliminate the suffering of the elderly people. Optimal aging can be made real by educating people to carry out necessary learning activities throughout their careers. Older people can be provided with suitable learning programs to maintain cognitive function. The aging process can be made easier, safer, and better with appropriate learning, leisure, and social activities.