



Understanding the Role of Pedagogies on Adult's Learning Experience

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ABSTRACT: Learning and development of an individual has a significant influence in a person's intellectual and holistic development. Adult learning is an important but often neglected area in learning and development arena. There is a paradigm shift in adult learning as compared to child learning. Adults are different from children in terms of learning abilities, learning methods, learning behavior and experience etc. Hence, it is critical to understand and evaluate, how adults learn and assimilate the knowledge. In this context, the pedagogy (the method of teaching) has a greater bearing on the quality and delivery of imparting knowledge and skills. There are many pedagogical instruments which can be utilized by the instructors.

This paper aims to understand the effectiveness of different pedagogies on the adult's learning experience. Four widely used pedagogies i.e., lecture, workshop, role play, outbound learning has been chosen and studied with respect to nine evaluation parameters which were identified to evaluate the learning experience and outcomes. It also aims to understand the subjects and situations vis-a-vis the different pedagogies to get the optimum learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Adult learning, Pedagogy, Outbound learning, Role Play, Workshop

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I. LITERATURE REVIEW

When we think about education, our minds immediately build up a picture of a classroom with a teacher directing students through a topic and assisting them in a hands-on activity in the classroom or outside activity. Adult education, in reality, refers to a wide range of activities that encourage adults to learn in various aspects of their lives [1]. Although adult education differs from that of children, the fear that adult education might not be productive has no evidence. It depends on the individual's learning ability. Recognizing personal learning styles helps lecturers to facilitate the learning process and to provide rational learning methods, self-contained curricula, and scientific programming curricula based on adult learning experiences with the goal of further improving their competencies [2]. Learning styles (learning styles include visual, auditory, reading and writing, and kinesthetic) play an important role in the lives of learners. When students recognize their own learning style, they will be able to integrate it into their learning process. As a result, learning process will be enjoyable, faster, and more effective[3]. Having fun and experiencing enjoyment were identified as a proven way to create a socially connected learning environment and also acted as motivators for both faculty and students to attend classes and learn skills [4]. According to Knowles' assumptions about adult learners and the process elements of adult education, as people mature, they shift from dependent personality to a more self-directed personality and accumulate a growing set of experiences that provide an abundant resource for learning; moreover, they develop curiosity about learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their jobs or personal lives; and furthermore, adult learners become more problem-oriented rather than subject-oriented as they mature[5].

II. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Adult learner

An adult learner is a skilled individual who has certain experience and prior knowledge in a field. The instruction and learning approach for adults vary to a great extent as compared to children.

2.2 Characteristics of adult learning

Adults are practical, as they have accumulated life experiences (both in professional and personal spaces) in their life journey. This puts them in a different pedestal than the children and teenage students. They tend to take learning more seriously. Their ability to articulate and debate problems and issues on the practical issues enables adults to be more engaged in the learning process. They reinforce the learnings with real life experiences to expand their knowledge. Adults are goal oriented in learning. The goals could be but not limited to learning a new skill for enriching their career, for getting a promotion in office, to hone their skill sets etc., adults may be more open to share their viewpoints and experiences to other learning partners that can promote cross learning from the peers.

2.3 Pedagogies in adult learning

Pedagogy refers to the method of how teachers teach, in theory and in practice. Pedagogies play a significant role in teaching and more importantly in teaching to adults. There are different pedagogies which can be used by the instructors depending upon the nature of subject being taught, learning objectives and the level of maturity of the learners etc.,

