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## **What Lifelong Learning Means to a Malaysian Senior Citizen**

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### **Abstract**

This paper addresses the issue of lifelong learning as experienced by a Malaysian female senior citizen in the current era. Data were retrieved from the participant's reflections which had been chronicled during the course of her learning in 2011. A linguistic analysis was applied to detect major issues described in the reflections which were written in English. These were then itemised under specific headings while the contents of the reflections were then categorised according to these headings. The overall findings suggest that lifelong learning was perceived to be a rewarding experience although the advancing age affected some aspects of her health, memory, vision, physical movement and so her attitude towards learning. The outcome of this paper suggests that lifelong learning was undertaken by the senior citizen for personal satisfaction and this learning process can be made more pleasant if some of the challenges identified can be addressed duly and aptly. In this regard, tertiary institutions may want to look into the development of retiree-friendly curriculum design, retiree-friendly course materials, flexible assessments, retiree-friendly locations and infrastructure as well as conducive learning environments. Senior citizens can contribute to the development of a nation because of their rich experiences and knowledge.

**Keywords:** lifelong learning, senior citizen, aging, challenge

### **Introduction**

Lifelong learning is a concept of primitive times. People in the early civilisation view learning as a way of life brought on by necessity. Today, learning is a concept that has gained new outlook as its revival is resuscitated by global conferences such as the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) held in 1997 and the Dakar World Education Forum (WEF) organised in 2000. The term lifelong learning is viewed as a learning continuum

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Kuang Ching Hei, Ph.D.

What Lifelong Learning Means to a Malaysian Senior Citizen

irrespective of age but to date, there is no definitive demarcation for it because different scholars perceive it differently. Nonetheless, it has been declared by the Faure Report (1972) as key to the new millennium. It was declared as an essential tool for mankind for the 21<sup>st</sup> century as human beings struggle to adapt to the evolving needs of the labour market happening worldwide. The concept of lifelong learning is soon becoming a global issue as soon, it will be a necessary and crucial skill to possess if people want to modify themselves to meet the shape and context of this changing world brought about by political, economic, sociocultural and technological advances. World citizens must inevitably find new skills and acquire new knowledge in order to make themselves useful. Otherwise, they may lose out to the more resourceful others.

Education has always been an important concern for many nations around the world. It is believed that education can help to change the impact of the deteriorating world for the better. Historically, the Chinese emphasised on education because they believed that one's success in education can empower oneself to change one's destiny for the better. In today's world, however, education is perceived to be a stepping stone that could enable one to be more competent when contesting in the game of 'survival of the fittest'. Education does not guarantee prosperity or a good future but it is a passport that can provide one with the opportunity to taste success. Like other countries in the world such as India, China, South Africa, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, Malaysia also aspires for its people to become better educated. Literacy is highly rated in this society and one way Malaysia addresses issue is by creating avenues for adults who had missed their chances when they were younger to participate in this lifelong learning experience. While Malaysian universities are offering higher qualifications such as diplomas, bachelors degree, masters degree and doctoral degrees to working adults nation-wide, community colleges are offering vocational courses such as automobile, farming, small-cottage industries as well as entrepreneurship to the many aspiring learners. Consequently, many working adults are able to enrol in such courses and programmes. Although educationists strive hard to make these educational choices more inviting to working and senior adults, little literature has been written about their personal experiences which when understood, can enable educationists to design courses with better and more attractive features which are likely to attract senior adult learners. This will make the endeavour of pursuing lifelong learning a more fruitful and enlightening one for adult learners which can contribute to active citizenship.

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Kuang Ching Hei, Ph.D.

What Lifelong Learning Means to a Malaysian Senior Citizen

## **Aim**

This paper addresses the issue of lifelong learning. It aims to understand what lifelong learning means to a fifty-five year old Malaysian working woman who is pursuing a law degree in a local university. This paper attempts to uncover the major issues related to lifelong learning as experienced by one Malaysian senior citizen based on her narrative reflections.

