





Providing an Adult Education Model for Shahed and Isargaran Schools in Tehran Province (Grounded Theory)

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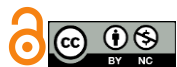
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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aims to provide an adult education model for Shahed and Isargaran schools in Tehran Province.

Methodology: The research method is applied in terms of its goal, qualitative in terms of data type, and grounded theory (paradigmatic) in terms of its nature and study type. The research population includes educational experts with doctoral degrees, authorship, articles, research, and practical experience in this field. Based on purposeful theoretical sampling, 15 experts were selected for interviews. The research tool was a semi-structured interview in which the dimensions, components, and indicators of the adult education model for Shahed and Isargaran schools were organized.

Findings: Initially, deep interviews with experts were conducted for the interview form, followed by open coding to extract the indicators. Through axial coding, the indicators were categorized into components and dimensions and sent to 15 experts. Using selective coding through interviews and brainstorming, the components and indicators were identified and finalized. As a result, 5 dimensions, 21 components, and 111 indicators for the adult education model for Shahed and Isargaran schools in Tehran Province were finalized. After final approval and prioritization by experts, the dimensions, components, and constructing indicators of the model were delineated, and the model was validated again by experts.

Conclusion: This model addresses the unique needs and challenges of adult learners, emphasizing holistic development, effective use of technology, and alignment with market demands. The validated model provides a structured framework for improving adult education in these specialized schools.

Keywords: adult education, causal factors, intervening factors, contextual conditions, strategies, outcomes, outputs

1 Introduction

Adult education, in its broadest sense, has always existed, with humans throughout history learning from each other's experiences and passing this knowledge from generation to generation. However, adult education emerged as a distinct form of education in the eighteenth century and developed as a separate part of formal education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Undoubtedly, adult education began with literacy training but gradually underwent fundamental changes in its concepts, methods, ideology, and content (Oljira & Hailu, 2021).

In developed countries, adult education emphasizes operationalizing continuous learning and moving towards a knowledge-based society, incorporating information and communication technology. New topics such as environmental education, population, peaceful coexistence with others, and similar issues are also considered. In contrast, in developing countries, adult education is mainly focused on literacy for youth and adults (especially women) and is generally used as a tool for increasing awareness and effecting social and political changes (Abbaspour et al., 2018; Akintolu & Letseka, 2021).

Globalization and its resulting challenges in various political, economic, commercial, cultural, and particularly educational domains have significantly influenced literacy and adult education more than other changes (Hoggan & Kasl, 2023; Karimi et al., 2013). Undoubtedly, globalization is a multidimensional phenomenon, and its resulting changes encompass politics, culture, economics, and particularly education. Therefore, a comprehensive and all-encompassing revision of education is essential; otherwise, this institution will gradually fail to perform its functions and lose its effectiveness and impact due to its inability to respond to contemporary needs and demands (Abbaspour et al., 2018; Karimi et al., 2013).

Globalization has also presented new challenges to countries, particularly developing ones, necessitating new measures to address these issues. These challenges include marginalization or exclusion of illiterate or low-literate individuals from social and economic activities, transforming them into unproductive and impoverished people, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, the spread of epidemics such as AIDS and addiction, and the increasing gap in poverty between northern and southern countries and within these countries themselves (Hoggan & Kasl, 2023; Oljira & Hailu, 2021).

Most of the above-mentioned problems plague developing or underdeveloped countries, particularly illiterate and low-literate adults who are forced to endure these issues. Over time, their increasing numbers become a significant barrier to their society's sustainable development. Given these points, it appears that education is the only tool that can help combat the challenges posed by globalization and prevent a large portion of the adult population from becoming an obstacle to society's development. This is possible if adult education, especially for illiterate and low-literate individuals, can anticipate the educational consequences of globalization and respond to them (Karimi et al., 2013; Wu, 2020).

Therefore, today, adult education is recognized both as a fundamental right of every individual and as a key to their success in life. Furthermore, this education is considered a crucial step towards "sustainable human development" in any society. For this reason, adult education must diversify its content, literacy methods, and educational structure and adjust its goals according to the situation, implementing them through various organizations and public associations (Daneshvar et al., 2023; Gharibzadeh et al., 2020).

