「평생학습사회」 제22권 제1호(2026. 2. 28), pp. 1-27 https://doi.org/10.26857/JLLS.2026.2.22.1.1
JLLS Journal of Lifelong Learning Society

South Korean Adult Learning Participation in Relation to Employment Characteristics and Quality of Life

Eunkeong Jung (Ewha Womans University)
Namhee Kim* (Ewha Womans University)
Fabiola Pereira Aquize (Ewha Womans University)

<Abstract>

South Korea is highly developed in terms of education, but a significant gap remains between school and adult education. Using national survey data, this study examined differences in adult learning participation levels and perceived quality of life (QoL) by economic activity status, employment stability, and occupational skill level. Results showed that individuals who engaged in economic activities, held regular jobs, and held higher-skilled occupations participated more in adult learning than their counterparts. Overall perceived QoL differed significantly by participants' educational level, rather than by employment characteristics. In contrast, domain-specific aspects of QoL, including emotional health and sense of economic stability, varied according to selected employment characteristics. The findings of this study highlight the importance of participation in adult learning for individuals' working lives and overall QoL, and suggest tailored policies that address both the economic and emotional dimensions of learners' QoL.

• **Key words:** adult learning participation, employment characteristics, quality of life, education level, South Korea

* Corresponding author: Namhee Kim (knh@ewha.ac.kr)

I. Introduction

Adult education in South Korea (Korea hereafter) has not matched the country's well-known strength in the educational achievement of the school-aged population, resulting in a gap between school education and adult education. Although Korea's recent higher education completion rate is significantly high at 56.2% for ages 25-64, surpassing the OECD average of 41.9% (Korean Educational Development Institute, 2025), the adult learning participation rate remains low at only 33.1% (Korean Educational Development Institute, 2024). More concerning than the low participation rate is the severe imbalance in adult learning participation for different groups of people. For example, the participation rate in job-related adult education among the unemployed or economically inactive population is lower than that of employed individuals (Statistics Korea, 2021). This imbalance is a factor in the deepening gap between socioeconomic classes and serves as a barrier to social integration (Jang, 2017; Kim, 2021; Kim & Park, 2020).

In this regard, the status and characteristics of economic activities in the Korean context are assumed to affect Koreans' engagement in adult learning. Previous studies on the motivations for participating in adult learning and engagement in learning among adults who are active in the labor market have identified the possible influence of several job characteristics. For example, the higher level of specialization required in their roles, such as managerial and professional positions, was correlated with higher adult learning participation rates (Han, 2016; Lee, Lee, & Park, 2016; Panitsides, 2023; Shim, 2018). In addition, individuals engaged more in adult learning activities if they had more stable employment (Ferreira, de Grip, & van der Velden, 2018; Fouarge et al., 2012; Kyndt & Baert, 2013; Lee, Lee, & Park, 2016; Ryu & Jun, 2017; Yoon & Park, 2017), higher education levels (Han, 2016; Hwang & Gil, 2017; Jang, Jeon, & Kim, 2023), and worked in larger companies (Jang, Jeon, & Kim, 2023; Kyndt & Baert, 2013).

Some studies have also shown that higher levels of participation in adult learning are associated with more positive perceptions of quality of life (QoL hereafter) (Byun & Kim, 2011; Escuder-Mollon, 2012). Or, individuals who participated more in adult learning tended to report higher levels of happiness (Goian, 2014; Koh & Lee, 2014; Kwon, 2013; Li, 2019; Panitsides, 2013). However, this has not been closely examined in

research and no research has confirmed whether adult education participants' perception of QoL is affected by their employment characteristics.

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is a difference in the level of participation in adult learning and the perceived level of QoL based on individuals' economic activity status, employment stability, and occupational skill level. In this study, we attempt a detailed analysis of the dimensions that constitute QoL. We aim to understand in greater detail the individual differences in QoL perceptions among adult learning participants based on their individual employment circumstances. The findings can provide insights into the impact of adult learning on participants' perceived QoL and diversifying tailored adult learning programs.

Ⅱ. Literature Review

1. Adult Learning Participation and Characteristics of Employment

Regarding the impact of economic activity status on adult learning participation, mixed results have been reported in research. The first argument is that those who are economically active participate more in adult learning than those who are not (Dincer, Tekin-Koru, & Askar, 2016; Hwang & Gil, 2017; Lee, Lee, & Park, 2016; Rubenson, 2018). Economically active individuals aim to develop their job skills or careers by participating in adult learning rather than to develop hobbies and liberal arts (Jeon, 2009). In other words, economically active adult learners engage in goal-oriented learning to maintain their economic activities. The second argument suggests that unemployment status actually increases participation in adult learning, as unemployed individuals tend to be more active in adult learning to obtain employment opportunities (Leyretana & Trinidad, 2022; Rothes, Lemos, & Gonçalves, 2017). Hence, the impact of economic activity status on adult learning participation still seems to remain inconclusive.

Employment stability is also known to be related to adult learning participation. Research has found that regular workers whose employment is secure participate more in adult learning than non-regular workers whose employment is less stable (Ferreira,

de Grip, & van der Velden, 2018; Fouarge et al., 2012; Kyndt & Baert, 2013; Yoon & Park, 2017). In contrast, Radovan (2024) reported that non-regular workers' higher participation in adult learning was due to temporary workers seeking to improve their skills for securing future employment. Moreover, in Lee's study (2006), several groups that had lower participation in adult learning were identified as non-regular workers, women, low-educated individuals, low-skilled individuals, the unemployed, the self-employed, and those working in small businesses.

These differences in participation in adult learning have also been interpreted according to different motivational factors. For example, Kim & Park (2006) reported that job advancement motivation is higher for non-regular workers than for regular workers, while cognitive interest motivation is higher for regular workers than for non-regular workers. In other words, non-regular workers in relatively unstable positions tend to pursue employment stability and want to advance careers through learning (Ferreira, de Grip, & van der Velden, 2018), while regular workers in relatively stable positions place more importance on intellectual growth. These different motivational factors may lead to differences in adult learning participation based on their employment stability. Presumably affected by motivation, adult learning participation shows conflicting phenomena according to job stability, which needs further examination.