## **Reflections**

Reflections are narratives which individuals make in their respective journals after an event has occurred. This activity of writing down one's feelings can occur immediately or a few hours or days after an event. Reflections are generally practised as good habits. It is a way of bringing the day to a close. A participant spends a short period of time writing out the day's happening in the effort to understand his/her feeling or actions. Reflections are also practised as a technique for further improvements as seen in action research. Similar to diaries, reflections are written based on one's experiences and perceptions of particular happenings. No two persons write in the exact same way although their feelings may be the same but reflections captured in writings are generally personal, making it authentic but subjective. Subjective contents are not appreciated by scientists who want subject matters to be systematically conducted and the results systematically noted. Scientists also expect their data to be observed and noted on a regular basis whilst expecting data and result to be well validated. However, despite its subjective nature, reflections are possibly one of the best ways to understand what an individual thinks and feels during specific situations and contexts. Its subjective nature can assist social science researchers to better understand how human beings within a particular community think or feel about their life's experiences. Anthropologists and sociologists are well known for such a process of collecting data which can even be traced to early historical periods where scientists like Charles Darwin apply in taking note of his son's language development in 1882. The same approach has been endorsed by other scholars (Hubbs & Brand, 2005; Swindell & Watson, 2006) because reflections are generated from the meaning-making of the writer and such input, inevitably, is dependent on the environment. In this regard, reflections can serve as windows for social scientists to better understand the lifestyle of that particular community even though the perspective may have come from a small minority. In this sense, it is unfortunate that the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population.

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Kuang Ching Hei, Ph.D.

What Lifelong Learning Means to a Malaysian Senior Citizen

## **Lifelong Learning in the New Millennium**

The Chinese has a philosophy in life, *Huo Dao Lao, Xue Dao Lao* which views lifelong learning as a continuous activity no matter what one's age is. As one proceeds with life, one is expected to acquire new knowledge or skill of any kind; it is seen as a sign of constantly 'growing' and moving forward. A practice of Chinese civilisation dating back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Song Dynasty (960-1279) and Qing dynasty (1644-1912), lifelong learning was advocated by teachers and philosophers such as Confucius, Mengzi or sages. Extreme poverty and the over extended practice of corruption prevalent in China made the Chinese believe that education can help to break the poverty cycle. Till today, the Chinese people have not stopped advocating for education or lifelong learning to occur in one's life.

The old concept of lifelong learning was revived and the idea disseminated by the UNESCO who took it to various educational institutions around the world because of the need to educate the global citizens in third world countries. The concept of literacy which can be achieved through lifelong learning is an important one in Malaysia because it is believed that education enables nations to withstand the pressure of globalization. It is also believed that lifelong learning must happen in order that global citizens can accommodate to the rapid technological changes happening worldwide. If global changes are not addressed accordingly, people all over the world may suffer. If not duly arrested, the change can impact world productivity and employability (Abdul Shukor Ruslan, 2005). This was thus linked to the concept of active citizenship and economic development.

The pattern of lifelong learning works differently depending on ages. The National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) says that between the ages of 6 – 24, learning normally takes place in educational institutions ranging from primary to secondary and tertiary levels. The objective of learning in this age context is to develop learners in a holistic manner physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally and mentally. Between the ages of 25 – 60, learning tends to fall under the informal learning context where the use of instructional media is derived from the need that is developed at the workplace or by the profession/occupation requirement. This can be due to colleagues, due to travelling or due to the exposure to mass media. Additionally, learning at this age, could be induced by the accessibility of general information that has been provided

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Kuang Ching Hei, Ph.D.  
What Lifelong Learning Means to a Malaysian Senior Citizen

by technology, the environment or nature. Unlike young learners, adult learners learn from their experiences and problem solving instances. From these learning experiences, they learn to continuously develop their intellect, capability and integrity. In the case of elderly learners, according to Ariya Rojvithi (2003), learning tends to involve participation in community organizations, clubs and associations. Learning for the elderly at this point in time, makes their lives more meaningful for themselves. This kind of learning may also provide benefits to society as a whole. Such an aspect of positive benefits reaped by elderly citizens who feel that their lives are more meaningful can be verified by a study which looked at elderly retirees in Malaysia and Singapore (David and Kuang, 2012).

There is no definitive meaning for lifelong learning but some scholars (see Billet, 2010) say that lifelong learning is different from lifelong education. However, Barber (1998, p. 6) views higher education studies as a part of lifelong learning, defining it as ‘the continuous acquisition of skills and knowledge through both formal and non-formal learning opportunities’.

