Empowerment Through Education Phenomenological Study of Women Who Returned to School Later in Life

Ali Asghar. Mashinchi[1]

[1] Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, Lamard Branch, Islamic Azad University, Lamard, Iran.

* Corresponding author email address: mashinch56@gmail.com

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Niloofar Mikaeili Professor of Psychology Department of Mohaghegh Ardabili University, Ardabil, Iran nmikaeili@uma.ac.ir	**Reviewer 1:** Farideh Dokanehi Fard Associate Professor, Counseling Department, Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran. Email: f.dokaneifard@riau.ac.ir **Reviewer 2:** Hajar Torkan Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Isfahan, Iran. h.torkan@khuisf.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

Introduction Clarity: "In the introduction, the authors mention, 'Education is a powerful tool for empowerment...' (p.1). This statement is broad. Please provide specific examples or studies that highlight how education has empowered women in similar contexts to enhance clarity."

Data Analysis Method: "The authors mention using NVivo software for data analysis (p.2). It would be helpful to describe the specific coding process used in NVivo to identify themes, including any inter-coder reliability checks."

Demographic Details: "The demographic information of participants is summarized well (p.2). However, consider providing a table that breaks down these demographics in more detail, such as education level before returning to school and types of employment."

Institutional Barriers: "The paper lists 'Institutional Barriers' but does not delve into specific policies or institutional practices that were barriers. Providing detailed examples would add depth to this section."

Impact on Family Dynamics: "The impact on family dynamics is mentioned as an important outcome (p.5). Discuss how these changes in family dynamics might differ across cultural contexts, referencing specific participant experiences."

Policy Recommendations: "The conclusion mentions supportive structures and policies (p.7). Elaborate on what specific policies (e.g., childcare support, flexible learning schedules) would be most beneficial based on your findings."

Ethical Considerations: "The ethical considerations section states adherence to the Helsinki Declaration (p.7). Consider discussing any specific ethical challenges encountered and how they were addressed."

Use of ChatGPT: "The declaration mentions the use of ChatGPT for improving academic writing (p.7). Clarify how this tool was used to ensure it did not influence the interpretation of qualitative data."

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

Literature Review: "The literature review section could benefit from more recent sources. For instance, the references to Hill (1995) could be supplemented with more current studies on the labor market effects of women's education."

Participant Selection: "In the Methods and Materials section, the selection criteria for participants state 'women above the age of 30 who had re-enrolled in formal education after a significant break' (p.2). Clarify what is meant by a 'significant break' to ensure reproducibility."

Data Collection Tools: "The use of semi-structured interviews is appropriate, but the authors should provide the interview guide in an appendix to allow readers to understand the scope and depth of questions asked."

Theoretical Framework: "The paper could be strengthened by explicitly stating the theoretical framework guiding the study. For instance, how does phenomenology specifically inform your understanding of empowerment in this context?"

Theme Development: "In the Findings section, the theme 'Balancing Responsibilities' is critical (p.3). Provide specific participant quotes that illustrate this theme more vividly to strengthen your narrative."

Economic Benefits: "Under 'Motivations for Returning to Education', 'Economic Benefits' are mentioned (p.3). It would be valuable to quantify how many participants mentioned economic factors as their primary motivation if such data is available."

Coping Strategies: "The coping strategies section is comprehensive (p.4). To enhance it, discuss any differences in coping strategies between employed and unemployed participants, if applicable."

Longitudinal Perspective: "Consider discussing the potential long-term impacts of returning to education. What do the participants anticipate as future benefits or challenges?"

Comparative Analysis: "The paper references studies from other cultural contexts (p.6). A more explicit comparative analysis between these contexts and the current study could offer deeper insights."

Future Research: "In the 'Limitations and Suggestions' section, the authors suggest larger samples for future research (p.6). Specify what specific variables or subgroups should be focused on in these future studies."

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.