Adult learning participation also varies according to the type of job. In general, the higher the occupational skill level, the higher the participation in adult learning. According to the European Union's Adult Education Survey (AES), there is a significant difference in adult learning participation rates between managers and professionals (67.3% in 2016) and those in entry-level occupations (30.9% in 2016) (Panitsides, 2023). Choi, Kim, & Lee (2008) found that the likelihood of continuous participation in adult learning is highest for office and management workers, and a similar trend is found in other studies (Boeren et al., 2012; Han, 2016; Lee, Lee, & Park, 2016; Rubenson, 2018; Strauss & Leuze, 2013). Also, the strength of the particular needs and types of motivation that underlie adult learning have been discussed. Kim & Park (2006) found that the motivation for job advancement is highest in sales occupations, while the motivation for social stimulation is highest in production occupations, indicating differences in motivation by job type. A study by Shim (2018), which examined adult learning participation focusing on factors influencing workplace learning, found that

managers had higher rates of participation in adult learning compared to general workers. Based on these findings, the adult learning participation rate may be higher in professional and managerial occupations with higher job proficiency requirements than in simple labor occupations with lower skill requirements and expectations. As discussed above, the results of research conducted on participation in adult learning based on employment stability and characteristics are inconsistent; thus, this study aims to investigate adult learning participation in relation to employment characteristics.

2. Perception of QoL among Adult Learning Participants: Differences by Economic Status and Employment Characteristics

An important outcome of adult learning is the impact on learners' QoL. Studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between higher participation in adult learning and increased happiness levels (Field, 2009; Pearce, 2017), as well as higher perceived QoL (Laal & Salamati, 2012). Participation in adult learning has also contributed to the recovery of mental health disorders and improved potential stress coping abilities (Hammond, 2004; Pearce, 2017). Furthermore, the benefits of adult learning participation extend beyond an individual's physical and mental health and well-being. Field (2011) stated that adult learning affects employment and income and has an indirect impact on health and sociability. It can also contribute to the expansion of social relationships by positively influencing adult relationships such as community engagement and social interaction (Billett, 2024). Overall, participation in adult learning is expected to have a positive impact on one's QoL in terms of physical health, mental health, psychological satisfaction, and social relationships.

The concept of QoL is frequently used interchangeably with life satisfaction, happiness, and well-being in that they all emphasize an individual's subjective evaluation instead of objective conditions (Yun, Jeon, & Lee, 2023). The definition and measurement of QoL vary across studies, but the World Health Organization's WHOQOL is the most common and widely accepted (Escuder-Mollon, 2012). WHO describes the QoL as how individuals perceive their life position, considering both their sociocultural environment and their personal goals, expectations, and concerns. The instrument WHOQOL measures different facets (World Health Organization, 1998), including energy and fatigue; positive feelings; thinking, learning, memory, and

concentration; body image and appearance; negative feelings; social support; opportunities for acquiring new information and skills; and participation in and opportunities for recreation and leisure. As is evident from the inclusion of emotional elements in the definition of WHO's QoL, it is difficult to measure QoL using only objective indicators. Subjective well-being is developed from the concept of QoL and has been expanded by Cummins (2005) into a theory of QoL that comprises seven domains: material well-being, health, productivity, intimacy, safety, community, and emotional well-being.

Although numerous studies have shown that participation in adult learning has a positive impact on QoL, research on how QoL perceptions differ based on the economic activity status and employment characteristics of adult learning participants is still scarce. Park, Kim, & Lee (2023), who studied the impact of adult learning participants' personal backgrounds on their learning outcomes, found that economic activity status did not significantly impact their QoL. Rather, learners' internal characteristics, such as motivation for participation and collaborative learning, appeared to have a greater impact on their QoL. Participation in economic activities is known to have a positive impact on the QoL of people from various socioeconomic classes (Min & Cho, 2018; Randall, Bernard, & Durah, 2023). Working is a key factor in maintaining and improving QoL. Although it is expected that participation in adult learning will generally have a positive effect on the participants' QoL, it is difficult to confirm how the participants' perception of each sub-factor of QoL will differ depending on whether they are economically active or not. However, considering that the life satisfaction of the unemployed has consistently been reported to be lower than that of the employed in the Korean Adult Lifelong Learning survey (Ministry of Education & Korean Educational Development Institute, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024), it can be expected that the QoL perception of adult learning participants who are economically active will be higher than that of the opposite case.

Previous studies suggest discrepancies in the analysis of the impact of economic activity status and employment characteristics on the level of participation in adult learning. While it has been confirmed to some extent that participation in adult learning positively impacts perceived QoL, research on how perceived QoL varies according to economic activity status and employment characteristics of adult learning participants remains lacking. Based on prior research, this study proposes the following research

hypotheses.

1) Level of Adult Learning Participation

RH 1-1. People who participate in economic activities participate in adult learning more than those who do not.

RH 1-2. People who have a job with high employment stability participate in adult learning more than those who do not.

RH 1-3. People who have a job requiring a high occupational skill level participate in adult learning more than those who do not.

2) Perception of QoL among Adult Learning Participants

RH 2-1. Adult learning participants who participate in economic activities perceive their QoL more positively than those who do not.

RH 2-2. Adult learning participants who have a job with high employment stability perceive their QoL more positively than those who do not.

RH 2-3. Adult learning participants who have a job requiring a high occupational skill level perceive their QoL more positively than those who do not.

Ⅲ. Methods

The Ministry of Education and the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) have conducted the Korean Adult Lifelong Learning survey annually since 2007. The survey collects data through a systematically stratified sampling method at the national level based on a face-to-face household interview from adults aged 25 to 79 to determine their level of participation in adult learning and their perceptions of adult learning. It includes respondents' participation in formal and non-formal education, accessibility to adult learning, non-participation factors, and learning outcomes. From the data set of 9,968 (KEDI, 2022), we selected 2,817 respondents who participated in adult learning at least once in 2021.

The dependent variables in this study were the frequency of adult learning participation and participants' perceived QoL associated with their engagement in adult

learning. The frequency of adult learning participation was assessed by the number of times participants engaged in adult learning programs. QoL was measured based on responses to four items, including mental health, physical health, social participation satisfaction, and a sense of economic stability. These dimensions were selected based on the multifaceted nature of QoL, which encompasses various aspects of an individual's well-being (Bowling & Windsor, 2001; Cella, 1994). Although this simplified measurement does not fully capture the multidimensional nature of QoL as conceptualized in the WHOQOL framework, some prior studies (Jang, 2021; Kil & Kim, 2019) have assessed quality of life using four brief items addressing mental health, physical health, social participation, and perceived economic stability. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not helping at all; 5 = very helpful) by asking how helpful adult learning was to their QoL. The Cronbach's coefficient for the QoL items was .632. Despite a moderate level of internal consistency, it is acceptable for exploratory research when the data were obtained from a large-scale national survey (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The independent variables in this study are economic activity status, employment stability, and occupational skill level. Economic activity status was measured based on the question, "Are you working for the purpose of income?" Employment stability was measured based on the response to a regular job or temporary job, excluding non-wage workers, which was originally included as a response option. In this study, regular workers were operatively defined as employment types with high employment stability (e.g., full-time, salaried, or continuous), and temporary and daily workers were operatively defined as employment types with low employment stability (e.g., part-time, seasonal). Occupational skill refers to the level of skills needed for job performance. In this study, occupational skill level was divided into three groups based on the type of occupation. The survey presented nine categories of occupations according to the Korean Standard Classification of Occupations (KSCO), which were divided into three skill levels: (1) the first skill level includes elementary workers; (2) the second skill level includes clerks, service workers, sales workers, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers, plant, machine operators, and assemblers; and (3) the third skill level includes managers, professionals, and related workers. Additionally, since educational level has been identified as a factor associated with both participation in adult learning (Han, 2016; Hwang & Gil, 2017; Jang, Jeon, & Kim, 2023)

