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**Planning for The Third Age Universities in  
Egypt in light of some Foreign Countries  
Experience**

**Submitted By**

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A Thesis Submitted for the Partial Fulfillment for the  
requirement of PhD Degree in Education  
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1443 H.G – 2022 A.D

**Summary of the Study**

### **Introduction:**

Lifelong learning is conspicuously a foundation for knowledge and an example of an inclusive society. Besides, it works to create an environment that helps all individuals acquire knowledge, experience and develop skills. To achieve lifelong learning goals; all parties from governments, institutions and organizations must take responsibility for this. One of the most prominent challenges faced by lifelong learning is adapting to the requirements of the elderly in every aspect of learning and at all levels, as the elderly constitute the fastest growing segment of the population in most countries of the world. However, we find that the general policy of countries still looks at the education of the elderly as merely a luxury and has nothing to do with human development. To meet the learning needs of this marginalized group, some countries have developed a variety of educational models that provide lifelong learning to meet the special needs of the elderly population. The most important of these models is the third-age universities. Third-age universities first appeared in Toulouse, France, in 1972, in order to improve the quality of life for the elderly. According to the French model; Third-age universities are linked to traditional universities and colleges, and take advantage of their resources. In 1982, the British model of third-age universities was established in Cambridge. This model is based on "self-help" universities that are autonomous and entirely dependent on volunteer efforts and do not belong to traditional educational institutions.

Education for adults, especially the elderly, in Egypt is considered one of the marginalized and modest services, which are often abandoned without paying sufficient attention to them in return for covering the needs of the basic stages of education for children and youth in schools and universities. Also, adult education programs in Egypt focus on eradicating alphabetic illiteracy. Therefore, they do not meet the needs of adults,

especially retirees, which called for studying the experiences of some third-age universities in some foreign countries, and the possibility of benefiting from them in developing a proposed model to guide Egyptian universities towards a lifetime third-age university.

### **Problem of the Study:**

In Egypt, according to the latest statistics issued in 2021 by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, it appears that there is an increase in the number of elderly people aged 60 years and over, as the percentage of the elderly in Egypt reached 7.9% of the total population compared to 6.7% in the 2017 census. The noticeable increase in the numbers of this age group calls for paying special attention to this group, as is the case in most countries of the world. Adult education programs in Egypt are limited to literacy programs in most cases, and literacy programs focus on young people aged (15-35) years, and the older groups do not pay enough attention, and the necessary funding for these programs is not allocated. Although the literacy process is included in lifelong learning programs in different countries of the world, the reality in Egypt does not indicate that. Participation in literacy programs is often aimed at obtaining a certificate to join various jobs and professions. Consequently, there are shortcomings in the efforts made in educating the elderly despite the continuous increase in their numbers, which has resulted in a great waste of human resources. Moreover, in light of the state's recent trend of achieving sustainable development, programs for educating the elderly should be reconsidered, and the need to take into account the provision of lifelong learning ways for this group when developing educational policies. Thus, it makes it imperative for policy makers to take into account the necessity of providing lifelong learning methods for this group as a model for the third age universities in Egypt. In an attempt to deal with

this problem, the study attempted to answer the following main question:

How can third-age universities be planned in Egypt in light of the experiences of some foreign countries? From this main question, the following sub-questions are derived:

- 1- What are the theoretical foundations of universities of the third age in the contemporary educational literature?
- 2- What are the main features of the University of Toulouse for the third age in France in light of the forces and cultural factors influencing?
- 3- What are the main features of Cambridge University for the third age in United Kingdom in light of the influential cultural forces and factors?
- 4- What are the similarities and differences between the universities of Toulouse and Cambridge for the third age?
- 5- What are the efforts made to educate and care for adults in Egypt in light of the influential cultural forces and factors?
- 6- What is the proposed model for establishing third-age universities in Egypt in light of benefiting from the experience of the universities of Toulouse and Cambridge for the third age, and in line with the conditions of Egyptian society?

### **Importance of the Study:**

- 1) This study may represent an addition to the educational literature in the Arabic language in the field of lifelong learning, especially the elderly, and the related concepts, mechanisms and models in this field.
- 2) The study may provide an in-depth look for decision-makers about the importance of educating the elderly, and its role in improving their lives, and helping them to integrate into society in a better way and more effectively.
- 3) The study may contribute to achieving and developing a good model for third-age universities in Egypt.
- 4) This study may contribute to presenting some scenarios that educational officials can benefit from to develop continuing

## Summary of the Study

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education programs for the elderly in accordance with contemporary trends.