Some of the widely used pedagogies are lecture, role play, workshop, outbound learning (experiential learning). Of late, learning in informal settings is gaining more traction especially in corporate training. Trainers are now adopting new pedagogies like theater, role plays and work shop etc., which breaks away the monotony of the traditional classroom setting. They provide the learners a fresh learning approach that can stimulate their creative side in an imaginative way. Theater and role plays provide new perspectives for people to understand and appreciate the different roles and responsibilities of different departments within an organization. It can also help develop interpersonal communications and relationships among teams. Workshops can play a significant role in situations where collective ideas of different groups are required to solve contemporary issues and challenges. The ideas of different stake holders are discussed and debated to arrive at concrete solutions to the real-life problems. Movies have the ability to significantly influence youngsters and adults alike and can be effectively adopted to teach specific subjects like negotiation, communication and cross-cultural studies etc.,

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the study is to understand the effect of different pedagogies on adult's learning experience and outcomes. A survey was conducted to study the above objective. The respondents included graduates, post graduated and PhD's, working professionals, fresher's etc. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section captures the adult's background information such as age, gender, educational qualifications, and work experience. The second section of the questionnaire consists of 9 evaluation parameters which are considered for studying the impact of four different pedagogies on adult's learning experience and outcomes. The answers to the questions are given in the form of a likerating scale ranging from 1 to 10. (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest).

3.1 parameters considered for evaluating learning experience and outcome

The learning experience and outcome of adult's has been evaluated using nine parameters which encompasses various aspects of an adult's learning experience. The nine parameters considered in this study are as given below;

- i. Interaction and engagement
- ii. Cross learning /mutual sharing from other participants
- iii. Energy levels during the learning activity
- iv. Focus / concentration
- v. Ease of understanding and grasping of the subject /concepts
- vi. Level of visualization
- vii. Ease of application in real life situations
- viii. Inducement for extended learning
- ix. Knowledge transmission.

3.2 Pedagogies selected for study

The study focused on the following four pedagogies

Lecture

Lecture refers to an oral presentation designed to teach learners about a specific topic or to convey information in a classroom setting.

Workshop

The workshop refers to activities that give participants hands-on experience and allow them to apply real-world situations.

Role play

It is a type of experiential learning in which students learn in a simulated environment and is intended to provide real-time experience in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Role-play refers to simulating a real life environment mostly by entrusting the learners to assume the role of a character or person and act in the given environment /circumstances with other learning partners, frequently involving diverse genres of practice.

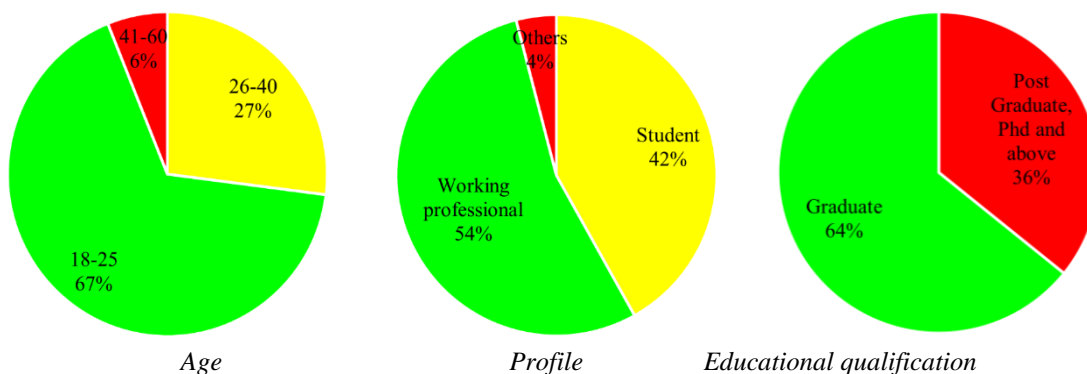
Outbound learning

Outbound learning refers to learning through organized activities that take place in an outdoor environment/setting generally by doing specific physical activities and learning through the same.

3.3 demographic profile of the respondents

The survey was conducted on adults with diverse backgrounds and demographic profile to set off any bias with respect to a particular group.

The pie charts below represent the demographic profile of the respondents.



IV. OBSERVATIONS

Table 1 and Table 2 provides the summary of the most preferred pedagogies and the least preferred pedagogies for the nine parameters considered for evaluating the learning experience of adults.

