The Self Evaluation of Adult Learners: Management Effectiveness in Life Long Learning

Zehra Altınay Gazi1, Fahriye Altınay Aksal2, Gökmen Dağlı3 and Aytekin Isman4

Abstract—The aim of this study was to examine the management effectiveness of adult learners on life long learning process. Within the framework of qualitative research, experiences and perceptions of adult learners were gathered through interviews and self-report. The implementation of the techniques of gathering qualitative data and method triangulation based on collaborative data analysis supported the increased the credibility and objectivity of the research. The thematic analysis of multiple data through cross examination and showed that adult learners in master degree program had an ability to manage themselves in affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions in their work and academic life. Adult learners as researchers and master degree students reported that they have ability to solve problems, behave people empathic and behave towards work related actions. Being involved in management effectiveness dimensions (cognitive, affective and behavioural), adult learners underlined that collaborative works, dialogue and continuing education life cycle provided them have opportunity to analyze their potential in a dense. This research provided insight to evaluate the educational administration and management master degree program with its course instructions and self evaluation of adult learners in the programme based on management effectiveness.

Keywords—life long learning, management effectiveness, qualitative research, self evaluation

I. INTRODUCTION

In building knowledge driven economy within the learning age, adaptation to the changes and environment has intensified need to gain ability to make managerial reactions [6]. In effective management through life long learning philosophy, managerial skills and competences are crucial in order to acquire successful action oriented innovations in the working contexts.

In this global context, knowledge is characterised as dense and reconstructed process from accumulated experiences of learners [13]. It has an impact when it becomes practical and efficient. In this respect, managing knowledge relies on management effective of learners through affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. Before considering how to achieve management effectiveness in the organizations, considering management effectiveness of individuals is right direction to achieve “effectiveness” [9], [11]. The potential to have effectiveness is changed through environmental changes that globalization, technology make great impact on the reaching out knowledge.

The study of O’Grady, Atkin [7] put emphasis on skills for life for active participation in twenty-first-century society. This study provides an insight to consider role of adult learners in establishing management effectiveness within life long learning journey. Furthermore, Braimoh [8] underlined that life long learning is crucial for quality improvement of individuals as adult learners. In this respect, researchers defines life long learning as fostering learning throughout the life. To acquire life long learning capacity, management effectiveness has essential to foster learning of adult learners [14].

Merrill [8] stresses the importance of experiences of adult learners in the co-construction of knowledge. In addition the study of advocates how important is to consider experiences of adult learners in their management effectiveness [8]. Further to this, some researchers supports the key role of experience in knowledge construction and fostering learning throughout the life. [10] Learning in the working place has great need to have management effectiveness that it encompasses affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions [11].

This research aims to examine the management effectiveness of adult learners on life long learning process as regards their interpretations and experiences. This yields how adult learners have self awareness on their potential who work and study at the same time as life long learners. Within an inductive process, following research questions are set to be answered:

- How do adult learners perceive management effectiveness dimensions?
- What are perceptions of adult learners towards life long learning philosophy?
- How do adult learners evaluate their potential on management effectiveness as life long learners?

II. METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study was based upon the framework of qualitative research which covers the understanding, interpretation of socially constructed meanings within an inductive process [3]. Within the qualitative research framework, experiences and the process, interaction between
human being explores the significant cues to understand the socially constructed meanings. In this research, inductive research was implemented that qualitative inquiry embraced three phases within this research. First phase captured the training which includes what management effectiveness is, the relationship between management effectiveness and lifelong learning. The training was delivered by master degree programme instructor to 16 adult learners who are both working and studying master degree in educational administration and management. Second phase reflected data gathering process after the training in order to investigate what adult learners perceive management effectiveness, how they interpret lifelong learning philosophy and how they perceive their potential within lifelong learning process. The last phase is the evaluation process of adult learners’ perceptions and experiences in relation to gathered qualitative data.

A. Research Design and Approach

In this study, qualitative research is the right choice of the research design as it reflects inductive process through soft data and interpretive understanding what is actually happens. Socially constructed meanings, experiences are the inevitable cue of practices to understand how the process happens. In this study, interpretations, experiences and constructed meanings of 16 adult learners help reveal the understanding and exploration on the research focus [2], [3]

Case study approach was employed to understand what is happening in the specific context as regards the perceptions and experiences of adult learners [5]. Although using single case study for the research in gathering exploration for research focus is the limitation of the study, reflection as a group of adult learners within specific context help to understand and practice of management effectiveness within life long learning philosophy.

