

Fear Benefits and Social Perceptions of Aging

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Abstract

This research is about the impact of aging and why people should not fear aging. The study is quantitative and uses the statistical data collected from a group of university students that describe the fear of aging and its reasons. The study uses three other studies that describe the benefits elderly people are getting in different countries. It describes the health benefits, financial benefits, social protection benefits, and opportunities for productive aging. All these factors are focused on making an argument that people should not fear aging because where it brings several negative things with it, it also creates opportunities that facilitate old age people in several parts of the world.

Keywords: fear, benefits, health, social protection, and financial help

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Why do people fear aging? Most people have a fear that they will be left alone or, with aging, their life will become miserable. They want to stay young for as long as possible. This fear is most common in women who are more emotionally attached to their looks and worry a lot about their deteriorating features with age. Aging has become a potential problem today, and people are developing certain myths and stereotypes related to the process of aging. People today want to enjoy their life till their last breath, stay young and look good. But natural processes cannot be slowed down, and the fear of getting old always stays with us.

The people who fear aging mostly present their physical and mental decline as an argument for their fear. They live in constant depression by feeling that they are losing something. The health decline linked with aging forces this fear even further. They see their lives ending in front of their eyes, and they feel powerless as they cannot do something about it.

Physical decline is another push to this fear. People fear that with decreasing health their quality of life will decrease. They will no longer be able to enjoy life, perform interesting activities, or spend quality time with their family. They fear that “bonuses” of getting old, like back pain, decreased stamina, increased diseases, and lower health, will restrict most of their activities, and they will never be able to enjoy them again.

Why is research needed?

To understand why people fear aging and are scared of it, we will research the people's views on how and why they fear aging. We will look into their attributes, nature, financial position, health conditions, and opportunities to understand how and why people develop the fear of aging and what the participating factors are.

Furthermore, the studies will discuss what the benefits of aging are. This research will be supported by various studies done on this topic. This paper will describe various benefits aged people are getting in different countries and why people should fear aging due to these reasons.

Opposing Views

Many people who hold opposing beliefs about aging give statements that are related to only the negative effects of aging. They seem to overlook the positive side and base their views on only considering the horror of aging. They consider aging as a curse and a hindrance in their way of enjoying life.

They consider aging as a barrier to using their full potential and fear it because of loneliness and hopelessness, which are some of the adversaries of being old. Some people look at it as a milestone, while others consider it a setback that will not let them achieve what they want to in life and will take their happiness away, giving them grief and sadness in return.

Furthermore, some people consider it as a disease that slowly eats up their body and takes away their senses. They believe that aging acts as a virus that is incurable, and people have to live a life by knowing that something is taking their life away. They believe that aging will leave them attached to bed like a patient; they will be at the mercy of others to take care of them and even perform the easiest tasks for them. This fear is more solidified when the person has no children, or they are away from him.

Additionally, these people fear aging because of the fear of death. They consider that aging is taking them close to their death, and their time on earth to enjoy the sparkles of life has ended. They fear that aging will bring diseases and abnormalities in their mental and physical health.

Literature Review

Why the fear?

Jill M. Chonody & Barbra Teater (2014) researched the points of why people fear aging and death. He researched the social management and terror management theory and described why people have a

fear of growing old (Chonody & Teater, 2016). This study focuses on the fact that despite accepting the aging process people look for ways to slow the aging process. The study explored the visual elements of the process of aging. The study was carried out on university students from three countries. And explains how the fear of aging is linked to the fear of death and what psychological changes occur in people when they switch from being youthful to old.

The study discusses two theories: the social identity theory and the terror management theory. The social identity theory describes that it is important for people to be a part of an active society. This theory is explained to have a negative impact when people are growing old (Chonody & Teater, 2016). They consider being a part of an active society and then growing old will disturb the social status. The survey showed that students were conscious that their social status would be disturbed by growing old.

The second theory is the terror management theory, in which the author equates the fear of growing old as the fear of death. This theory's impact was observed on the students, and the result showed that most students were scared of dying, so they hated being old. The results collected had high variation among genders and age groups (Chonody & Teater, 2016).

The results proved that women have a greater fear of being old, and they consider relatively low age to be considered as old age. Men, in contrast, had less fear of being old and their age of being old was found higher. It was observed that fear of being old was linked to loss of beauty and youth which was strictly due to physical competence that is present in youth (Chonody & Teater, 2016).