Cobb (2009, 2010) defines lifelong learning by narrowing ‘learning’ as a process in life where transformation takes place and where a change in behaviour and attitude is brought about by the experience of new knowledge and skills. Cobb (ibid.) mentions that learning can be associated with formal classes and courses and this is probably because most people associate paper qualifications with learning too. Cobb (ibid.) adds that specific workplace positions may bring about better lifestyles due to the higher and better work remunerations which resulted due to better paper qualifications. Nonetheless, Cobb (ibid.) states that learning is not just about the culmination of an end product like a certificate, diploma or degree. He believes that learning also requires some kind of activity from the person who wants to learn. This learning is reflected in self-practice, preparation for the future or even purposeful interaction with others. In this regard, Cobb (ibid.) treats learning as an unconscious effort.

Cecchini (2003) summarises lifelong learning as all forms of learning activities which are undertaken by the respective individuals throughout his/her life with the aim of improving certain knowledge, skills and competences. He claims that such intention to develop is within a personal, civic, social and/or employment related perspective.

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Kuang Ching Hei, Ph.D.

What Lifelong Learning Means to a Malaysian Senior Citizen

## **Women and Lifelong Learning**

Historically, women in the early days are deprived of learning, unlike their male counterparts. This is probably because the world then was patriarchal as more men seemed to rule nations and served as community leaders. Today, things have changed drastically although many women in countries such as Afghanistan are still deprived of education. This practice indicates that education for some female members of the world community may still be a struggle and a challenge.

Are women any different from men when it comes to leaning? Studies have been conducted to understand women in lifelong learning. Bencsik, Meri, and Noszkay (2009), in their study, focused on female workers who had continued their learning and who had found employment within three years after learning. They also looked at the benefits women gained from lifelong learning. Their study then looked at the kinds of training that were needed and whether or not the moves of these female workers in their jobs were appreciated by their employers. Their findings indicate that older women who had lost their jobs before were more concerned about developing their soft skills. They also found that dependability, independence and adaptiveness to the situation is important if the women wanted to retain their jobs. The study further disclosed that the employers preferred to invest in professional development for their female staff instead of focusing on motivation for their employees through trainings. This implies that the female workers were expected to make contributions to their workplace through the development they had acquired through further learning. How inspired were these women in the work they do was not an issue to their bosses.

Vicente and Nazaret (2012) focused on lifelong learning of the Gypsy women in Spain. Their study found that lifelong learning of the Gypsy women was meant to provide assistance and support (socio educational or compensatory projects) and it was aimed at complementing the work of the teachers who were training the women in everything related to Gypsy culture. Their findings suggest that there were still some biasness in the way the Gypsy women were viewed. This means that despite training and being given the context to learn to enable change, the

stereotyping of the Gypsy women could not be erased, implying that education or no education, the Gypsy women had been stereotyped.

Richard, Silvia and Martin (2011) examined the effect of lifelong learning on women's employment and wages in the United Kingdom. All data were drawn from the British Household Panel Survey. Their findings indicate that upgraded qualifications in the women's educational status have a clear effect on their earnings. Lifelong learning for the women in stable employment appears to provide a one-off boost for wage growth. This implies that women probably pursued lifelong learning for economic gains which can also change their lives.

### **Struggles of Malaysian Women**

Women and their roles in society have been studied (Fukumaru, 2000; Kim, 1995; Kim & Hurh, 1988; Marica, Borhanuddin & Abdulah, 2009) and among local studies, Marica et al (2009) focussed on gender roles in Malaysian families where the women were employees. Their study indicated that the women employees thought that their lives were more lopsided than the men's. This perception was derived from several observations: women carried a full-time job and they helped to bring in a second income for the family; women had more household responsibilities such as preparing meals, doing laundry, caring for the children and their education, women also had to balance the family's finances and budgeting; they had to do shopping and marketing for home groceries; they were generally the ones to take care of garbage as well as various duties including taking care of their elderly relatives (parents, in-laws). More than half of the respondents in the study claimed that all these responsibilities have reduced their personal time (me-time) for themselves.