Table 1: Most Preferred Pedagogies

Sl. No.	EvaluationParameter	Age (years)			Gender		Education		Profile			Experience (years)	
		18-25	26-40	41-60	Male	Female	Graduate	P.G., Ph.D., and above	Student	Employees	Others	0-5	5+
1	Interaction and engagement during the learning activity	OBL	OBL	RP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	RP
2	Cross learning /Mutual sharing from other learning participants	OBL	OBL	RP	OBL	RP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	WSP	OBL	OBL
3	Energy levels	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL
4	Level of Focus	OBL	OBL	RP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	RP

5	Ease of Understanding and grasping of the Subject /Concepts	OBL	OBL	RP	OBL	RP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	RP
6	Level of visualization	OBL	OBL	RP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	RP
7	Ease of Application in real life situations	OBL	OBL	WSP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	WSP	OBL	OBL	WSP
8	Level of Inducement for extended learning	OBL	OBL	RP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	RP
9	Level of knowledge transmission	OBL	OBL	WSP	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL	OBL

Table 2:Least preferred pedagogies

Sl. No.	Evaluation Parameter	Age (years)			Gender		Education		Profile			Experience (years)	
		18-25	26-40	41-60	Male	Female	Graduate	P.G., Ph.D., and above	Student	Employees	Others	0-5	5+
1	Interaction and engagement during the learning activity	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE
2	Cross learning /Mutual sharing from other learning participants	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE
3	Energy levels	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE
4	Level of Focus	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE
5	Ease of Understanding and grasping of the Subject /Concepts	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	RP	LE	LE
6	Level of visualization	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	RP	LE	LE

7	Ease of Application in real life situations	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE
8	Level of Inducement for extended learning	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE
9	Level of knowledge transmission	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE	LE

Abbreviations:

P. G=Post Graduation, OBL=Outbound Learning,

RP=Role Play, WSP=Workshop, LE=Lecture

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Outbound learning

The study reveals that the outbound learning is the most preferred pedagogy in the age group of 18- 40. Since outbound learning is a form of experiential learning, it is found to be very effective method for achieving optimal learning experience for adults.

However, outbound learning or experiential learning does not come without any challenges. There are many challenges in imparting experiential learning. Instructors need to have a clear understanding of the learning objective that is to be imparted and the set up and organisation of activities requires proper planning and seamless execution. Outbound learning has to be followed by a debriefing session to highlight the various learning themes and sharing of experiences by the participants. Participants should also have maturity to understand the situations and assimilate the experiences to convert it into a learning process.

5.2 Role play

Role play has been found to be relevant in the age group of 41–60 for few parameters like interaction and engagement, cross-learning, focus levels, ease of understanding, and level of visualization. It is to be noted that female participants preferred this pedagogy over males. Respondents with more than 5 years of experience also preferred this method over the others.

5.3 Lecture

Lecture method is found to be the least preferred pedagogy among the selected four pedagogies with respect to seven parameters out of nine parameters considered for this study. It is also to be noted that the results are unanimous with respect to all the categories like gender, different age groups, and educational backgrounds and across different profiles & experiences.