Social Protection

The book Social Protection for Dependency in Old Age (2018) is about the social protection benefits for senior citizens (Pacolet et al., 2018). The EU started an awareness program in 1993 to overcome the social challenges of senior citizens. The aim of this program was to create expectations for member states to maintain high standards of social protection for senior citizens. This program's motivation was reflected in the old-age social benefits given to senior citizens in the following years. Several pension schemes were observed in the decade (Pacolet et al., 2018).

This program had increased political concerns and the debate to research on its pros and cons was performed in various countries. The research that was done for the program showed that old-age citizens were generally comfortable with their surroundings but not with the political concerns and support from the government. In the start, the EU showed a great interest and diversified mix for the social protection program. This program, after careful observation, revealed that the protection programs were not applicable to long-term benefits and provided no long-lasting insurance for citizens (Pacolet et al., 2018).

This study focused on a detailed overview of the social protection benefits provided to old-age citizens. It examined the coverage, risks and dependency factors of the process and described the

current arrangements of policy trends and perspectives. It examined the eligibility criteria and conditions for social protection and evaluated the provisions and benefits that this program included (Pacolet et al., 2018).

The adequacy of this care was determined by the interaction of the formal and informal set of provisions in terms of income support, savings and temporary aid. It also focuses on the number of people benefiting from this program who have access to a care system. It also evaluates the resources that are provided to senior citizens and the roles of the public and private sectors.

The experts in this study collected data on policies of social protection and detailed information on certain aspects. The study concluded that the care system is not only diverse in its program but provides adequate support to older citizens. However, there were some shortcomings found in the care process and the expenditure data which were against the application of these social improvement programs (Pacolet et al., 2018). The overall evaluation of the program showed that the program is adequate for its application in various countries, and future improvements are needed to complete the adequate cost.

Health Benefits

The study made by Jules McGregor, Stewart W. Mercer, and Fiona M. Harris (2018) focuses on the provision of medical facilities in healthcare organizations and social work interventions. The need for primary health care in patients is increasing every year. Based on the available evidence on healthcare benefits, the study synthesized and evaluated data from studies between 1990 and 2015. It evaluated the effectiveness and outcomes of the studies and observed their role in the improvement of health outcomes of these studies (Mcgregor et al., 2018).

Although the study found incomplete data to measure the effectiveness, results suggested a promising and ever-increasing rate of improvement in the elderly and the general public. The measures taken to evaluate the health effectiveness were done on the basis of present social care and health conditions. The study measures the self-management conditions in reducing psychological and physical health (Mcgregor et al., 2018). The results showed the practical applicability of social services and their effectiveness in achieving health goals.

Seven studies were collected United States, Israel and the United Kingdom (Mcgregor et al., 2018). The study focused on psychotherapeutic, social, and health support provided in these countries. All the intervention studies were aimed at finding the variation in treatment and medical support for patients. The evidence collected was in compliance with the National Health Service, which aims to provide a practically applicable structure for long-term health benefits, self-management and increased public health opportunities (Mcgregor et al., 2018).

One of these studies was specifically focused on people over 65 years of age (Mcgregor et al., 2018). It was observed in the study that medical facilities in healthcare organizations decreased stress levels

and social problems as people were given adequate health benefits. It was observed that studies were effective in the improvement of social work, and their aim to target the general public and improve their health conditions was achieved. However, the study raised some points where health provision facilities were not adequate, and people were at risk of vulnerability just because of the health inequality conditions (Mcgregor et al., 2018).

Productive Aging

This study is focused on the factor of the economic contribution of older adults in the society. It was described that aging productively increases the economic contribution to society. In this study, it was observed that older people engaging in productive activities live their old age positively. Rather than sitting idly if people participate in social welfare programs, it is more beneficial for both their families and society. The study focuses on two main points, the participation of older adults in social optimization roles and the opportunity to get engaged in growing resources, and what are the economic and health disparities in the issue. The current policies in employment have changed the structures of aging benefits, more benefits are being introduced to employees after the year 2022.

The study showed that 29% Americans provide care to one or more adult members of the society (Gonzales et al., 2015). These caregiving facilities have a higher percentage of older people now, and they are working on self-sustaining methods rather than being dependent on other people. Being an active part of society increases their social status and the level of respect in society. It was also observed that caregivers of older age are more efficient in caring for older citizens, and they can be more supportive and patient in their service.

The participation of older adults in volunteer work increases their psychological state. They feel a part of society and feel confident by receiving positive community feedback (Gonzales et al., 2015). Volunteer work increases their respect in society as well as their quality of life. It also benefits the community and the organizations as it decreases the cost of training and recruiting volunteers.

The study also describes certain benefits that must be controlled to improve productive engagement of older employees in the society (Gonzales et al., 2015). The inclusion process of volunteers who have good educational backgrounds, greater expertise in the field, and handsome pay structure are less attracted to the social welfare programs and do not agree to work as volunteers. They have high standards of work, and their inclusion gives less advantage to the volunteer work organizations.