The plights of the Malaysian women were also addressed by Masami Mustaza (The Star, July 2011). In her report, it was mentioned that Malaysian women were the 16th most stressed women in the fast-lane. Malaysian women also had to juggle their lives with hardship, struggling to move up their career ladder like men do but were often restrained by their family roles as a mother, wife, and daughter. The women also claimed that their husbands, on the other hand, maintained only one role, which was as the bread winner.

The multitasking effects of Malaysian women have also been highlighted (see Wong Bee Lee cited in Masami Mustaza, July 2011). Malaysian women served their roles as employees whilst also performing tasks as wives, mothers and daughters. They were reported to be carrying longer working hours than their European and Australian counterparts thus they were more stressed (Wong, 2011) cited in Masami Mustaza (2011). It was also mentioned that Malaysian women take leave not to go on vacations, but to care for their families and aged parents, unlike their European counterparts. Masami Mustaza (2011) also indicated that many Malaysian women today try to balance career with home and family responsibilities, which inevitably, added to their stress. Nonetheless, no report was written about senior Malaysian women pursuing lifelong learning.

### **Lifelong Learning and Senior Citizens**

Educationists distinguish young learners from adult learners because of specific differences. It has been mentioned (Kuhne, no date given) that adult learners can be characterised by the following characteristics:

- a. Adults take more control over their learning
- b. Adults draw upon their personal experiences for learning
- c. Adults are more motivated in learning situations
- d. Adults are more practical
- e. Adults do not take on learner roles seriously
- f. Adults fit their learning into their margins – by setting priorities
- g. Adults may feel inadequate in their learning
- h. Adults are more resistant to change
- i. Adults are more diverse so they use their experiences in their applications of learning
- j. Adults have to compensate learning with aging

Lamb and Brady (no date given) attempted to understand the experiences of older learners in one lifelong learning institute and its impact on their sense of well-being. Their study aimed to reveal various factors that could have prompted the elders into participating in lifelong learning (LLL). Their study worked on the assumption that older learners who continued long-



term participation in an older adult education program do so because they experienced significant rewards that are consistent with their perceived needs and this hypothesis was verified by their study. They concluded that older adult participation in LLL was totally voluntary and seldom motivated by career or pecuniary interests. This implies that older learners do it for individual and personal gains.

A similar finding was reported in another study looking at elders in lifelong learning. Fisher's (1979) study found that elder participants involved in lifelong learning were mainly white, female, and they had income and educational attainment that is higher than the non-participants. The same finding was confirmed by others Bencsik, Meri and Noszkay (2009), Vicente and Nazaret (2012) as well as Fugate and Lamden (1997), Manheimer and Moskowitz-McKenzie (1995, 1997) and Martin (2003) cited in Lamb and Brady (no date given).

Hiemstram (1993) suggests that adult learners may seem to be a group when involving themselves in lifelong learning. However, there are individual differences. He proposed that these learners should not be viewed or investigated as homogenous because they are not. To overcome this, Hiemstram (ibid.) suggests looking at these learners individually as each possesses multi-dimensional characteristics. They are different in their needs and abilities. Hiemstram's (ibid.) claim can help to validate the significance of this paper.

## **Methodology**

Data sourced for this paper comprise a series of narrative reflections provided by one senior female citizen pursuing a degree in law. Her reflections were written in English during the process of her learning in 2011. Permission was requested to use her data and these were then copied onto a file. A linguistic analysis was then applied to the contents of the reflections by focussing on the lexicon or words used. From several readings of the data, the contents were then placed into four main headings of A) Learning, B) Health, C) Family and D) Personal Affairs. The reflections were then grouped respectively and discussed.

The development of this paper is qualitative and descriptive in nature. Due to the fact that the contents were derived from one participant's reflections or narratives, the outcome of this paper may not be generalised. The contents could also be seen as subjective as it is limited to only one adult senior citizen. However, in the world of social science, it is imperative for a researcher to learn and understand the experiences of a particular community by viewing the events of experiences through the windows of one individual who can represent the minority of the society. Thus, despite its subjective nature, reflections are real in that they were chronicled by the person experiencing it. There are arguments claiming that one individual's experience cannot represent the experiences of the majority and this is true because what one culture observes as good may be perceived as bad in another culture. Nevertheless, it will serve as an eye opener for the community as these experiences can then be used as case studies or as an initial effort to understand the experiences of senior citizens pursuing lifelong learning. In the case of Malaysia, social scientists have no choice but to rely on the narrations of one senior female citizen so as to be able to unravel the possible issues related to lifelong learning. It is subjective but it enables the world to view the inner thoughts of a particular community. The disadvantage of taking one participant's input is that findings cannot be generalised but the findings could support Hiemstram's (1993) argument.