and QoL (Ban et al., 2015; Han, 2016; Kim, 2013), it was included as a covariate along with age in the analysis.

The data were analyzed using jamovi version 2.6.44. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in how many times they participated in adult learning and the perceived QoL level based on respondents' economic activity status, employment stability, and occupational skill level, while using the age and education level as the covariates. Although the assumption of normality and homogeneity of variances was not fully met, the ANCOVA results were considered robust due to the large sample size and were interpreted in conjunction with effect size estimates (Yoo, 2013). Post-hoc analyses were performed when the ANCOVA results showed significant differences to identify which groups differed. Post hoc comparisons were conducted based on estimated marginal means, adjusting for the covariates. Although the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, pairwise comparisons were interpreted with caution, focusing on effect sizes rather than solely on statistical significance.

〈Table 1〉 Characteristics of Participants

Gender	Male			Female		
	1,421 people (50.5%)			1,396 people (49.5%)		
Age	25-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60-69 years	70-79 years
	448 (15.9%)	649 (23.0%)	561 (19.9%)	639 (22.7%)	391 (13.9%)	129 (4.6%)
Education Level	Middle school or less		High school		Bachelor's or higher	
	203 (7.2%)		817 (29.0%)		1,797 (63.8%)	
Economic Activity Status	Economically active			Economically inactive		
	2,306 (81.9%)			511 (18.1%)		
Employment Stability	Regular employee		Temporary/ daily worker		Non-wage worker	
	1,535 (66.6%)		178 (7.7%)		593 (25.7%)	
Occupational skill level	Skill Level 1		Skill Level 2		Skill Level 3	
	90 (3.9%)		2,042 (88.6%)		174 (7.5%)	

The sociodemographic characteristics of the 2,817 respondents were reported in Table 1. The percentages of males and females were similar. The largest age group was 30-39 years old, and the smallest group was 70-79 years old. In terms of education level, the largest group was those with a bachelor's degree or higher. Most of the respondents were economically active, and among them, the proportion of regular workers was higher than that of temporary and daily workers. When classifying the occupations of economically active individuals based on skill levels, the largest proportion was the second skill level group. The average of adult learning participation frequency per participant was 1.24 times (Table 2). The largest group participated one time, accounting for 82.8% of the total. The average score for their perceived QoL among adult learning participants was 3.69 on a 5-point Likert scale.

〈Table 2〉 Adult Learning Participation Frequency and Perceived QoL among Participants

Adult Learning Participation Frequency	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 times	6 times	Mean	SD
	2,331 people (82.8%)	358 people (12.7%)	82 people (2.9%)	38 people (1.3%)	5 people (0.2%)	3 people (0.1%)	1.24 times	0.603

Perceived QoL Dimensions	Mean	Min	Median	Max	SD
Overall Perceived QoL	3.69	1.5	3.75	5	0.482
Emotional Health	3.93	1	4	5	0.584
Physical Health	3.76	1	4	5	0.786
Social Participation Satisfaction	3.77	1	4	5	0.664
Sense of Economic Stability	3.31	1	3	5	0.770

Ⅳ. Results

RH 1-1: An ANCOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in the number of times they participated in adult learning based on their economic activity status while controlling for age and education level. The results (Table 3) indicated that economic activity status had a statistically significant effect on adult learning participation after controlling for age and education level, $F(1, 2813) = 4.07$, $p = .044$. Age, $F(1, 2813) = 4.59$, $p = .032$, and education level, $F(1, 2813) = 31.37$, $p < .001$, were also significant covariates. However, the effect sizes were small, indicating limited

practical significance.

RH 1-2: An ANCOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in the number of times they participated in adult learning based on employment type while controlling for age and education level. The results (Table 3) indicated a statistically significant effect of employment type on adult learning participation after controlling for age and education level, $F(1, 1708) = 9.80$, $p = .002$. Age, $F(1, 1708) = 7.79$, $p = .005$, and education level, $F(1, 1708) = 13.21$, $p < .001$, were also significant covariates. Although the effect sizes were small, the findings indicate that employment type remains significantly associated with differences in adult learning participation.

RH 1-3: An ANCOVA was conducted to determine if there were differences in the number of times they participated in adult learning based on occupational skill level while controlling for age and education level. The results (Table 3) indicated a statistically significant effect of occupational skill level on adult learning participation after controlling for age and education level, $F(3, 2811) = 5.52$, $p < .001$. Age showed a marginal effect, $F(1, 2811) = 3.83$, $p = .050$, whereas education level had a strong and statistically significant effect, $F(1, 2811) = 22.56$, $p < .001$. Although the effect sizes were small, the findings indicate that occupational skill level remains significantly associated with differences in adult learning participation. Post hoc comparisons (Table 4) using the Bonferroni test revealed that individuals in the highest occupational skill

〈Table 3〉 ANCOVA Results for Economic Activity Status, Employment Stability, and Occupational Skill Level

Model		*df*	*F*	*p*	η^2p
1. Economic Activity Status	Economic Activity Status	1, 2813	4.07	.044	.001
	Age (covariate)	1, 2813	4.59	.032	.002
	Education (covariate)	1, 2813	31.37	< .001	.011
	Residuals	2813			
2. Employment Stability	Employment Stability	1, 1708	9.80	.002	.006
	Age (covariate)	1, 1708	7.79	.005	.004
	Education (covariate)	1, 1708	13.21	< .001	.008
	Residuals	1708			
3. Occupational Skill Level	Occupational Skill Level	3, 2811	5.52	< .001	.006
	Age (covariate)	1, 2811	3.83	.050	.001
	Education (covariate)	1, 2811	22.56	< .001	.008
	Residuals	2811			

Note. ηp^2 = partial eta squared.

level participated in adult learning significantly more frequently than those in the first and second skill levels, whereas no significant difference was observed between the first and second skill levels. Thus, hypotheses 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 are all supported.

