

The Effect of Cooking Classes on Older Adults Resiliency

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Introduction

Resiliency changes before, during, and after taking cooking classes may relate to changes in resiliency for older adults. Social activities, such as taking cooking class for older adults is interactive dynamic processes that involves many factors including physical, cognitive, affective, and socio-demographic aspects of behavior that underpin the way individuals approach resilience in later life.

The study will use quantitative methods to examine features of cooking class as a social activity that might cause resilience change in interactions of older adults with other people. This study is designed to investigate the factors that cooking class will be identified as an important activity in the proposal that is to establish what aspects of social relationships with other people result in satisfactory resilience experiences. The investigators intend to establish (a) socio-economic characteristics of resilience, (b) specific aspects of physical/mental health issues older adults find problematic, and (c) effective social programs for older adults that would contribute for them to be successful in their aging process.

The aims will be achieved by using a Modified Connor-Davison Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) questionnaire. Independent variables are taking cooking class and demographic factors of older adults in East Texas and the dependent variable is the participants scores of resilience. The quantitative data will be analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling and Factor Analysis to explore if the cooking classes show any relationship with resilience scores. It is anticipated that this study will create a database of information that can be used in future projects to design best practice cooking programs for older adults' by higher educational institutions.

Currently there is increasing research interest in social activities and concept of resiliency in later life to help older adults to maintain a sense of engagement and personhood (Sabat, 2001). For the older adults, maintaining *active life style* can be a daily challenge that is exacerbated by emotional and physical difficulties (Candlin, 2000). Candlin (2000) suggested that social activities and concept of resiliency will be new approaches to research and professional training in the Gerontological professions and calling for wider research into the relationship between *social activities and resiliency in later life or recreational activities*. Increasing the knowledge base of how people provide appropriate social and recreational activities, such as taking cooking class for older adults and how older adults report their resilience is an aspect of current research proposal.

It is necessary to assess if there are differences in how older adults' different socio-economic differences relate to reported resilience. Understanding what these factors might predict in relation to more satisfactory interactions can help create *best practice* training programs for Gerontology professionals. Healthcare institutions and professional Gerontological researchers might find such information useful in planning and creating training programs. Understanding older adults' social recreational activities, such as taking cooking class and their concept of resilience might help care providers to better understand how they approach the future of care-giving.

Research Question

Thus, the present study addressed the following research question:

Are there older adults' resilience differences before the cooking class, during the cooking class, and after the cooking class?

Method

Approach

- (1) To collect data from East Texas older adults' population, PIs will contact senior centers in East Texas.
- (2) To investigate which features of resilience score changes most before, during, and after cooking classes will be reported as the important factors in older adults' resiliency.
- (3) To characterize and describe the older adults' resiliency, strategies for helping to facilitate social activities will be provided.
- (4) To establish a database of information relating to demographic variables that impact older adults' resiliency and cooking classes, participants' demographic factors will be included.

Older adults from East Texas area will be recruited (target $n = 100$). The investigators will identify appropriate sites and contact them via phone and/or letter first to explain the study. The Stephen F. Austin State University has several graduate student internships that serve survey in the targeted region. It is anticipated drawing on these to initially collect data, but other sites will be contacted. Institutional Research Board (IRB) permissions have been granted by the Stephen F. Austin State University ORSP.

Statistical Analyses

To address the hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling and Factor Analysis will be used to identify relationships between the resilience and cooking classes in later life. The statistical software program (SPSS version 16.0) will be used to test each of the hypotheses.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a technique which effectively subsumes a whole range of standard multivariate analysis methods, including factor analysis and analysis of variance. SEM actually underlies much of what researchers do on a daily basis. That is, on the basis of things we can measure, we attempt to make predictions of things we cannot measure.

For this research, SEM provides an opportunity (in fact, a requirement) to hypothesis models of social activities, such as cooking classes and to test or *confirm* these models statistically. In the paper, some examples are presented to show some of the benefits of this modelling approach.

Instruments: The investigators will use a questionnaire that has been created for the purposes of this study. The PIs will use a Likert scale to measure the degree to which specific features of resilience are reported as most likely to changes. The questionnaire includes structured questions that will elicit responses describing strategies that the participants find helpful when accommodating to the older adults' resilience.

Innovation

Older adults' resiliency has yet to be fully explored in terms of demographic factors, such as socio-economic factors. Recently, many Gerontological researchers are interested in how older adults' demographic factors affect their concept of resiliency. Furthermore, maintaining the level of resiliency that might be necessary to sustain a successful aging process in later life can prove extremely important for older adults. Previous research noted that older adults' resiliency is positively related to frequent engaged in social activities.

It is evident that the degree of success and satisfaction individuals experience in active social activities may be important factors in resiliency in later life. In addition, the frequency of engagement in social activities can be varies greatly on older adults' demographic background. Thus, there is a need to investigate the factors that might account for these factors. Individuals bring a variety of demographic, affective, and behavioral factors to an interaction, and any one of these variables might influence the individual's interactional orientation when they are engaged in social activities. For example, socio-economic status or an individual's factors may account for the amount of effort he or she is prepared to put forth when older adults have opportunity for engaged in social activities. Certainly, in the examples cited above, the PI noted individual differences in the demographic factors that might account for their different approaches when interacting with other people.

1. Data mining to establish whether any further demographic variables or combinations of variables show a relationship with reported resiliency score changes and older adults' cooking classes.

2. Implement a second study using the same measurement instruments to investigate whether demographic factors (e.g., race, gender, age, marital status, Income, and education) affect the resiliency score changes when they take the cooking classes.

3. Create and implement focused training programs for professional base and community based on older adults' individual/demographic characteristics. In addition to dissemination of findings through publication of academic articles, it is anticipated that this work will lead to the creation of training programs, an information website, and healthcare promotion literature. The training programs and literature will provide information on managing resiliency in interactions with older adults.

References

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