

Aging in The Australian Society

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Aging and Demographic Change in Australia

According to the American English dictionary, aging is defined as the process of becoming more mature or older. It can also refer to various processes that contribute to the deterioration of health and ultimate death with time. The manifestation of aging is the frailty of the old person's increased rates of morbidity, mortality, and disability (Powell,2006).

On the other hand, ageism is the different ways of treating people or persons based on age-relating stereotypes or assumptions. However, currently, older people face challenges because of how society perceives them. Older people are seen to be slow, sick, unproductive, sad, unskilled, fragile, forgetful, lonely, and needy.

I have come across a famous media article titled "Ageing Population in Australia." This recent article mainly discusses the aging population of Australia. It tries to outline Australians' stereotypes and perceptions toward aged people, how they are perceived to pose a universal and economic threat, media portrayals, their roles, and overall representation (whether negative or positive). Stereotypes can lead to discrimination, prejudice, and ageism against older people (Nelson,2004).

Social Attitudes and Fear of Aging

Young Australians are very cynical and afraid of the aging process. They associate aging with poor health, hearing loss, mental incapacity, and income loss. Being old is perceived differently in circumstances such as community or business activities. In this piece, regarding age, the Australian people consider being older to be the period 55 years and above (Australian Human Rights Commission,2013). The aging process is portrayed as a source of discrimination. Discrimination can be in the workplace, retail, or social situations. For example, when a colleague cracks a joke about their age or their un-involvement in the decision-making process (Crawford & Walker,2008). Older people often tend to feel ignored, devalued, overlooked, disrespected, worthless, useless, unwanted, etc.,

In my point of view, the concept of aging in this article is negatively portrayed. The Australian government is currently well known for facing critical challenges from its aging population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics predicts an expected increase in median age from 37 years from 2007 to 2056. This study indicates that the proportion of Australians over 65 years is likely to shoot from 13% to 26% in the very period (Marianna,2013). With this remarkable age rise, an old-age population is a threat to the Australian political system and its economy.

Based on the Republican point of view, Plato writes, "It is for the older man to rule and then for the younger to submit." This phenomenon is a good definition of "gerontocracy" which means oligarchical societal rule by its elders (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011). This ideology can now be perceived to become a reality by the Australian people. The old people are very active and are hence seen to be a more significant blow to the future generations, brilliant minds with political interests. Some researchers suggest that there is some conservatism linked to older generations. They tend to stand a high voting power and unstoppable political influence. The older generation often has entirely different priorities from those of a young age (Arber, 2002).

Pension Reform and the Politics of an Aging Electorate

A good example is the pension reform case. With the obstructing demographic crisis, there is a dire need for security systems for the elderly. But as most voters grow old, they do not support the reforms because they seem to be out of their interests. Policies that are likely to cut down their unfunded pension amount are frequently rejected by the elderly.

The older people are very active, and this poses an adverse representation. The major worry to the Australian population is the representation of the interests of the young and unborn generations (Hillman, 2012). Addressing significant issues like biodiversity loss, youth unemployment, climatic changes, and crumbled infrastructure is crucial for continued prosperity. However, older voters do not prioritize such an amendment (Aldredge, 1955). The democratic voice of the youth is slowly shrinking, despite the importance of their interests to society.

Economic and Healthcare Effects of Population Aging

The aging population is perceived to have significant impacts on the Australian economy. The elderly are thought to impose more stress on the healthcare services provided to them. Decreased or lack of workforce and reduced taxation have resulted in increased expenditure, revenue-making deficit, debt, and eventually economic downturn (Victor, 1994).

Aging is a good reflection of the physiological growing process and beliefs and attitudes about the aging process. Different categories of individuals, including young adults and business people, have mixed feelings about the elderly (Hillier & Barrow, 2014). Some of the stereotypes and attitudes portrayed within the Australian communities towards aging include; invisibility- a belief that one's experience, opinions, and views are not well taken care of. Financial drain older adults are perceived to be a financial burden to the younger ones. Cognitive ability is a perception that the aged have a lower concept of grasping power, hence the longer time it takes to learn a new task, i.e., adopt new

technology. Productivity- a feeling that the elderly do not contribute to workplaces (Gutheil,1994). Social capability- they are thought to be grumpy, boring, and short-tempered. Victimization- an impression that they are vulnerable to victimization.

The media constitutes TV watching, online streaming, internet browsing, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and reading magazines and newspapers. These social media platforms, both visual and print, have an enormous influence on the attitude and perception toward the aging process. The media portrays the contrary view and understanding (Stewart & Webster, 2011). For instance, feelings of Isolation and loneliness. Most of the time, only young people are glorified and used in advertising. They are perceived to be sexy and beautiful, unlike the old ones, who can only be used to show hostility in movies. The media portrays them as forgetful, victims, grumpy, old, sick, weak, vulnerable, slow, pensioners, and boring, among others (Cowgil,1972).

Sociological Theories of Aging

Social theoretical approaches to aging support the reviewed article directly. Disengagement theory- society is presumed to help young people to take up the roles and older people to leave their previous take other roles that suit their capability (Cumming,1961). Activity theory- is evident in the article when the older generations can't accept other reforms based on their self-interests. Conflict theory- this explains the age-based discrimination and inequalities facing older people arising from their ethnicity, gender, or social class. Some older adults are more affluent than others.

If I was 65 years old, I am sure this work would make me feel socially, economically, emotionally, and politically secluded. This feeling is because of people's attitudes and stereotypes that are rampant within people toward the aging process. People have a feeling that old people are bad, slow, lonely, victims, grumpy, boring, helpless, stupid, fragile, and sick. This feeling also affects one's emotions negatively; thus, one feels ignored, lonely, and isolated. This is traumatizing, right?

To conclude, all human beings deserve better treatment by those around them, be it pediatric, the aged, or adult, irrespective of gender, social class, or ethnicity. The aging process happens to every living creature with the exclusion of none. Therefore, everyone has the right to be treated equally without creating a lousy attitude toward anyone. The best possible solution to make the aged people feel wanted and loved again is through mass media. The media can involve them in adverts and describe them as loving, caring, smart wise, and funny. Encouraging and positive representation- is needed to show respect to the elderly through the display of messages and images that reinforce their contribution to society. Finally, the media can break down their fear-based behavior and stereotypes by motivating and encouraging them to be positive.

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