〈Table 4〉 Post Hoc Comparisons by Occupational Skill Level Based on Estimated Marginal Means (Bonferroni-adjusted)

Comparison	Mean Difference (EMM)	SE	*p* (Bonferroni)	Cohen's d
Skill Level 1 vs. 2	-0.074	0.067	1.000	-0.124
Skill Level 1 vs. 3	-0.233	0.081	0.025	-0.389
Skill Level 2 vs. 3	-0.158	0.048	0.005	-0.265

Note. Post hoc comparisons were conducted based on estimated marginal means adjusted for age and education level. Cohen's d is reported as an effect size for pairwise comparisons.

RH 2-1: An ANCOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in the perceived QoL level of adult learning participants based on economic activity status while controlling for age and education level. The results (Table 5) indicated that economic activity status did not have a statistically significant effect on the perceived QoL level after controlling for the covariates, $F(1, 2813) = 2.94$, $p = .086$. Age was not a significant covariate, $F(1, 2813) = 0.93$, $p = .336$, whereas education level had a significant effect on the perceived QoL level, $F(1, 2813) = 12.41$, $p < .001$, although the effect size was small (partial $\eta^2 = .004$). Thus, Hypothesis 2-1 is not supported.

However, after breaking down the QoL perception scores, statistically significant differences were observed across the dimensions of emotional health, physical health, and a sense of economic stability. In terms of emotional health, the economically active group had a lower perception of QoL compared to the economically inactive group. The results (Table 6) indicated that economic activity status had a statistically significant effect on emotional health after controlling for the covariates, $F(1, 2813) = 27.89$, $p < .001$. Age, $F(1, 2813) = 2.16$, $p = .142$, and education level, $F(1, 2813) = 2.72$, $p = .099$, were not statistically significant covariates. In contrast, in terms of their sense of economic stability, the economically active group had a higher perception of QoL compared to the economically inactive group. Economic activity status had a statistically significant effect on the sense of economic stability, after controlling for the covariates, $F(1, 2813) = 10.31$, $p = .001$. Age was not a significant covariate, $F(1, 2813) = 2.30$, $p =$

.130, whereas education level had a significant effect on the sense of economic stability, $F(1, 2813) = 15.52$, $p < .001$, although the effect size was small (partial $\eta^2 = .005$). These findings suggest that the impact of economic activity status on the emotional health of adult learning participants may be different from the impact on their sense of economic stability.

〈Table 5〉 ANCOVA Results for QoL by Economic Activity Status

Source	*df*	*F*	*p*	ηp^2
Economic Activity Status	1, 2813	2.94	.086	.001
Age (covariate)	1, 2813	0.93	.336	.000
Education (covariate)	1, 2813	12.41	< .001	.004
Residuals	2813			

Note. ηp^2 = partial eta squared.

〈Table 6〉 ANCOVA Results for QoL Subdomain by Economic Activity Status

QoL Subdomain	Source	*df*	*F*	*p*	ηp^2
Emotional Health	Economic Activity Status	1, 2813	27.89	< .001	.010
	Age (covariate)	1, 2813	2.16	.142	.001
	Education (covariate)	1, 2813	2.72	.099	.001
Physical Health	Economic Activity Status	1, 2813	5.34	.021	.002
	Age (covariate)	1, 2813	2.43	.119	.001
	Education (covariate)	1, 2813	4.90	.027	.002
Social Participation Satisfaction	Economic Activity Status	1, 2813	1.71	.191	.001
	Age (covariate)	1, 2813	1.96	.162	.001
	Education (covariate)	1, 2813	2.64	.104	.001
Sense of Economic Stability	Economic Activity Status	1, 2813	10.31	.001	.004
	Age (covariate)	1, 2813	2.30	.130	.001
	Education (covariate)	1, 2813	15.52	< .001	.005

Note. ηp^2 = partial eta squared.

RH 2-2: An ANCOVA was conducted to determine if there were differences in the level of perceived QoL based on employment stability while controlling for age and education level. The results (Table 7) indicated that employment stability did not have a statistically significant effect on QoL after controlling for the covariates, $F(1, 1708) = 3.40$, $p = .065$. Age was not a significant covariate, $F(1, 1708) = 1.97$, $p = .161$, whereas education level had a significant effect on QoL, $F(1, 1708) = 19.18$, $p < .001$, with a

small effect size (partial η^2 = .011). Thus, Hypothesis 2-2 is not supported.

〈Table 7〉 ANCOVA Results for QoL by Employment Stability

Source	*df*	*F*	*p*	ηp^2
Employment Stability	1, 1708	3.40	0.065	.002
Age (covariate)	1, 1708	1.97	0.161	.001
Education (covariate)	1, 1708	19.18	< .001	.011
Residuals	1708			

Note. ηp^2 = partial eta squared.

However, breaking down the QoL perception scores (Table 8), statistically significant differences were found in the area of emotional health. In terms of emotional health, the regular employees group had a lower perception of QoL compared to the temporary and daily workers group. Employment stability had a statistically significant effect on emotional health after controlling for the covariates, $F(1, 1708) = 9.62$, $p = .002$. Age was not a significant covariate, $F(1, 1708) = 1.44$, $p = .230$, whereas education level had a significant effect on emotional health, $F(1, 1708) = 10.01$, $p = .002$, although the effect size was small (partial $\eta^2 = .006$). In contrast, for perceived economic stability, regular employees showed significantly higher QoL scores than temporary and daily workers before controlling for age and education level. However, this difference was no longer statistically significant after adjusting for the covariates. These results suggest that the

〈Table 8〉 ANCOVA Results for QoL Subdomain by Employment Stability

QoL Subdomain	Source	*df*	*F*	*p*	ηp^2
Emotional Health	Employment Stability	1, 1708	9.62	.002	.006
	Age (covariate)	1, 1708	1.44	.230	.001
	Education (covariate)	1, 1708	10.01	.002	.006
Physical Health	Employment Stability	1, 1708	3.46	.063	.002
	Age (covariate)	1, 1708	0.55	.457	.000
	Education (covariate)	1, 1708	5.31	.021	.003
Social Participation Satisfaction	Employment Stability	1, 1708	2.46	.117	.001
	Age (covariate)	1, 1708	0.19	.659	.000
	Education (covariate)	1, 1708	3.13	.077	.002
Sense of Economic Stability	Employment Stability	1, 1708	1.07	.301	.001
	Age (covariate)	1, 1708	2.20	.138	.001
	Education (covariate)	1, 1708	22.68	< .001	.013

observed differences in perceived economic stability are attributable to educational differences rather than employment stability per se.