The constraints such as limited resources, inflexible administrative structure, scattered illiterates, poor quality of educational spaces and equipment, inability to stabilize literacy, failure to reform the teaching-learning process, and neglect of functional literacy have led to challenges in this education system. Despite efforts made, significant success has not been achieved, indicating that the adult education system faces fundamental challenges (Fathi Vajargah & Shafii, 2008; Gharibzadeh et al., 2020; Loeng, 2020). Considering that Shahed and Isargaran schools aim to continue the education of students who have dropped out due to special circumstances and should receive special facilities, unfortunately, the number of these schools is constantly decreasing due to changing government policies. In all 19 districts of Tehran, there are only 8 such schools, a decrease from the past. Additionally, these schools lack sufficient budget and facilities. Since learners in these courses are mostly employed individuals who need to enhance their job and life skills, they do not have access to educational resources and curricula that meet the standards. Furthermore, the content of their textbooks is the same as that of daytime schools, meaning that the curriculum planners have not developed specific topics suited to their life conditions, job needs, and mental requirements. Given the above-mentioned documents and the researcher's experience as an adult education stakeholder and observing

the existing challenges, this study aims to scientifically answer the following question: What model can be presented for adult education in Shahed and Isargaran schools?

2 Methods and Materials

The present study is applied in terms of its goal, qualitative in terms of data, and grounded theory (paradigmatic) in terms of its nature and study type. The statistical population of this study includes experts in human resources with doctoral degrees, authorship, articles, research, and practical experience in this field. Using purposeful theoretical sampling and based on theoretical saturation, 15 experts were selected. The research measurement tool was a semi-structured interview, obtained through open and axial coding. Then, selective coding was implemented through interviews and brainstorming, where the components and indices were finalized and prioritized by the experts. The model was again delineated based on dimensions, components, and indices, and validated by the experts. The reliability and validity of the measurement tool were obtained using the triple consensus method. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews with experts, continuing until theoretical saturation. Data analysis was performed in three stages of open, axial, and selective coding.

The most important part of data analysis in the study was coding (open, axial, and selective), which was performed as follows:

Open coding: Interviews were transcribed, and data were standardized. Scientific terms were selected according to the theoretical literature of the research, and a list of concepts was obtained. The obtained concepts were then categorized.

Axial coding: The obtained categories were related to each other, establishing relationships between the codes generated in open coding.

Selective coding: This stage involved integrating, refining, and improving categories, where the researcher arranged the categories in a particular sequence to form a theory. This was made possible by discovering the central category.

3 Findings and Results

The researcher identified instances related to adult education. Initially, an interview checklist was prepared, and then expert opinions were obtained. Through semi-structured interviews with experts, numerous instances were identified, demonstrating that adult education can be different from other educational institutions and organizations. The semi-structured interviews with experts resulted in the identification of 110 initial codes (key concepts). [Table 1](#) presents some of the identified initial codes from the interview texts:

Table 1

Extracted Indices from Interview Texts

Interview Text	Extracted Indices
Communication skills are among the most important skills a manager, teacher, or anyone interacting with students should have, whether the student is an adult or not. The art of communication with the audience is considered one of the most important skills.	Possessing communication skills appropriate for the audience
Nowadays, it is impossible for any educational institution to function without using virtual networks, and teachers are no exception.	Possessing skills to use virtual networks
In adult education, an important point is considering the overall growth and holistic development of individuals. When we plan and strive for individuals to learn a skill, we must also have a proper plan for their spiritual and psychological growth and not just focus on skill training.	Focusing on holistic development and avoiding one-dimensional growth
We should guide individuals towards professions considering their interests and talents.	Awareness of professional alignment with individual talents
Adults usually intend to enter the job market and society soon; therefore, when planning for them, attention must be given to the needs of both the domestic and global job market.	Attention to the global job market

Based on the analysis and coding process of the interviews, the initial codes were standardized, and some

were deleted or revised, resulting in 110 open codes identified, as shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2

Dimensions, Components, and Number of Indices for Adult Education Model for Shahed and Isargaran Schools in Tehran Province (Axial Coding Stage)

Dimensions	Components	Number of Indices
Causal Factors	Management	6
	Teacher	9
	Learner	5
	Content	5
	Training	7
	Evaluation	5
Contextual Factors	Organizational Culture	10
	Laws and Regulations	6
Intervening Factors	Learning Environment	5
	Technology	7
	Financial Resources	4
Strategies	Socio-Cultural	3
	Educational	5
	Economic	4
Outcomes	Individual	6
	Value-Based	5
	Social	8
	Economic	7
	Political	3

In the selective coding stage, the identified components were grouped into more abstract categories, and after conducting a brainstorming session with experts, the adult

education model for Shahed and Isargaran schools was shaped.

Table 3

Dimensions, Components, and Number of Indices for Adult Education Model for Shahed and Isargaran Schools in Tehran Province (Selective Coding Stage)

Dimensions	Components	Number of Indices
Causal Factors	Socio-Cultural	3
	Educational System Policies	5
	Laws and Regulations	4
Contextual Factors	Organizational Culture	9
	Educational System Structure	3
	Teacher	9
	Learner	5
	School Management	6
Intervening Factors	Educational Management	4
	Economic Conditions	4
	Technology	7
	Global Educational Conditions	3
	Family Conditions	3
Strategies	Educational Program	5
	Curriculum	8
	Teaching-Learning Strategies	6
Outcomes	Individual	6
	Value-Based	4
	Social	8
	Economic	6
	Political	3

A total of 111 open codes (indices) were categorized into 21 axial codes (components), and these components were categorized into 5 selective codes (dimensions). The dimensions, components, and indices obtained are presented in Table 3.