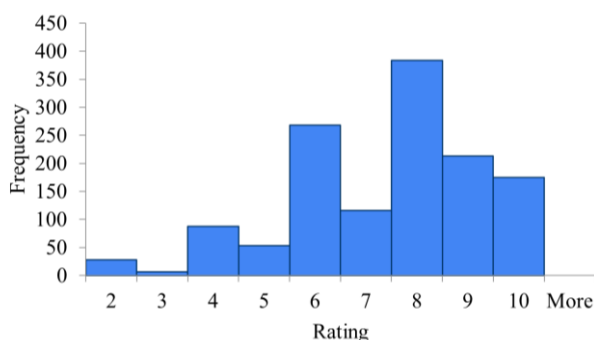
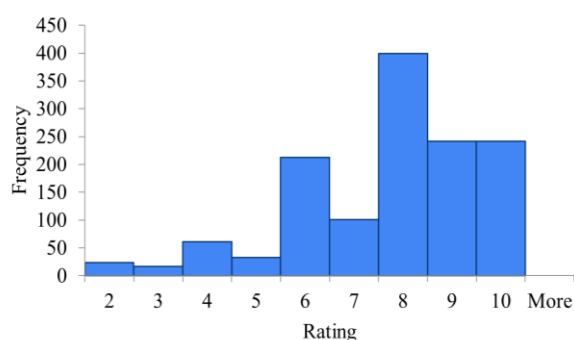
5.4 Workshop

It was observed that Workshop is also preferred by the people in age group of 41–60. It was particularly found to be useful for learning outcome related parameters like Ease of Application in real life situations and knowledge transmission.

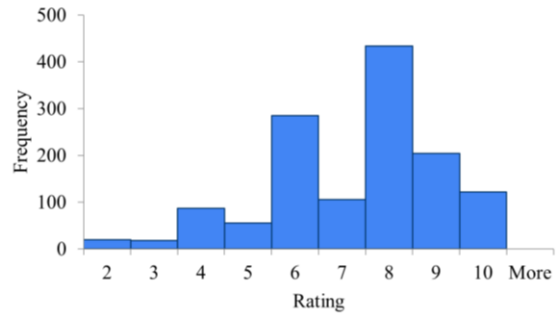
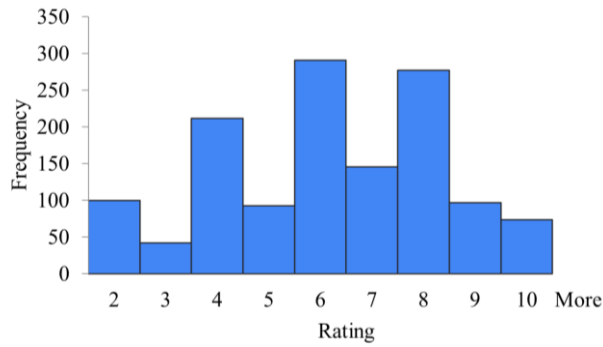
5.5 Analysis of the distribution of rating scores

The histograms below show the distribution of the rating scores with respect to four pedagogies taking into consideration all the nine evaluation parameters.

The bar charts above provide the comparison of the total rating scores of four pedagogies against each of the nine evaluation parameters. It clearly indicates that outbound learning scored the highest and lecture scored the least for all of the nine parameters