RH 2-3: An ANCOVA was conducted to determine if there were differences in the QoL perception scores based on occupational skill level while controlling for age and education level. The results (Table 9) indicated that skill level did not have a statistically significant effect on QoL after controlling for the covariates, $F(3, 2811) = 2.43$, $p = .063$. Age was not a significant covariate, $F(1, 2811) = 0.85$, $p = .357$, whereas education level had a significant effect on QoL, $F(1, 2811) = 8.63$, $p = .003$, although the effect size was small (partial $\eta^2 = .003$). Thus, Hypothesis 2-3 is not supported.

〈Table 9〉 ANCOVA Results for QoL by Skill Level

Source	*df*	*F*	*p*	ηp^2
Occupational Skill Level	3, 2811	2.43	.063	.003
Age (covariate)	1, 2811	0.85	.357	.000
Education (covariate)	1, 2811	8.63	.003	.003
Residuals	2811			

Note. ηp^2 = partial eta squared.

V. Discussions and Conclusion

The results reveal important findings and implications. First, the results indicated differences in adult learning participation levels across groups based on the Korean data. This finding is well aligned with international research indicating that individuals participate more in adult learning if they are economically active (Dincer, Tekin-Koru, & Askar, 2016; Hwang & Gil, 2017; Rubenson, 2018), have stable employment (Ferreira, de Grip, & van der Velden, 2018; Fouarge et al., 2012; Kim, 2001; Kyndt & Baert, 2013; Lee, 2006; Son, 2004; Yoon & Park, 2017), and are engaged in high skill-level occupations (Boeren et al., 2012; Choi, Kim, & Lee, 2008; Han, 2016; Lee, Lee, & Park, 2016; Rubenson, 2018). It seems that people who have better job conditions (e.g., more stable work, higher level of skilled work) are more likely to participate in adult learning activities.

Although groups that are economically inactive and those with low employment stability also participate in adult learning to overcome economic instability (Radovan,

2024), this is not enough to reverse the overall imbalance in adult learning participation. The cause of this imbalance needs to be examined to identify organizational and societal barriers and, if any, promote public policies or programs to overcome this disparity. On the one hand, the relatively low participation in adult learning among economically inactive populations partly explains the overall low level of adult learning participation in Korean society. While workplaces provide education and training, including mandatory education, those outside the workplace are not widely participating in adult learning. It is necessary to explore specific factors that hinder participation in learning through follow-up studies.

Consistent with prior research, differences by skill level were associated with variations in participation levels. Job-related education and training participation varies significantly across different economic sectors, with a notable disparity between jobs at high risk of automation and others (Ioannidou & Parma, 2022). This disparity underscores a concerning trend, whereas workers in jobs most vulnerable to technological displacement are less likely to receive training that could help them adapt to changing job markets (OECD, 2023). The pace of technological change demands continuous skill upgrading for currently employed people (Dincer, Tekin-Koru, & Askar, 2016; OECD, 2025), requiring interventions to ensure that low-skilled workers receive the necessary training and education in a timely manner.

The findings suggest that no statistically significant differences in QoL were observed according to the employment characteristics of adult learning participants. Although preliminary analyses appeared to show variations in QoL by occupational skill level, these differences were no longer statistically significant after controlling for education level, suggesting that the observed differences by skill level were spurious. Likewise, when economic activity status and employment stability were considered, variations in perceived QoL appeared to be more closely associated with differences in education level than with employment characteristics. These patterns are broadly consistent with previous studies indicating that education level is associated with QoL through both direct and indirect pathways (Ban et al., 2015; Han, 2016; Kim, 2013). In the Korean context, education has been widely emphasized as an important means of facilitating individual social mobility and contributing to economic development (Ban et al., 2015).

Educational level has also been frequently identified as a factor associated with

participation in adult learning. The present findings are in line with earlier research (Han, 2016; Hwang & Gil, 2017; Jang, Jeon, & Kim, 2023), suggesting that higher levels of education tend to be associated with a greater likelihood of participating in adult learning. Taken together, these results suggest that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in adult learning and to report relatively higher levels of QoL. These findings indicate the need for increased policy and institutional attention to adults with lower levels of education. Although adult learning is often framed as a mechanism for reducing inequalities in learning opportunities (Song, 2025), observed disparities in both participation and QoL by education level suggest the possibility that adult learning may not fully offset, and may in some cases reflect, existing social inequalities (Jang, Jeon, & Kim, 2023).

There was no difference in the perception of overall QoL based on employment stability, but the perceived QoL in terms of emotional health was lower for regular workers than for their counterparts. This pattern may be interpreted in consideration of Koreans' challenging working life. Korea is known for high work demands and longer working hours under competitive social pressure with harsh organizational practices (Kim et al., 2021, 2023). As an example, in a study of Korean women's job transitions (Kim, Kim, & Baek, 2024), personal health problems were found to be one of the most troubling reasons for their career transitions. Additionally, since the possibility of job mobility of temporary workers has increased as the labor market has recently become more flexible, their emotional stress may have declined in response to such social changes (Yoo et al., 2016). According to Fontinha, Van Laar, & Easton (2018), this may imply that temporary workers have lower expectations for their working life and tend to be easily satisfied with given conditions compared to regular workers. Presumably, these contextual factors could be considered to partly explain why temporary workers reported relatively better emotional health. Nevertherless this calls for rigorous future research to fully understand the underlying mechanisms.

The phenomenon that economically inactive participants feel relatively less economically secure through their participation in adult learning makes us reconsider the differences in participation rates in adult learning according to economic activity status. As we have seen, economically active people tend to participate more in adult learning. Economically inactive people, by contrast, tend to have limited access to learning opportunities that could enhance their economic stability. In this sense, it can be

interpreted that the utility of adult learning itself is tilted toward emotional health rather than economic stability. According to national statistics, the perceived outcomes of adult learning participation follow a hierarchical pattern: psychological satisfaction and happiness, increased income, and employment stability (Statistics Korea, 2022). Therefore, in designing adult learning policies, greater emphasis should be placed on promoting participants' subjective well-being and happiness rather than focusing solely on economic returns.

This study on Korean workers suggests an inverse relationship between economic stability and emotional well-being among economically active people, contrasting with U.S. research (Prati, 2024; Ryu & Fan, 2023) that generally report positive reciprocal relationships between economic status and mental health. This disparity highlights how cultural and economic contexts could influence the interplay between financial factors and psychological well-being. The findings underscore the need for culturally informed approaches in both research and workplace interventions, recognizing that the impact of economic stability on mental health varies across cultures.

