

Exploring University Academics' Awareness and Application of Knowles' Adult Principles

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Abstract

The relevance and application of Knowles' Adult Learning Theory in the context of a medical university in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Knowles' adult learning theory remains highly influential in higher education because it emphasizes learner autonomy, experience, relevance, and practical application. Research supports many of these principles, and they continue to shape effective teaching practices. However, contemporary scholars generally view andragogy as a useful framework rather than a complete or universally applicable theory, and it is often integrated with other learning theories to address its limitations. This research study aims to explore this concept and staff awareness of adult learning principles to evaluate the extent to which these principles are reflected in existing professional development practices. This study investigates a plethora of literature on adult learning, professional development, and andragogical approaches in medical and higher education. Hence, to complement the literature review, a survey was conducted among academic, clinical, and professional staff to assess their knowledge of adult learning concepts and their perceptions of professional development activities within the institution. Considering professional development, the implementation of effective professional development (PD) strategies is critical for fostering continuous growth and improving performance within academic and healthcare settings. This study sheds light on the relevance of applying the principles of ALT in PD for academics in higher education. This research examines how adult learning theories could help shape the design of PD programs and enhance staff engagement, retention, and clinical outcomes. The study includes qualitative and quantitative evidence, providing insights into the effectiveness of ALT in promoting professional growth among teaching faculty and clinicians in a medical context in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Results suggest that ALT professional development is required and useful in enhancing higher education teaching and learning.

Keywords: Knowles' Adult Learning Theory, Professional Development, Medical University, Adult Learning, Staff Development, Medical Education