B. Data Collection Techniques and Analysis

Multiple qualitative data collection techniques were used in this research study. Semi-structured interviews and self-reports were used in order to gather soft data as regards the inductive investigation [4]. Content - thematic - analysis was implemented to reveal the results of investigation from semi-structured interviews, self-reports. In thematic analysis, key concepts and themes were considered and determined in relation to research focus and questions. Data triangulation and analysis provided cross examination and verification which increased credibility as the data analysis process covered matrix inquiry [1].

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The examination of the data triangulation provided valuable findings regarding the perceptions of adult learners’ on management effectiveness and life long learning process while they are working and at the same time studying master degree for their professional development. Three phases in qualitative inquiry was implemented in relation to research questions as creating awareness and prior knowledge, understanding on management effectiveness, life long learning process; data gathering and self-evaluation of adult learners; overall analysis. In this respect, the following aspects are revealed Microsoft Equation or MathType Equation. “Float over text” should not be selected.

A. Perceptions of Adult Learners: Management Effectiveness

Training, the data collected from semi-structured interviews and self-reports reflected a promising parity concerning the importance of the management effectiveness for the career and professional life of the adult learners.

Although adult learners (N=16) had no in-depth prior knowledge on management effectiveness dimensions and lifelong learning philosophy, they had an opportunity through 75 minutes training as a kind of workshop to internalize what management effectiveness is, how adult learners develop professional life within a frame of lifelong learning philosophy. This workshop provided a base line of the qualitative inquiry in order to gather in-depth data for the following steps within the inductive process. According to semi-structured interviews, almost all adult learners (N=12) perceived management effectiveness as facilitating their potential to manage personal and academic life for the success. Almost half of the adult learners indicated that management effectiveness dimensions which are cognitive, affective and behavioural attempts need to be in harmony for the real effectiveness. Further to this, almost all of them stated that they gained awareness about management effectiveness dimensions by the training. Therefore, training is the crucial part of the qualitative research to create a base for the further steps. Significantly, AL 1 (Adult Learner) stated that training provided deeper insights to find a chance in evaluating self-management effectiveness as regards the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions. AL 12 underlined “When I didn’t study master degree and this training, my knowledge on management effectiveness is surface, I found the opportunity to have more consideration on dimensions and self-evaluation.” Further, AL 5 and AL 8 underlined that training provided think more about affective dimension within the life to balance excitement, fear and angry for the effectiveness. In addition, almost all adult learners raised that affective dimension is the invaluable dimension of management effectiveness to deal with the problems and it needs to be focused attention to balance other dimensions within an effective manner.

According to self-reports of the adult learners, almost all of them agreed that management effectiveness is the combination and synergy of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions for the success in the life. Significantly, adult learners reported that affective dimension is the spot mechanism that affects cognitive and behavioural dimensions to facilitate actions and evaluations within both professional and academic life. Adult learners also noted that they get a chance to do in-depth evaluation and critical reflection on the management effectiveness and their life after the training session.

Considering the difficulty of managing cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions for personal effectiveness, training was evaluated as an effective event which provided a chance to internalize self and peer evaluation of adult learners. At the same time, they think their strengths and weaknesses in detail. In this regard, both semi-structured interviews and self-
reports provided multiple angles and proved that adult learners had no prior understanding of management effectiveness with its dynamic components until the training session. This shows how instructional behaviour of course instructor and instructed professional events are important to gain and transfer skills to the life beside the knowledge and competence. Further to this, parity of self-reports and semi-structured interviews reflected that adult learners perceived that affective dimension is very crucial to have potential effectiveness. Moreover, almost all adult learners perceived that management effectiveness need to be well internalized for professional career and life.

**B. The Life Long Learning Philosophy**

The in-depth examination of multiple data (semi-structured interviews and self-reports) showed that adult learners perceived life long learning philosophy as invaluable perspective and vision for personal and professional development relative to several reasons.

Before indicating points of views and experiences of adult learners, it is critical to mention the importance of life long learning philosophy. Adult learners have awareness of its importance for their professional life. Both semi-structured interviews and self-reports highlighted that adult learners perceived this philosophy as three aspects; a. way of developing management effectiveness b. process of supporting career and professional life c. combining knowledge, skills and competence through professional events.

In semi-structured interviews, almost all adult learners (N=11) stated that education and gaining experience is the endless process. Further to this, they agreed that professionalism is a synergy of experiences that learners gained from the life and the education. Significantly, adult learners paid attention to the necessity of interconnection learning from the life and the education. They highlighted particular problems if learners could not transfer and reflect knowledge, skill and competence to the work and could not continue to develop their potential abilities on the road of professionalism. As regards these problems, AL 4 stated that gaining life-long learning philosophy since studying undergraduate degree is very significant to be well equipped to the work in the competitive agenda. Further to this, AL 7 similarly pointed out those professional and practical events should be parallel with courses while studying in any degree in order to be well prepared to the life and the work. AL 9, 10, 11, 14 agreed that gaining successful degree is not sufficient if the one can not transfer knowledge, skills and competence into the practice. If not, communication, planning, critical reflection, teamwork incapability cause ineffectiveness and dissatisfaction.

