

Ageing Effect and Intergenerational Interaction in New Media Age

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Abstract

Intergenerational interaction is identified as a counteracting force on the physical, social and psychological fatigue, created by ageing. 100 pensioners (65+) from Kozhikode District were enquired about the physical, social and psychological fatigue felt by them and their extent of intergenerational interaction through various ways. Analyses reveal that there is high association between the variables in reverse direction. The study indicates that intergenerational interaction is a non-medical method to reduce the physical, social and psychological fatigue of the elderly. Unfortunately the younger generation in the era of new media does not realize the actual need of their elderly family members and consequently the aged group is thrown out from the palliative atmosphere of their own family.

Keywords

ageing, intergenerational interaction, new media

Introduction

Ageing is not a disease, it is a developmental process. The pleasure of having accomplished is possible only after one has reached close to the destination. Many aged, have a great sense of achievement and having lived well. Some have a sense of loss and grief also. Thus the mental state of the aged varies with the kind of aim of life that they have pursued (Kapoor, 1954). A human being usually goes through physical, psychological and social ageing after 60 to 65 years of his/her birth. Decrease in physical strength, endurance and flexibility are usually referred as physical ageing. Various factors like genetics, lifestyle, nutrition, medical care

influence physical ageing of a person. In later life, the intelligence that has gained throughout the years remains unbroken. Learning may not be as easy as in earlier years and take more time to recall facts in the memory bank. This indicates the psychological ageing of an individual. Experiencing many different types of losses, such as health, job, money, home, and death of friends and family may be the symptom of one's social ageing. Various factors, such as social support, religion and spirituality, active engagement with life and having an internal locus of control have been proposed as being beneficial in helping people to cope with stressful life events in later life.

In the context of wider expansion in Sociological studies of ageing, an attempt to enquire the counteracting forces which resolve the ageing effect is felt indeed. All of us usually think the elderly people in common creates a burden for their family members, are not interested in continuing the life as a problem, in a psychological and social condition to withdraw from every activities likewise. But we all neglect their actual need and spirit to be kept young both in their physique and psyche. Here the study revealed that the intergenerational interaction inside the family helps the senior members in that particular family a lot in keeping higher energy level in every activity engaged in and to live with a young spirit up to the end of life.

In the era of new media people the younger generation in particular is highly drawn to the attractive facilities of various digital devices which enable them accessing anything anytime anywhere through creative participation. While the digital devices and their overwhelming utilities penetrate into our lives, we do not realize that our primary group interactions are deteriorating gradually. The study also intends to make a notice into the consequence of the deterioration of intergenerational interaction on the problems of aged in our society.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of the aged
- To assess the intergenerational interaction of the elderly
- To analyze the association between the intergenerational interaction and the total wellbeing of the aged

Method

Interviews among 100 pensioners (65+) from four treasuries in Kozhikode District enquired into the physical, social and psychological fatigue felt by them and their extent of intergenerational interaction through various ways. The responses are scored and the respondents are divided into three different groups on the basis of their total score (0-10, 10-20 and 20-30). The higher and lower scores indicate the higher and lower level of interaction of the respondents respectively. The hypothesis is proved correct and is reinforced by finding the correlation coefficient(r) of the variables, the intergenerational interaction of the respondents and their physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

Physical, Psychological and Social Status

As the ageing process affects the body, mind and social life of an individual, the wellbeing of each respondent could be assessed only through identifying their physical, psychological and social conditions. They were asked about their total body condition, diseases they have, physical assistance they get from their family members, relief they experience by the assistance they are getting rather than using medicines etc.

The tables given below show the relation between the physical conditions of the respondents and their intergenerational interaction:

Table 1: Body condition of the respondents

Body Condition	Good	Normal	Bad	Total
0-10	-	9(75)	3(2)	12
10-20	31(50)	29(47.5)	1(1.64)	61
20-30	22(81.4)	5(18.52)	-	27
Total	53	43	4	100

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

Table 1 clearly shows that respondents who have a high level of interaction are also having a good physical condition while those who have the lowest level of interaction possess a normal or bad physical condition.

Table 2: Physical assistance and relief experienced by the respondents

Physical Assistance	Experiencing Relief	Not Experiencing Relief	Total
0-10	-	12(100)	12
10-20	11(18.03)	50(81.97)	61
20-30	6(22.22)	21(77.78)	27
Total	17	83	100

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

Table 2 says about the physical assistance getting by the respondents and the relief they experience through the assistance getting from their family members. 100 Percentage of the lowest scorers is included in the category of respondents who are not experiencing relief by the physical assistance of their family members.