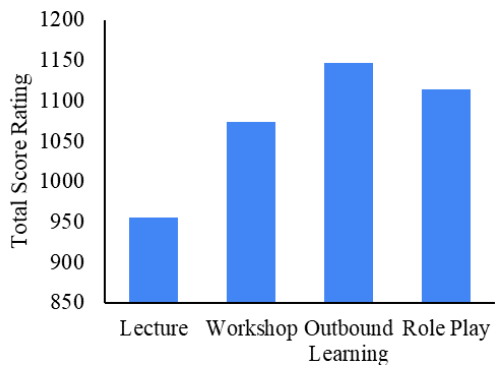


Outbound learning Role play

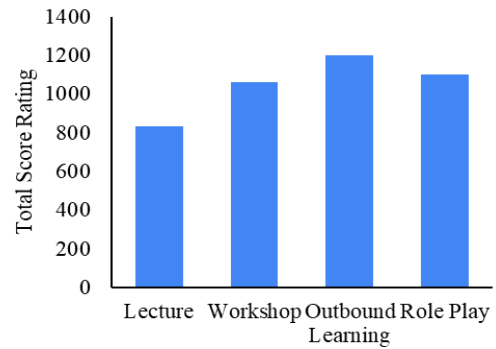


LectureWorkshop

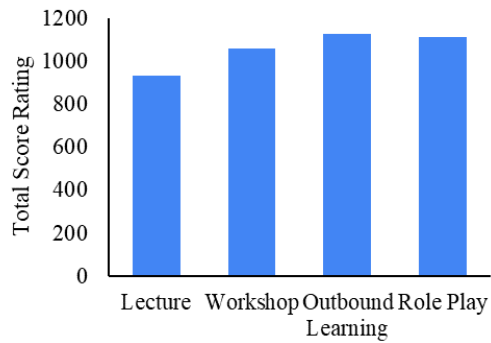
5.6 Analysis of Parameters Vs Pedagogy



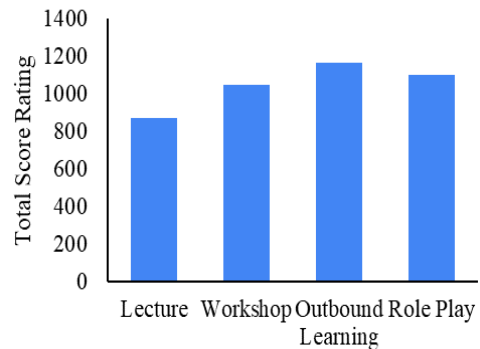
Level of interaction and engagement during the learning activity



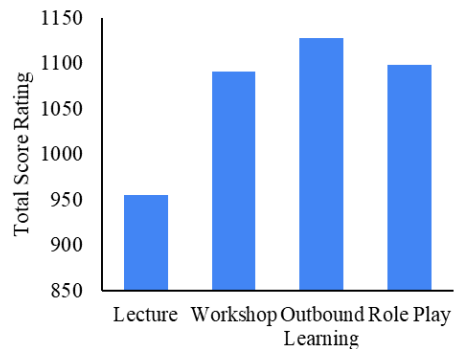
Energy levels during the learning activity



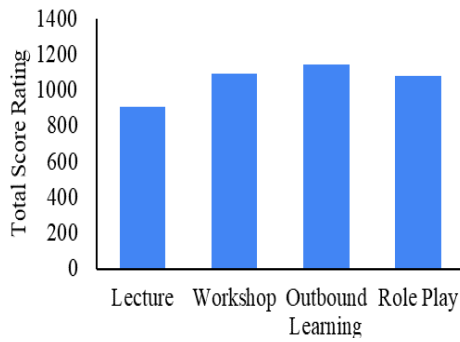
Level of cross learning /mutual sharing from other learning participants



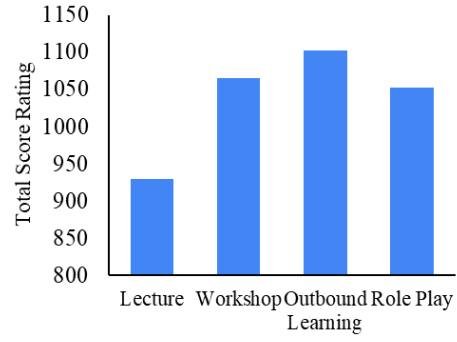
Level of focus / concentration during the learning activity



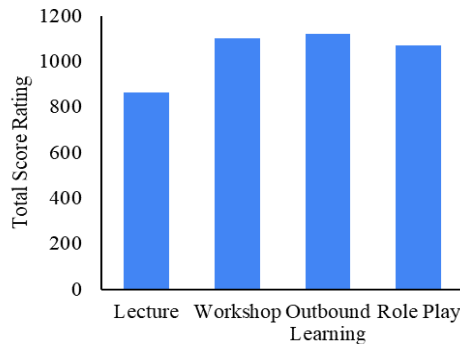
Ease of understanding and grasping of the subject /concepts