As regards the reflective self-reports, almost all adult learners reported their problems in having in-depth understanding of life long learning philosophy in master degree level whose cope with problems to achieve effectiveness in their professional life. The problems in skills, competence and knowledge within the specific field for the work and professional activities; communication, teamwork, critical reflection were listed and highlighted by AL 5, 6, 8, 12, 15, respectively. The data displayed that communication, collaborative works promoted adult learners' awareness of management effectiveness in both work and professional, academic growth. In addition, adult learners pointed out that professional events as part of the life long learning philosophy promote active learning and experiential learning to have required knowledge, skill and competence harmony for their success and effectiveness. The data drawn from self-reflective reports and interviews confirmed that adult learners who involved in this qualitative inquiry have awareness and importance of life long learning philosophy. In addition, they stressed that learning by doing, experiential and active learning should have significant role for each specific field.

**C. Self-Evaluation of Adult Learners**

The adult learners found a chance to evaluate their management effectiveness and the impact of life long learning process to their potential effectiveness as regards the cognitive, behavioural and affective dimensions. All of them agreed that the first phase of this inquiry that is training is sufficient to get in-depth insight on what management effectiveness is and how it could be better within the life long learning process. Further to this, the second phase that is data gathering created an awareness of weak and strengthen sides of the learners based on self-evaluation while responding to the semi-structured interview and reflecting on self-reports. The overall analysis that is the last phase of this inquiry, demonstrated that being involved in collaborative work, communication network with others, critical thinking and reflection improve their weaknesses in order to have management effectiveness and help them develop professionalism as regards the life long learning programmes and events.

According to triangulated data from semi-structured interviews and self-reports, AL 1 pointed out that AL 1 is much considered affective dimension to manage and plan all the tasks. Further to this, AL 1 highlighted that certificate programmes, social events are the effective life long learning activities to contribute academic, work and professional life. Further to this, AL 2 remarked that having graduate degree and at the same time working is crucial evidence to show life long learning process and synergy of affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of management effectiveness. In addition, AL 3 reflected that graduate courses and practical involvement to the work sector delegates how adult learners should gain potential abilities through experiential learning. AL 4 pointed out that self-directed learning environments, experiential learning platform provide gain wider angles in order to enhance professional development. AL 5 stated that managing feelings provide be calm in order to solve problems as regards the affective dimension in frame of management effectiveness. AL 6 reflected that management effectiveness is a self-control and mechanism to achieve the goals that life long learning events foster to develop self-control. AL 7, 11, 12 similarly highlighted that respecting to others as part of the affective dimension is crucial to balance behavioural and cognitive dimension within a proactive approach, significantly in communication process. AL 10 stated that rethinking and reorganizing the events according to situation, time is significant for the management effectiveness. AL 8, 11 put forward that management effectiveness is changeable according to people, time and situation that cognitive dimension should be strengthen in order to balance other
dimensions. AL 9, 13 and 15 pointed out that active learning, self-directed learning environments and the experiences from the life and work are highly beneficial to enhance professional development. Further to this, AL 16 highlighted that life long learning activities enhance skills, knowledge and competence development besides work and education that adult learners can manage tasks, communicate with others, involve in team work, and have critical reflection and multiple perspectives for the complexity in an effective way.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper yielded findings of adult learners’ perceptions and experiences on management effectiveness dimensions (cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions), life-long learning philosophy, relationship between management effectiveness and life-long learning process, and the potential of the adult learners to manage their professional development engaging with life-long learning process and maximizing potential transferable skills through professional events help adults develop reflection, intellectual flexibility; communication and collaboration skills which fosters self-development [10]. This study showed that interaction with real life experiences, experiential learning process with having education and working within specific context at the same time provide adult learners internalize the life-long learning process and develop their potential in terms of knowledge, skills and competence for their work and the life. In addition to this, this qualitative inquiry supports self-evaluative awareness and enhances knowledge, skills and competence building for the adult learners. Besides qualitative inquiry implications, adult learners found a chance to evaluate their potential on cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of management effectiveness for professional development. Self-directed learning environments as experiencing work and the education as adult learner enable learners construct knowledge, develop multiple perspectives; enhance collaborative skills and the competence within the frame of life-long learning within the life through gaining new perspective.

Although this research study provided significant findings on how learners perceive management effectiveness, life long learning philosophy and how they evaluated their potential abilities as regards the qualitative inquiry, the longitudinal studies and quantitative research may be conducted in addition to explore the research focus from different perspective and analysis.

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