## Data Analysis

This section provides the input traced from the reflections. The four themes are categorised according to importance within a table and the narrations are then placed respectively. What is perceived to be positive is categorised as rewarding (√) while what is perceived to be negative is categorised as challenging (X). Table 1 provides the data and a discussion follows.

**Table 1: Issue of Learning**

No.	Theme	Issue or no Issue?
	<b>Learning</b>	
1	<i>Class attendance</i>	No issue As a senior person I have less commitment at home looking after younger children. I can also avoid attending social functions if I choose to without feeling guilty. I actually enjoying going to class and meeting new friends from another industry. I like studying law so attending class is not an issue.

2	<i>Doing assignments</i>	<p>Yes, this is great issue</p> <p>I hate assignments but they are better than exams.</p> <p>I don't like deadlines because I forget so easily.</p> <p>Typing and formatting assignments are also a problem to me because I am slow and clumsy.</p> <p>I wish it is just attending class and no assignments but without assignments, it will be difficult to assess.</p> <p>Because I have good language skills, I have an edge over others. Law is not easy to argue without the language. .</p>	√
3	<i>Exam preparation</i>	<p>Yes this is a major issue</p> <p>I hate hate hate exams because I become a real nerve wreck.</p> <p>My heart beats non-stop and my hands go cold in exam halls.</p> <p>Trying to remember my cases is the worst of all...after writing and writing, I still forget.</p> <p>I really wish they would do away with exams for seniors like me.</p>	√
4	<i>Forming discussion groups</i>	<p>Yes a small issue</p> <p>Too much time wasted with others not of the same frequency.</p> <p>I prefer doing things on my own really.</p> <p>Can be annoying working with people who think they know but don't know.</p>	√
5	<i>Preparing and reading up for discussions</i>	<p>No issue because I cannot run away from this</p> <p>I don't mind reading up the extra article as advised by the lecturer, in fact even if I have to buy the book, it is not an issue.</p> <p>My main challenge is that the various law books are thick and too smooth so it is difficult for my stiff fingers.</p> <p>I am also unhappy with the pages as they keep slipping off</p> <p>Most of all I hate the fonts...why can't publishers or printers make fonts bigger and the spacing wider?</p> <p>My aging eyes are strained as I read the books.</p> <p>Subsequently I can't read for long.</p> <p>I also can't read or write my notes for too long as the chair hurts my back.</p> <p>Oral preparation and discussion is not a huge issue at all.</p> <p>In fact, other than the books, I love interacting if I know my stuff well.</p> <p>Nonetheless, if topics discussed are not within my grasp I can get embarrassed.</p>	X
6	<i>Meeting teachers for discussion</i>	<p>Yes it is an issue</p> <p>I find that it is a waste of time seeing m y 'young' teachers who talk as if they know everything and I don't.</p> <p>The experience of sharing with some classmates is better, they tell you what they know and I learn better.</p> <p>One teacher of mine even looked at me as if I was a total greenhorn.</p>	√
7	<i>Meeting deadlines for assignments</i>	<p>Yes this is an issue sometimes.</p> <p>Because I took three courses in a year, it was difficult having to submit some of the work on time.</p> <p>This isn't because I cannot write, it is simply overwhelming because law expects you to quote cases and I need to make references to many books to get the cases.</p>	√
8	<i>Purchasing of required texts</i>	<p>No issue</p> <p>I am able to buy whatever books I want including foreign texts because I have my own salary.</p> <p>In fact, as a senior learner, I am more than willing to buy books</p>	X

		unlike my young classmates who cannot afford to do so. .	
9	<i>Time to do studies</i>	No issue Because children are grown up and I can use the computer.	X
10	<i>Transport to class</i>	No issue Free to do what he/she wants Usually has own vehicle for use.	X
11	<i>Vision in doing course work</i>	Yes Vision is blurring so very difficult to read thick books with small fonts. Sometimes the glaring light can also affect my reading ...I have suffered from headaches before while reading a thick text on jurisprudence. In classes, I notice that I cannot read PPTs in red. Other times, I have had to walk right up to the screen to read what was on the slide.	√