In the final stage, through the Delphi technique and brainstorming session, all identified components and indices

were reviewed and analyzed. Initially, the components and indices obtained were sent to 20 experts, and their opinions were gathered. The collected opinions were applied to the identified factors, and the modified list was sent back to the experts for validation.

Table 4

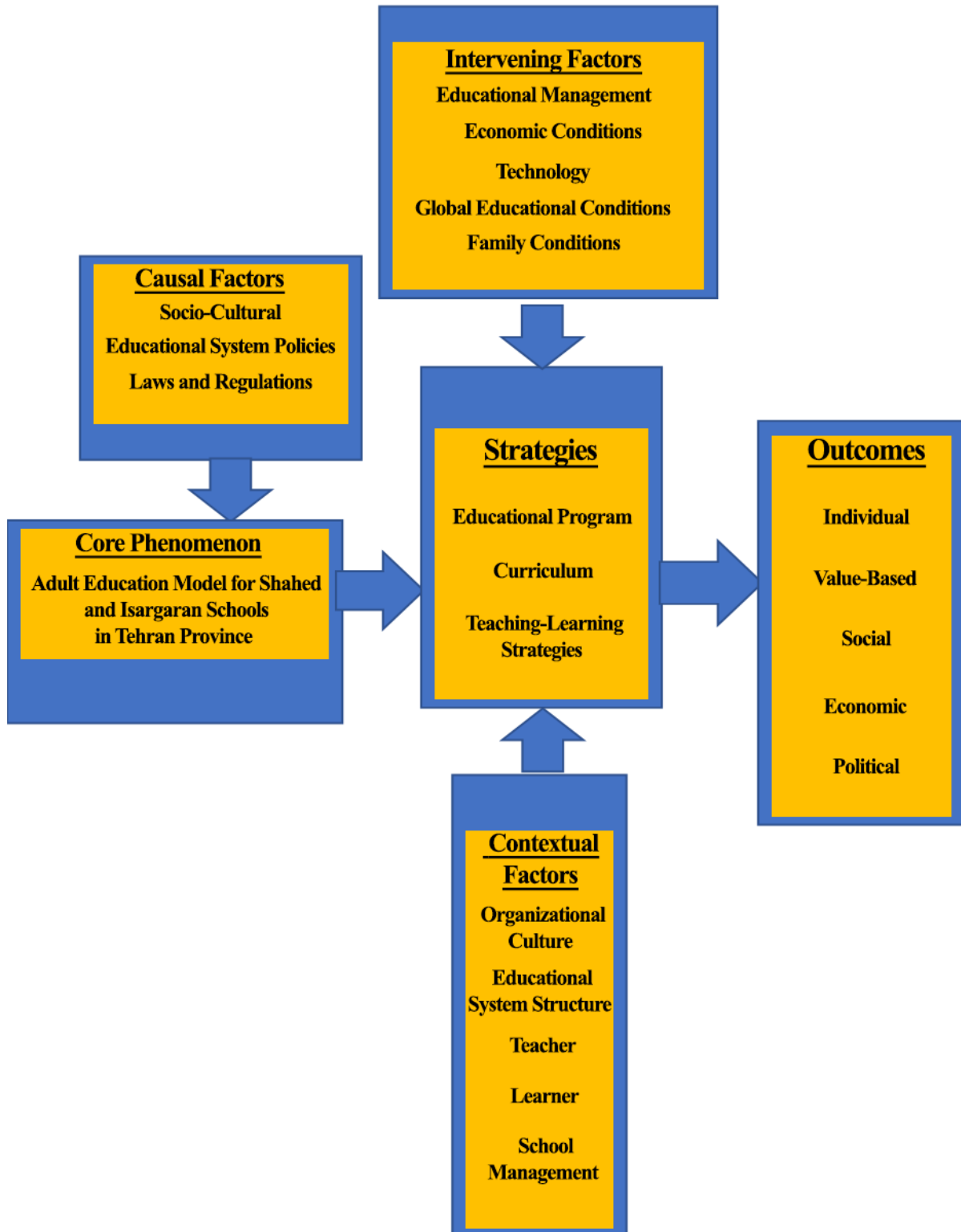
Prioritization of Components in the Adult Education Model for Shahed and Isargaran Schools

