

THE ROLE OF GENDER AND AGE IN LIFELONG LEARNING PERCEPTION AND COMPETENCIES

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In order for teachers to gain lifelong learning competencies, the teacher education pillar is undoubtedly the most important component. According to the literature review, research in teacher education is critical for investigating how a teacher trainer's lifelong learning perceptions and competencies are affected. The aim of this study is to explore the role of gender and age of teacher trainers on lifelong learning perceptions and competencies through an explanatory research design. Using the random sampling method, a sample of 300 teacher trainers from education degree colleges in Myanmar was selected. In order to investigate the perceptions of teacher trainers on the subject of lifelong learning, a 9-item perception on lifelong learning questionnaire was used. The Lifelong Learning Competencies Scale with 27 items, based on the European framework, was also used to examine teacher trainers' lifelong learning competencies. First of all, a descriptive analysis of the target variables was run to calculate the mean scores. As a second step, we decided to use an independent samples t-test to compare scores by gender and a one-way ANOVA for comparing scores by age to identify differences between the target variables by background factors. In the third step, the Tukey test was run to compare how the mean scores of each group were different. The mean scores of female teacher trainers' perceptions about lifelong learning were higher than those of males. A high score in lifelong learning competencies was also found for female teacher trainers. Despite the higher mean scores of females, the independent t-test revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in perceptions on Lifelong Learning ($t_{(47)} = .60, p = .55$) and Lifelong Learning Competencies ($t_{(47)} = .43, p = .67$). In terms of lifelong learning perceptions, teachers who are 41–50 years old had the highest mean scores. Teacher trainers in the 20–30 and 41–50 age groups have the highest mean levels of lifelong learning competencies. The ANOVA results revealed that there are significant differences in the perception on lifelong learning ($F_{(295)} = 2.72, p < .05$), while there is no statistically significant difference in lifelong learning competencies ($F_{(295)} = 2.13, p = .08$) in terms of the age of teacher trainers. In addition, the Tukey test revealed that 41–50-year-old teacher trainers ($3.47 \pm .44$) have higher lifelong learning perception means than 31–40-year-olds ($3.20 \pm .38$) at $p < .05$. As a result of our findings, it is concluded that gender does not play an important role in lifelong learning perception and competencies, but the age of teacher trainers is an important factor in them. Despite this, the age of a teacher trainers does not determine their lifelong learning competencies.