Based on the findings of this study, several policy implications can be suggested. First, it appears important to implement practical support programs that enable adult learning participants with low socioeconomic status, including lower levels of educational attainment, to sustain their participation in learning activities. Such efforts may include the expansion of vocational skills development programs aimed at enhancing employment stability among older workers (Oh & Sung, 2023), as well as the expansion of lifelong learning voucher schemes targeting socially and economically vulnerable groups (Byun & Seo, 2021). Second, adult education programs could be informed by the diverse characteristics of learners, including differences in educational background and work experience. This study suggests that economically active adult learners report relatively lower levels of emotional health. While mandatory workplace training—such as industrial safety and health education—continues to be implemented, there may be a need to broaden institutional support for mental health-related programs, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises. In this regard, greater emphasis could be placed on the role and responsibility of employers in promoting workers' emotional well-being (Kim, 2025).

We acknowledge some limitations of our study. First, because we selected rather clear control variables (age and education level) missing out other potential control

variables such as income level, it is cautious when interpreting the result that professional and managerial occupations (i.e., third skill level) with higher occupational skill levels exhibited a statistically significant higher perception of QoL compared to elementary workers (i.e., first skill level). Second, this study relied on self-reported measures of QoL, which are not free from response bias, even though a form of self-report on QoL is commonly used in research (Cummins, 2005; Diener, 1994). In the future, QoL can be explored with different data collection methods. Third, there are some concerns about disparities in some sample sizes. For example, nine occupations were re-categorized based on their skill level and analyzed across three tiers, which resulted in the uneven distribution of sample sizes for each level. Also, substantial differences exist in sample sizes between the economically active and economically inactive groups, as well as between regular employees and temporary and daily workers. Furthermore, considering that unequal group sizes may affect the stability of parameter estimates, future research could address these limitations by employing stratified sampling designs to achieve more balanced group distributions.

As additional recommendations for future research, the general adult population, both adult learning participants and non-participants, can be recruited to directly confirm whether employment characteristics influence participation in adult learning. In addition to targeting the general population, future research may examine the associations between employment characteristics, adult learning participation, and perceived QoL through longitudinal research designs, which can identify causal relationships among the variables, given that our cross-sectional data at a single point has a limitation.

In conclusion, the need for continuing education among working adults is increasing due to rapid changes in the economic environment, but the opportunities are not equal or evenly distributed. Therefore, it is necessary to study the factors in the economic approach that impact adult learning and subsequent performance. The significance of this study lies in identifying the links among employment characteristics of working adults, their motivations, and outcomes of participation in adult learning, and how these factors impact their perceived QoL.

References

Ban, S. J., Lim, H. J., Cho, Y. J., & Lee, J. (2015). The impact of the level of education as a result of educational investment on a quality of life - Mediating effects of an employment, a health, and a social relation. *The Journal of Economics and Finance of Education, 24*(2), 111-131.

Billett, S. (2024). Learning across working life: Educative experiences and individuals' participation. *Studies in Continuing Education, 46*(2), 143-159. https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2023.2221650

Boeren, E., Holford, J., Nicaise, I., & Baert, H. (2012). Why do adults learn? Developing a motivational typology across 12 European countries. *Globalisation, Societies and Education. 10*(2), 247-269. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2012.678764

Bowling, A., & Windsor, J. (2001). Towards the good life: A population survey of dimensions of quality of life. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 2*, 55-82. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1011564713657

Byun, J.-I., & Kim, I. S. (2011). Analysis of the effects of participation in lifelong learning. *Journal of Lifelong Education, 17*(4), 29-53.

Byun, J.-I., & Seo, Y. (2021). An analysis on lifelong learning participation of low-income adults using lifelong education voucher. *Journal of Lifelong Learning Society*, *17*(3), 241-265. https://doi.org/10.26857/JLLS.2021.8.17.3.241

Cella, D. F. (1994). Quality of life: Concepts and definition. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, 9*(3), 186-192. https://doi.org/10.1016/0885-3924(94)90129-5

Choi, D.-M., Kim, S. H., & Lee, S. J. (2008). The determinants of adults learning participants for lifelong in Korea. *Journal of Lifelong Education, 14*(4), 29-55.

Cummins, R. A. (2005). Moving from the quality of life concept to a theory. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 49*(10), 699-706. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2005.00738.x

Diener, E. (1994). Assessing subjective well-being: Progress and opportunities. *Social Indicators Research, 31*(2), 103-157.

Dincer, N. N., Tekin-Koru, A., & Askar, P. (2016). Investigation of participation in adult education in Turkey: AES data analysis. *Comparative Education Review, 60*(3), 530-548. https://doi.org/10.1086/687064

Escuder-Mollon, P. (2012). Modelling the impact of lifelong learning on senior citizens' quality of life. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 46*, 2339-2346. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.481

Ferreira, M., de Grip, A., & van der Velden, R. (2018). Does informal learning at work differ between temporary and permanent workers? Evidence from 20 OECD countries. *Labour Economics, 55*, 18-40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2018.08.009

Field, J. (2009). *Well-being and happiness: IFLL thematic paper 4.* National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Field, J. (2011). Is lifelong learning making a difference? Research-based evidence on the impact of adult learning. In *Second international handbook of lifelong learning* (pp. 887-897). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Fontinha, R., Van Laar, D., & Easton, S. (2018). Quality of working life of academics and researchers in the UK: The roles of contract type, tenure and university ranking. *Studies in Higher Education, 43*(4), 786-806. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1203890

Fouarge, D., de Grip, A., Smits, W., & de Vries, R. (2012). Flexible contracts and human capital investments. *De Economist, 160*, 177-195. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10645-011-9179-0

Goian, C. (2014). Transnational wellbeing analysis of the needs of professionals and learners engaged in adult education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 142*, 380-388. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.695

Hammond, C. (2004). Impacts of lifelong learning upon emotional resilience, psychological and mental health: Fieldwork evidence. *Oxford Review of Education, 30*(4), 551-568. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498042000303008

Han, S. J. (2016). The impact academic background, study attitude and participation in nonformal lifelong education on adult learners' quality of life. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Multimedia Services Convergent with Art, Humanities, and Sociology, 6*(2), 379-394. https://doi.org/10.35873/ajmahs.2016.6.2.039

Hwang, J. W., & Gil, H. J. (2017). Analysis of influential factors related to learner on the participation in non-formal lifelong education: Focusing on programs regarding vocational competence and liberal arts and humanities. *Journal of Lifelong Learning Society, 13*(4), 105-127. https://doi.org/10.26857/JLLS.2017.11.13.4.105

Ioannidou, A., & Parma, A. (2022). Risk of job automation and participation in adult education and training: Do welfare regimes matter? *Adult Education Quarterly, 72*(1), 84-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/07417136211026635

Jang, C. S., Jeon, H., & Kim, J. (2023). Characteristics and outcomes of lifelong learning participation among working adults by education level: A latent class analysis. *Journal of Lifelong Education, 29*(4), 149-180.