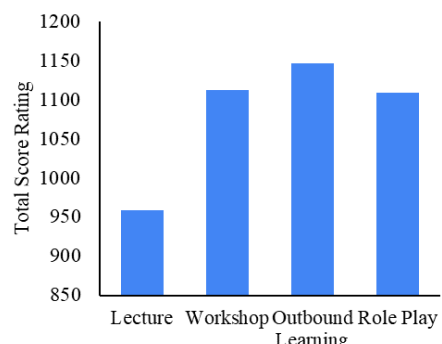
Level of visualization



Level of inducement for extended learning



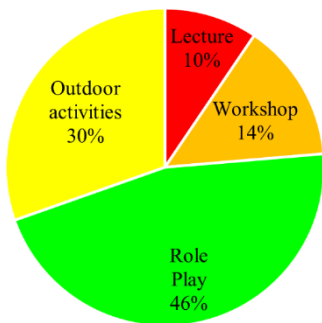
Ease of application in real life situation



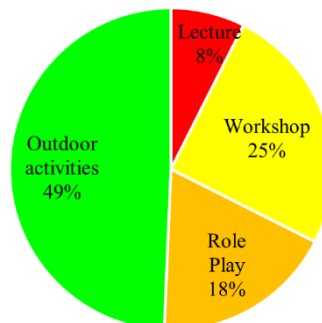
Level of knowledge transmission

5.7 Subject wise analysis on preference of pedagogies

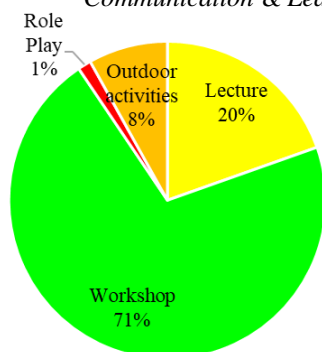
The study also focused on the understanding the adult learner's preferred pedagogy on important subjects/areas like communication and leadership, science & technology, arts, culture & humanities and behavioral management.



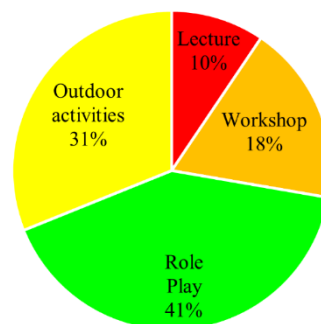
Communication & Leadership



Arts, Culture and Humanities Behavioral Management



Science & Technology



It was observed that for science & technology subjects, workshop has emerged as the most preferred one (71%) followed by lecture (20%) and outbound learning methods (8%).

However, subjects on arts, culture and humanities, it was found out the most preferred pedagogy is outbound learning (49%). This signifies for the humanities subjects; experiential learning has wider acceptance among the learners as the scope for experimentation is very high in experiential learning

VI. CONCLUSION

The study analyzed the impact of four different pedagogies on adult's learning experience and outcome by evaluating it under nine parameters, which comprehensively covered the key question under study. It emerged out the new pedagogies like outbound learning, role- play plays a very significant role in enhancing the learning

Experience of adults as compared to the traditional methods like lecture, workshop. Hence, it is concluded that adults learn better through experiential learning which is learning through doing (kinesthetic style). This has huge implications for the instructors and practitioners, on how a training program has to be designed and delivered to adults to gain maximum impact.

The utility of outbound learning as a pedagogy lies in its ability to bring an element of fun, energy and excitement of exploration, resulting in making the learning activity lighter and implied. However, the nature of subject taught also plays a crucial role in selecting a most suitable pedagogy which is revealed through subject wise analysis. For example, behavioral management and communication and leadership subjects, outbound learning and role- play were the most dominant methods by constituting about 72% and 76% respectively. On the other hand, science & technology subjects, workshop and lecture together constitutes about 91%.

This study also established that it is imperative that instructors should take into consideration the subject nature of the instruction that has to be imparted to employ the right pedagogical interventions to optimize the adult's learning experience and outcome.

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