## Learning

Under this theme the participant does not seem to be experiencing a lot of negativity because she had no issues with class attendance, doing her discussions and assignments because these are basically matters which cannot be avoided if one is a learner. She also has no hesitations in acquiring reference texts and actually pursuing her learning process because as a working woman she has her own purchasing power unlike younger learners. The only challenge she faced in lifelong learning is doing assignments, meeting deadlines and her worst phobia is examinations which are further contributed by her own cognitive capacity of remembering which was due to her age. She also dislikes meeting teachers and classmates for discussions which has been described as being a waste of time and this is clearly reflected by her personal ego when she described being seen as a greenhorn. These reflections suggest that senior citizens do take time seriously and they do not like being perceived as ‘kids’ because they have work experiences.

**Table 2: Issue of Health**

No.	Theme	Issue or no Issue?	
	<i>Health</i>		
1	<i>Health hazards</i>	Yes, this is a prime issue as I was pursuing the course. My health was like going down, I am not sure whether it is my age, menopause or that I am overworked with full time job and studying on weekends and rushing to complete my home chores, my professional duties and my commitment as a student. I sat a lot on the computer table and the prolonged activity of sitting down and working on assignments seem to have caused me to become overweight. I could feel numbness on one side of my leg and occasionally even felt giddy. I also noticed that I was a lot on coffee and chewing on snacks	√

		<p>and no proper meals.</p> <p>My husband noticed my ‘expansion’ and made a remark and this upset me. Of course when I got upset, I lost my equilibrium and did not function well for a few days.</p> <p>Unable to put on my normal clothes also made me feel a little diffident and unsure of myself and of course this led to me feeling a little low and withdrawn.</p> <p>It was terribly difficult to lose weight.</p> <p>I also experienced numbness on my left leg, my soles seemed sore although I wasn’t walking a lot and my head ached a lot. This too affected my studies and assignments because in law, one really need to read lot and be updated and remember the cases.</p> <p>My fingers especially the right hand also hurt from time to time and then when I saw the doctor, he said I had trigger finger. It alarmed me tremendously but I had to still myself in order not to lose faith.</p> <p>I wonder if it is the computer causing me to be like this or is it my age again?</p> <p>Recently, my hair dropped more than before and a colleague had even mentioned that it is thinning.</p> <p>Overall, it cannot be denied that my body hurts from working so hard whether it is typing up assignments or reading and writing summaries. The woman who massaged say that the back muscles are very taut.</p> <p>The neck too seems stiff and I have had to move my body as I sit on the chair to alleviate the stiffness.</p>	
2	<i>Memory retention</i>	<p>Yes, it is showing signs of deteriorating</p> <p>If ever there is a challenge in learning for me, this is the worst of it all when I had to recall all the cases when preparing for the examination. It is far easier to recall what I ate yesterday but recalling all the cases for what a judge had said as a precedent can be killing to my soul.</p> <p>Of the fifteen courses I have taken so far, I have only passed eight.</p>	√
3	<i>Physical movements</i>	<p>I noticed that I was not as nimble or agile not so long after I was into my studies.</p> <p>I fell down a few times as I walked, probably my balance.</p> <p>Once as I was coming back from the hospital, I just fell and bruised myself all over.</p> <p>At another time, I was unable to squat down in the toilet.</p> <p>As I climbed steps, I was panting and gasping for breath.</p> <p>Of course, I can’t drive in the dark.</p> <p>To some extent, these impositions hindered my progress.</p>	√

## Health

This column had the most comments and the data imply that age is catching up with the participant which she also realises. Nevertheless, because of what has been imposed upon her due to her age, the consequence is that it affected her learning and this is in general posed by her waning memory, vision and physical movements.

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Kuang Ching Hei, Ph.D.

What Lifelong Learning Means to a Malaysian Senior Citizen

In addition, age had also caught up with the senior citizen rendering her physique as a problem or an issue as her hands and legs are affected too although there is no evidence to link these physical disappointments to her learning process. It could also be due to ‘wear and tear’ as the body succumbs to gravity and deterioration of organs.