**Objectives of the Study:** The present study aimed to:

- 1- Identify the theoretical foundations of third age universities in contemporary educational arena.
- 2- Identify the most important features of the University of Toulouse for the third age in light of the influencing forces and cultural factors.
- 3- Identify the basic features of the University of Cambridge for the third age in light of the influencing forces and cultural factors.
- 4- Revealing the similarities and differences between the universities of Toulouse and Cambridge for the third age.
- 5- Revealing the reality of the efforts exerted to educate and care for adults in Egypt in the light of the influential cultural forces and factors.
- 6- Developing a proposed model for the establishment of third age universities in Egypt.

**Limitations of the Study:**

**A- Topic Limits:** The present study was limited to the two topics of planning and universities of the third-age.

**B- Spatial Limits:** The study was limited to the reality of adult education programs in Egypt, as well as the experience of the University of Toulouse for the third age in France and the University of Cambridge for the third age in Britain.

**Terminology of the Study:**

**Planning:** A process that includes defining a set of procedures and decisions with the aim of reaching specific goals, provided that this is done in certain stages and during established time periods, provided that all material, human and moral capabilities available now and in the future are used with the greatest possible efficiency.

## Summary of the Study

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The study defines it procedurally as: Establishing a set of steps and procedures necessary to establish a third-age university for the elderly in Egypt, during a specified period of time, by making the most possible use of the financial capabilities of Egyptian universities, and the human potential represented by the elderly themselves.

**University of the Third Age:** It is an institution designed to provide learning opportunities for the elderly who are referred for retirement or before retirement, and its objective is to: improve their living conditions and create opportunities for comprehensive development by providing lifelong learning opportunities for this age group.

The study procedurally defines it as a qualitative organization that provides educational and recreational services to retired elderly, to achieve the principle of lifelong education and improve the quality of life for them, while benefiting from their experiences.

**Study Methodology:** The study used the comparative approach, by describing the models of the third age universities in both Toulouse and Cambridge, and interpreting these experiences in light of the forces and cultural factors affecting each country, in order to determine the similarities and differences between the two universities, as an attempt to reach a proposed model to establish the universities of the third age in Egypt in light of the benefit from the experience of the universities of Toulouse and Cambridge for the third age, and in accordance with the conditions of Egyptian society

### **Study Steps:**

The study proceeded according to the following steps:

**First Step:** the general framework of the study and includes (introduction - problem of the study - importance of the study - objectives of the study - limits of the study - study terms - study curriculum - previous studies - steps of the study)

**Second Step:** Theoretical foundations of universities of the third age in the contemporary educational literature.

**Third Step:** Presenting the experience of the University of Toulouse for the third-age in France in light of the influencing forces and cultural factors.

**Fourth Step:** Presenting the Cambridge University experience for the third-age in United kingdom in the light of the influencing forces and cultural factors.

**Fifth Step:** Conducting a comparative analysis and presenting the similarities and differences between the universities of Toulouse and Cambridge for the third-age.

**Sixth Step:** Monitoring the efforts made in the field of adult education and care in Egypt in light of the influential cultural forces and factors.

**Seventh Step:** Develop a proposed model for the establishment of third-age universities in Egypt.

### **Study Findings:**

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

- 1) There is global interest in the elderly category, especially after the rapid increase in their numbers.
- 2) The importance of lifelong learning programs in promoting active aging and improving the quality of life for the elderly.
- 3) Third age Universities are among the most important institutions that have proven successful in providing lifelong learning programs for the elderly around the world.
- 4) There are many positive results for the elderly as a result of their participation in the activities of third-age universities, especially with regard to improving the psychological and mental health of the elderly, and achieving integration into society.
- 5) Third-age universities help the elderly to realize themselves and benefit from their experiences.

## Summary of the Study

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6) There are multiple models for third-age universities around the world, but they mainly stem from two main models, the French model and the British model.

7) The third-age universities, according to the French model, belong to a traditional university, benefit from its resources and fall under its supervision. The British model of third-age universities is characterized by independence and reliance on self-efforts and volunteer work.

8) There are some efforts made to develop adult education programs in Egypt, but they are limited and not suitable for the elderly.

9) Adult education in Egypt is limited to alphabetic literacy programs, in addition to the inadequacy of their curricula for the elderly.

The study suggested the establishment of an institution for the education of the elderly in the third-age group in Egypt called “third-age centers.” The adoption of a hybrid model between the models of the University of Toulouse and the University of Cambridge for the third age, to take advantage of the advantages of each model and overcome the negatives that do not fit the application of the experiment in Egypt, based on this model, the third-age centers are linked to the traditional university, but they are based on voluntary efforts to overcome the weak economic level of the state and the lack of material resources in universities, and work to achieve the principle of equal opportunities by providing the opportunity for all the elderly to join these institutions regardless of their social, economic and educational levels. This is in addition to providing a special unit to eradicate illiteracy for the elderly.