Methodology

Research Methodology

This study is focused on the impact of aging on people and why people should not fear aging. The

study discusses various benefits that are linked to the aging process, which can only be enjoyed when people reach ages above 65. According to Betty Friedan, "Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength." In this study, the data was collected from four studies made on various benefits that countries are providing to old-age citizens. These benefits vary by country, but they are more or less present in every country. The data was compiled on the health facilities provided to old-age citizens in various countries, the social protection benefits, and productive engagement in society. It was observed that most countries protect the rights of their old-age employees and give them opportunities to participate actively in the community development program. We found that participating actively in social welfare programs where various benefits society creates confidence in people and improves their psychological personality.

Subjects

The subjects of this study are ten elderly people from the American native population who will be told the benefits of aging. They will be convinced by providing them with intervention and positive impacts of aging. The first study, which was actually a survey, was taken from a group of students who were asked why they fear aging. The survey raised concerns and misconceptions about aging that we tried to clear in our study. This study observed the facilities that are provided to old-age citizens in these countries.

Data Collection

The data for our research was collected from the statistics we found in these four studies. It was quantitative and showed the exact metrics of health facilities and social and financial benefits that are provided to old people. The data collected was evaluated and cross-checked with the actual data from government metrics, and it was only used after its reliability was confirmed. No software was used to collect data, and it was only the statistics that were found from these studies that helped us reach our analysis and power our argument.

Experiment Data

The data collected for this research include the health and financial support that is found in three studies. The first study describes the response to the survey done by university students. The data collected by regression results in which the majority of the participants were women showed that men had less fear of aging, but they were more concerned about cosmetic surgery issues. However, women had more fear of death and being old, rather than they were more concerned about the cosmetic surgery issue (Fig.1, Appendix A). The data was collected from the health benefits study. The process showed multiple pieces of evidence to studies that were aimed to find the health benefits provided to adults (Fig.2, Appendix A). These studies show the effectiveness and positive outcomes of all the previous studies.

The studies showed that the annual cost for health facilities was reduced to 1161\$ from \$4035 (Mcgregor, 2018). The third study showed the social protection benefits of aging. The study showed that the social protection value for citizens over 65 years of age has increased in the last decade, and it is highest in Europe. The progress faced some barriers, but the GDP expenditure spent on social protection is ever-increasing now. (Fig.3 Appendix A). Denmark ranked highest in social care statistics for social protection statistics, whereas most of the European countries had less in the number of Residential Care personnel and Community care. These factors can help change the dreadful concepts of aging and people if people can understand its positive effects.

Findings & Future Study

Results

The research showed that most people who fear aging do not actually know about its positive factors. Most of the fear that is not because of aging, it is the fear of death that keeps horrifies people. (Chonody, J. M., & Teater, B., 2016). After this research, we are able to present the benefits people are receiving in various countries. Irrespective of their previous social and financial status governments are providing health benefits to the elderly people. The most prominent benefit is the availability of healthcare. Governments are saving funds for health services provided to elderly people. They are reducing the overall cost of healthcare and providing more opportunities to elderly people like home health care and palliative care.

The second most attractive benefit is the social protection given by governemnts. The European Union is motivating European countries to provide social care for elderly people. The people who are impacted by the social protection benefits are satisfied with their care, and they are encouraging an increase in facilities and political support provided to them. Looking at the statistics, we can say that old age financial benefits are increasing every year, and countries deal with the matter seriously.

The third benefit is productive aging, in which people who have influence in society are doing their best to facilitate other old members of society. They are opening social care homes for the elderly and are considered a respectable member of society because of their positive contribution to society. These people gain a lot of respect as they are spending their age not sitting idly at home but in positive activities that improve both their psychological self and the community.

Recommendations

Future studies, if done in this domain, need to collect more specific statistical data for financial and health conditions. The data is scattered in countries but it can be collected if a more targeted approach is used to collect data. The participants chosen for fear of aging were limited to university students, where variation can be found, but data is not confined to university students. The data

collection method should be targeted to old-age citizens who are living through the process because they hold more specific and accurate responses to this issue. More research should be done on the psychological impact of aging, and the topic should be focused only on aging, not the other factors that are possible in the aging process.

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Appendix A



Fig 1. Regression results from fear of Aging



Fig . 2 Health Facilities Studies



Fig. 3. Stylised expansion path of the development of social protection for older people: a common European way



Fig. 4 Development of (semi-) residential and community service for older people in Europe