The above analysis shows there is some association between the physical wellbeing of the elderly and their level of intergenerational interaction. The decrease in percentage of respondents who are experiencing relief by the physical assistance getting from their family members may be because of the reason that almost all of the respondents are having a permanent disease like Diabetes, Blood Pressure, Heart problems etc. and all of them are taking internal medicine regularly. Perhaps they are not in need of any physical assistance from their family members.

The next two tables represent the relation between the psychological conditions of the respondents and their intergenerational interaction.

Table 3: Occurrence of mental tensions in the respondents

Mental Tensions	Frequently	Rarely	No tension	Total
0-10	7(58.33)	5(41.67)	-	12
10-20	4(6.56)	18(29.51)	39(63.93)	61
20-30	1(3.7)	2(7.41)	24(88.89)	27
Total	12	25	63	100

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

Table 3 clearly says that there exists a definite relation between the interaction level of the respondents and their psychological health. Where 88.89 Percentage of the highest scorers responded as they have no particular tension, none of the lowest scorers responded as they are free from mental tensions.

Table 4: Method of Managing Stress by the Respondents

Stress Management	Sharing with Family members	Spiritual Practices	Managing himself/herself	No Tension	Total
0-10	-	5(41.67%)	7(58.33%)	-	12
10-20	14(22.95%)	11(18.03%)	12(19.67%)	24(39.34%)	61
20-30	3(11.11%)	7(25.93%)	2(7.41%)	15(55.56%)	27
Total	17	23	21	39	100

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

While analysing the method of stress management of the respondents, table 4 states that nobody in the category of 0-10 is interested to share their stress with anyone of their family members while the other two categories manage their stress by sharing with their family, by spiritual practices etc.

Social wellbeing of the elderly respondents and their level of intergenerational interaction are quoted in the following two tables.

Table 5: Interest in intergenerational interaction of the respondents

Social Interaction	Very much Interested	Somewhat interested	Very little interested	Total
0-10	-	7(58.33)	5(41.67)	12
10-20	26(42.62)	32(52.46)	3(4.92)	61
20-30	25(92.59)	2(7.41)	-	27
Total	51	41	8	100

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

It is clear in table 5 that when 92.59 Percentage of the respondents in the category 20-30 is very much interested to interact with their younger family members, nobody in the category 0-10 responded as they are very much interested in the intergenerational interaction.

Table 6: Contentment in the social recognition received by the respondents

Contentment in Social recognition	Good	Normal	Bad	Total
0-10	1(8.33)	10(83.33)	1(8.33)	12
10-20	39(63.93)	21(34.43)	1(1.64)	61
20-30	24(88.89)	3(11.11)	-	27
Total	64	34	2	100

Figures in parentheses denote percentage

While 88.89 Percentage in the 20-30 category is highly satisfied with the recognition they receive from their society, only 8.33 Percentage in the 0-10 category is having high satisfaction in the social recognition they receive.

Correlation between the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of the elderly and their intergenerational interaction

Already the relation between the total wellbeing of the respondents and their level of intergenerational interaction is established, here the correlation between the variables reinforce the hypothesis when the correlation coefficient(r) is found. Following table represents the correlation between the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of the respondents and their extent of intergenerational interaction separately.

Table 7: Intergenerational interaction

Correlation	Interaction and Physical Wellbeing	Interaction and Psychological Wellbeing	Interaction and Social Wellbeing
r value	0.681	0.701	0.624

From the above analysis it could be proved that the Physical, Psychological and Social wellbeing of the elderly people is having a definite correlation with their extent of intergenerational interaction. Especially their Psychological conditions are more dependent on their interaction with their younger family members.

Conclusion and suggestions

Socialization and relationships are very important to a human's well-being. But in this age of new media, younger generation is primarily socialized under control of different digital devices widely used and socialization through their primary group that is family is less possible. These circumstances lead them to neglect the elderly people in their own family who actually need their presence and talks rather than some medicines and treatment for their problems of physical, psychological and social ageing. The best thing we can do to help our senior loved one live a worry-free life is to listen to him or her, and to be vigilant about detecting any problems that he or she may not feel comfortable sharing (www.seniorshome.com). Be sensitive to our loved one's feelings and fears, and initiate conversations about the concerns of later life rather than being addict to the new digital media which are in the work of moulding digital human beings.

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