Dimensions	Components	Number of Indices
Causal Factors	Socio-Cultural	1
	Educational System Policies	2
	Laws and Regulations	3
Contextual Factors	Organizational Culture	1
	Educational System Structure	2
	Teacher	3
	Learner	4
	School Management	5
Intervening Factors	Educational Management	1
	Economic Conditions	2
	Technology	3
	Global Educational Conditions	4
	Family Conditions	5
Strategies	Educational Program	1
	Curriculum	2
	Teaching-Learning Strategies	3
Outcomes	Individual	1
	Value-Based	2
	Social	3
	Economic	4
	Political	5

As a result, the adult education model for Shahed and Isargaran schools in Tehran Province is as follows:

Figure 1

The Adult Education Model for Shahed and Isargaran Schools in Tehran Province



4 Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to provide an adult education model for Shahed and Isargaran schools in Tehran Province, resulting in 111 indices, 21 components, and 5 dimensions through a qualitative research approach using grounded theory (paradigmatic). The dimensions of the systemic model include five dimensions: causal factors, contextual factors, intervening factors, strategies, and outcomes. These dimensions encompass 21 components, including socio-cultural, educational system policies, laws and regulations, organizational culture, educational system structure, teacher, learner, school management, educational management, economic conditions, technology, global educational conditions, family conditions, educational program, curriculum, teaching-learning strategies, individual, value-based, social, economic, and political.

The findings of the present study showed that each obtained component consists of several indices. In explaining the findings, it can be stated that this model helps identify the significant factors of adult education. Today, we live in a rapidly changing and complex world, witnessing changes in fundamental values and social and political structures of societies within just a few decades. One of the results of these changes is the increasing social demand for education, which faces various challenges such as modernization in structure, programs, human resources, and empowering human resources, among others. Among these, adult education is considered one of the most important pillars of the modernization process of educational organizations.

The results also indicate that adult education has various components. Initially, in the dimension of causal factors, the components of socio-cultural, educational system policies, and laws and regulations were obtained. Causal conditions refer to the events that influence the core phenomenon, explaining why and how individuals and groups engage with this phenomenon. Specifically, educational system policies involve determining principles and actions related to educational matters, aiming to achieve desirable goals.

The second dimension, contextual conditions, includes organizational culture, educational system structure, teacher, learner, and school management. Employees in any organization have specific behaviors aligned with the organization's values, either set by the manager or learned over time. Organizational culture is inevitable where groups of people compete for limited resources. Educational system

structure defines the hierarchical structure of teams, leaders, managers, and individual contributors in an organization, determining what employees do, whom they report to, and how decisions are made.

Intervening conditions act as facilitators or constraints for strategies, accelerating or delaying their implementation. These conditions include educational management, economic conditions, technology, global educational conditions, and family conditions. Effective managers constantly support professional development, provide regular feedback, and seek opportunities to increase knowledge within their organization. Human capital is a transformative input for economic growth, positioning adult workforce education at the core of the modern economy.

The fourth dimension refers to the strategies of the adult education model, including educational program, curriculum, and teaching-learning strategies. For optimal learning in the educational system, each approach has a positive impact, and integrating their strengths forms a strong learning model based on a unified system, provided an appropriate educational process is selected.

The fifth dimension, outcomes, includes individual, value-based, social, economic, and political components. Adult education is founded on the belief that learning is not confined to a specific period and that active and effective adult participation in all personal and social spheres depends on their knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitudes. Enhancing their abilities to interact with rapid changes in all areas and placing them on a learning path is essential for their role in evolving society. These actions can improve adult education based on the research findings.

In alignment with other research, the findings of the present study are consistent with the prior research (Abbaspour et al., 2018; Akintolu & Letseka, 2021; Daneshvar et al., 2023; Fathi Vajargah & Shafii, 2008; Gharibzadeh et al., 2020; Hoggan & Kasl, 2023; Karimi et al., 2013; Loeng, 2020; Oljira & Hailu, 2021; Wu, 2020).

This study had limitations, such as:

- The research was conducted using a qualitative method; conducting it using a mixed method would have provided more credible results.
- The limited availability of some experts extended the interview process duration.

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate a national professional competency framework to ensure quality.

- Coordinate policy-making and management in planning educational and training activities.
- Develop and standardize educational, evaluation, and professional competence standards based on national and international occupational classifications.
- Create mechanisms for stakeholder participation in all stages and processes of educational and training programs by facilitating relevant laws and regulations.
- Coordinate and supervise budgeting and resource allocation for implementing agencies.
- Conduct extensive research to increase the generalizability of results using a standardized and comprehensive scale for widespread use.
- Conduct research to examine the impact of macro policies and programs on strengthening identified dimensions and components.
- Conduct comparative studies in the field of adult education for benchmarking in future research.
- Professional development within the national professional competency framework should provide horizontal and vertical mobility in major occupational groups for adults and enable lifelong learning assessment.
- Develop and approve educational, evaluation, and professional competency standards based on the national professional competency framework.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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