**Table 3: Issue of Family**

No.	Theme	Issue or no Issue?	
	<i>Family</i>		
1	<i>Family Commitment</i>	Not really an issue. My children are grown up and the youngest is independent on his own. I can stay focus on my studies without worrying about family commitment. I can say ‘No’ to family even if they insist on my presence. Many years of work experience has given me more confidence.	X
2	<i>Support from family</i>	No issue My family is very well taken care of so I need less of their support financially. Morally, they encourage me to study. My husband was the greatest support.	X
3	<i>Family bonding</i>	No Issue. We are fine as a family. In fact, I think I can understand the kids better when they are not doing their work as I think they should. At one point, even my son was showing me how to revise and what to read for my law! This is good, it puts us on the same ground.	X

## Family

Where this is concerned, the participant has no issue with it practically because the participant came from a family that gave her immense support. Such a support strengthened her focus on lifelong learning as an easier process that is enjoyed rather than detested, unlike how young learners sometimes feel.

**Table 4: Issue of Personal Affairs**

No.	Theme	Issue or no Issue?	
	<i>Personal Affairs</i>		
1	<i>Money constraints</i>	No this is not an issue at all Can make use of savings and now has less family responsibilities.	X
2	<i>Adequate sleep/rest</i>	No issue I may not get my usual 8 hours but I am not tired. I suppose as a senior it is normal to be short on sleep and still feel active unlike my younger female colleagues who say that they always lack sleep because of growing children and busy	X

		homes.	
3	<i>Personal space/privacy</i>	No issue I think as a senior woman I am seasoned to it after having lived with the family for so long. The children or spouse scatter away when they notice my irritations.	X

### **Personal Affairs**

In this issue of finding time for personal enjoyment or space, the senior participant also did not have many negative comments. In fact, as a senior citizen she felt empowered to do as she liked because she had the confidence and the economical means to fulfil her personal needs. Moreover, a grown-up family also helps to cement this belief in the senior citizen.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was to understand what lifelong learning means to a senior female citizen who was striving to do a full time bachelor's degree in a public university. The contents indicate that as a whole lifelong learning (LLL) for the participant was not an issue because she could handle many of the matters which lifelong learning involves for example attendance, assignments, examinations, discussion or study groups and transportation to attend classes. However, the age factor brought on other issues such as deteriorating memory, vision and physical movements which were compounded by pains in the limbs. These factors had indirectly affected her learning process and sometimes her attitude. The senior citizen had no issue with purchasing the necessary references but she had issues with examinations and issues with physically presenting herself at the location of the learning. Where the family issues are concerned the senior female citizen had no issues. There was also no issue with finding time for herself as her family gave her the support.

This paper is based on one senior female citizen's input in pursuing lifelong learning but the reflections provided reveal the actual issues a senior citizen pursuing lifelong learning experiences. Although one may say the contents are rather subjective and simplified, they are nothing but real. To verify the findings of this paper, it may be a good idea to do a comparison via reflections or even interviews with another senior learner from another cultural background or geographical region to see if there are similarities or differences in issues raised. This may open up the leeway for social scientists to consider learning within the context of senior learners

and to help address the challenges they face in order to make lifelong learning an enjoyable experience as senior citizens have a lot to offer to the country's development and growing population.

This paper thus concludes by saying that the pursuit of lifelong learning is a fulfilling experience for a person of retiring age because it not only expands one's viewpoints about life; it also provides new knowledge which can be used to improve one's interaction with others. Also, if one can discount the financial expenses faced, it can be said that the mere act of pursuing lifelong learning shall be an experience of achievement and enjoyment, particularly when reflected through the gains one can acquire. Nonetheless, the reality of life is that lifelong learning as a pursuit can be difficult as it requires determination and discipline. Young (July, 2007) provides 15 pointers to help propel people towards lifelong learning and they are:

- 1) Always have a book, 2) Keep a "To-Learn" list, 3) Mingle with more intellectual people, 4) Seek guided thinking, 5) Put learning into practice, 6) Teach others, 7) Clean you own input from time to time to be updated, 8 ) Learn in groups, 9) Unlearn assumptions, 10) Find jobs that encourage learning, 11) Start a project, 12) Follow your intuition, 13) Put the first fifteen minutes of the day into good use for learning, 14) Enjoy the rewards and 15) Make learning a priority.

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