Jang, H. J. (2017). *The effectiveness of vocational education and training for youth and*

non-regular workers in South Korea. Doctoral dissertation. Seoul National University.

Jang, S. J. (2021). *The relationship between learning attitudes and quality of life awareness of lifelong learning participants: Focusing on the medium effect of learning types and learning performance.* Doctoral dissertation. Ajou University.

Jeon, H. S. (2009). Affecting factors of the working adult learners' participation in adult education. *Andragogy Today: International Journal of Adult & Continuing Education, 12*(1), 57-77. https://doi.org/10.22955/ace.12.1.200902.57

Kil, H., & Kim, M. (2019). Analysis of adult learner's participation types and affecting factors of non-formal lifelong education programs: Focusing of latent class analysis. *Asian Journal of Education*, *20*(3), 773-796.

Kim, H. J., Lee, H. M., Cheon, H., & Ko, H. (2023). Differential impacts of reduced worktime on work-life balance in Korea. *PLoS ONE, 18*(11), e0294247. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0294247

Kim, H.-Y., Choi, J., Lim, H.-M., Park, C., & Hong, Y.-C. (2021). The association between non-regular work patterns and insomnia among Korean wage workers: The fifth Korean working condition survey. *Annals of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 33*, e9. https://doi.org/10.35371/aoem.2021.33.e9

Kim, J., & Park, C.-Y. (2020). Education, skill training, and lifelong learning in the era of technological revolution: A review. *Asian Pacific Economic Literature, 34*(2), 3-19. https://doi.org/10.1111/apel.12299

Kim, J. J. (2021). Improvement of vocational competency for the vulnerable and the status of education and training. *Korea Labor and Society Institute Issue Paper, 15*(1), 1-10.

Kim, K. K. (2015). Educational attainment and quality of life in Korean society. *The Journal of Research in Education, 26*(3), 1-28.

Kim, N., Kim, K. N., & Baek, P. (2024). Understanding South Korean women workers' career transition experiences: Using the career decision tree model. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, 1273241. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1273241

Kim, S. K. (2025). Current status and challenges of domestic and international worker mental health promotion policies. *Monthly Labor Review*, *8*, 35-54.

Kim, Y. H. (2001). Equity of access and participation in adult learning: Current status and strategies. *Journal of Lifelong Education, 7*(1), 41-68.

Kim, Y. I., & Park, Y. J. (2006). A study on the motives and barriers of participation in the lifelong education by the workers' status. *Journal of Lifelong Learning Society, 2*(2), 113-136.

Koh, E. H., & Lee, S. (2014). Study on happiness of lifelong learning and happiness of life

for adults. *The Korean Journal of Educational Methodology Studies, 26*(4), 851-870. https://doi.org/10.17927/tkjems.2014.26.4.851

Korean Educational Development Institute. (2022). 2022 Korean adult lifelong learning survey. Data set, codebook, questionaries. Retrieved January 22, 2024, from https://www.kedi.re.kr/khome/main/research/selectSurveyDBFormNewAll.do

Korean Educational Development Institute. (2024). Major indicators of the 2024 adult learning individual survey. Report. Retrieved October 21, 2025, from https://www.kedi.re.kr/khome/main/research/selectPubForm.do

Korean Educational Development Institute. (2025). Announcement of the results of the "OECD Education Indicators 2025". Press release. Retrieved October 21, 2025, from https://www.kedi.re.kr/khome/main/announce/selectBroadAnnounceForm.do?selectTp=0&board_sq_no=3&article_sq_no=36122

Kwon, H. I. (2013). *Study for difference in happiness depending on lifelong education program participation of adult learners*. Master's thesis. Daegu University.

Kyndt, E., & Baert, H. (2013). Antecedents of employees' involvement in work-related learning: A systematic review. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(2), 273-313. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313478021

Laal, M., & Salamati, P. (2012). Lifelong learning; Why do we need it? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 31*, 399-403. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.073

Lee, B.-H. (2006). Lifelong learning and labor market risks. *Quarterly Journal of Labor Policy, 6*(3), 1-32.

Lee, J. J., Lee, E. J., & Park, M.-H. (2016). Exploring the recognition of education and skills mismatch as determinants of lifelong learning participation for workers. *Journal of Lifelong Learning Society, 12*(3), 29-57.

Leyretana, K., & Trinidad, J. E. (2022). Predicting or preventing lifelong learning? The role of employment, time, cost, and prior achievement. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 28*(2), 658-673. https://doi.org/10.1177/14779714211054555

Li, K. (2019). MOOC learners' demographics, self-regulated learning strategy, perceived learning and satisfaction: A structural equation modeling approach. *Computers & Education, 132*, 16-30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.01.003

Min, D., & Cho, E. (2018). Patterns in quality of life according to employment among the older adults: The Korean longitudinal study of aging (2008 - 2014). *BMC Public Health, 18*(1), 379. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5296-x

Ministry of Education & Korean Educational Development Institute. (2021). 2021 Korean adult lifelong learning survey. Retrieved October 1, 2025, from https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/viewRenew.do?boardID=338&boardSeq=90490&lev=0&

searchType=null&statusYN=W&page=1&s=moe&m=0304&opType=N

Ministry of Education & Korean Educational Development Institute. (2022). 2022 Korean adult lifelong learning survey. Retrieved October 1, 2025, from https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/viewRenew.do?boardID=338&boardSeq=94299&lev=0&searchType=null&statusYN=W&page=1&s=moe&m=0304&opType=N

Ministry of Education & Korean Educational Development Institute. (2023). 2023 Korean adult lifelong learning survey. Retrieved October 1, 2025, from https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/viewRenew.do?boardID=338&boardSeq=99280&lev=0&searchType=null&statusYN=W&page=1&s=moe&m=0304&opType=N

Ministry of Education & Korean Educational Development Institute. (2024). 2024 Korean adult lifelong learning survey. Retrieved October 1, 2025, from https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/viewRenew.do?boardID=338&boardSeq=102862&lev=0&searchType=null&statusYN=W&page=1&s=moe&m=0304&opType=N

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

OECD. (2023). *Education at a glance 2023 sources, methodologies and technical notes*. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en

OECD. (2025). *Trends in adult learning: New data from the 2023 survey of adult skills*. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/ec0624a6-en

Oh, Y. R., & Sung, G.-E. (2023). A study on the effects of vocational ability development training participation on employment status of older workers. *The Journal of Lifelong Education and HRD*, *19*(4), 105-130.

Panitsides, E. (2013). Researching returns emanating from participation in adult education courses: A quantitative approach. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 32*(5), 600-619. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2012.753123

Panitsides, E. (2023). Adult education: Reaching the unreached. *Emerald Open Research, 1*(13). https://doi.org/10.1108/EOR-13-2023-0011

Park, J., Kim, H., & Lee, Y. R. (2023). A study on the effects of personal background, learning characteristics, participation motivation, and learning experiences on lifelong learning outcomes of adult learners in college. *Korean Journal of Adult & Continuing Education Studies, 14*(2), 55-75.

Pearce, E. (2017). Participants' perspectives on the social bonding and well-being effects of creative arts adult education classes. *Arts & Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice, 9*(1), 42-59. https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2016.1193550

Prati, G. (2024). The reciprocal relationships between economic status and mental health: Investigating the between-person and within-person effects in a three-wave

longitudinal study. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 366*, 16-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2024.08.169

Radovan, M. (2024). Workplace flexibility and participation in adult learning. *Sustainability, 16*(14), 5950. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16145950

Randall, K. N., Bernard, G., & Durah, L. (2023). Association between employment status and quality of life for individuals with intellectual or developmental disability. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 36*(2), 270-280. https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.13053

Rothes, A., Lemos, M. S., & Gonçalves, T. (2017). Motivational profiles of adult learners. *Adult Education Quarterly, 67*(1), 3-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713616669588

Rubenson, K. (2018). Conceptualizing participation in adult learning and education: Equity issues. In M. Milana, S. Webb, J. Holford, R. Waller, & P. Jarvis (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning* (pp. 337-357). London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55783-4_18

Ryu, S., & Fan, L. (2023). The relationship between financial worries and psychological distress among U.S. adults. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 44*(1), 16-33. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-022-09820-9

Ryu, S. H., & Jun, S. K. (2017). Differences of happiness according to personal variables and lifelong learning experiences. *The Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 8*(2), 123-138. https://doi.org/10.22143/HSS21.8.2.8

Shim, Y. (2018). A study on the impact of individual characteristics on the activation of workplace learning in Korean companies. *Quarterly Journal of Labor Policy, 18*(4), 77-104. https://doi.org/10.22914/jlp.2018.18.4.004

Son, J. J. (2004). Vocational education/training participation decisions of adult employed and unemployed workers. *Journal of Lifelong Education, 10*(2), 109-128.

Song, S. S. (2025). A narrative inquiry into the academic advancement experiences of three female adult learners: Focusing on high school equivalency and university entrance. *Journal of Public Society, 15*(4), 5-36.

Statistics Korea. (2021). Korean social trends 2021. Retrieved December 11, 2025, from https://mods.go.kr/board.es?mid=a90104010200&bid=12302&act=view&list_no=415902

Statistics Korea. (2022). Korean social trends 2022. Retrieved December 11, 2025, from https://mods.go.kr/board.es?mid=a90104010200&bid=12302&act=view&list_no=422182

Strauss, S., & Leuze, K. (2013). Further education of higher education graduates—The more, the better? *European Journal of Education, 48*(3), 436-453. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12039

World Health Organization. (1998). Programme on mental health : WHOQOL user manual,

2012 revision. Retrieved October 1, 2025, from https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/77932

Yoo, J. E. (2013). Misunderstandings and mis-applications on ANCOVA in educational studies. *Journal of Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction, 13*(6), 27-49.

Yoo, K.-B., Park, E.-C., Jang, S.-Y., Kwon, J. A., Kim, S. J., Cho, K., Choi, J.-W., Kim, J.-H., & Park, S. (2016). Association between employment status change and depression in Korean adults. *BMJ Open, 6*(3), e008570. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2015-008570

Yoon, J., & Park, S. (2017). An analysis on the factor of young adults participating in lifelong learning forms. *Journal of Education & Culture, 23*(3), 51-73. https://doi.org/10.24159/joec.2017.23.3.51

Yun, M., Jeon, H., & Lee, K. (2023). Moderating effect of lifelong learning participation in the relationship between years of schooling and life satisfaction. *Journal of Education & Culture, 29*(2), 587-608. https://doi.org/10.24159/joec.2023.29.2.587

저 자 정 보

정 은 경 Jung, Eunkeong	소 속: 이화여자대학교 교육학과 박사과정 수료 연 락 처: pensidre@ewha.ac.kr 연구분야: 평생교육, 노인교육, 디지털격차
김 남 희 Kim, Namhee	소 속: 이화여자대학교 교육학과 교수 연 락 처: knh@ewha.ac.kr 연구분야: 여성 경력개발, 국제 인적자원개발
Pereira Aquize, Fabiola	소 속: 이화여자대학교 교육학과 석사과정 졸업 연 락 처: fabiola@ewhain.net 연구분야: 유학생, 고용가능성, 온라인 경력준비행동

〈요 약〉

한국인의 성인학습 참여와 고용 특성 및 삶의 질과의 관계

정 은 경 (이화여자대학교)
김 남 희 (이화여자대학교)
Fabiola Pereira Aquize (이화여자대학교)

대한민국은 교육 수준이 매우 발달한 나라이지만, 학교교육과 성인교육 참여 수준에 있어서 격차가 존재한다. 본 연구는 한국교육개발원의 평생학습 개인실태조사 자료를 활용하여 고용 특성에 따른 성인학습 참여 수준과 삶의 질에 대한 인식 차이를 분석하였다. 연구결과, 경제활동에 참여하고 정규직에 종사하며 숙련도가 높은 직업을 가진 사람일수록 성인학습에 더 적극적으로 참여하는 것으로 나타났다. 전반적인 삶의 질 인식 수준은 고용특성보다는 성인학습 참여자의 교육수준에 따라 유의미한 차이를 보이는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 정서적 안녕감 및 인지된 경제적 안정성과 같은 삶의 질 특정 영역에서는 일부 고용 특성에 따른 차이가 확인되었다. 이러한 결과는 학습자의 삶의 질에 영향을 미치는 경제적·정서적 차원을 동시에 고려한 맞춤형 정책이 필요함을 시사한다.

• 주요어: 성인학습 참여, 고용 특성, 삶의 질, 교육수준, 대한민국

접 수 일: 2025. 12. 29
심 사 일: 2026. 1. 15
게재확정일: 2026. 2. 2