

Original Research Article

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A Study on Young Adult's Perception about Retired Professional's Wisdom

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to find out the young adult's perception about using the retired professional's wisdom. The current article reflects the differences in perceptions of young adults in using the wisdom of retirees from the professions based on gender and profession. A total of 120 young adults (60 men and 60 women) from the age group of 26 years to 40 years working in selected categories of occupations (Teaching, research, administration, lawyers and doctors) were purposively select to study their perception towards retired professionals' wisdom. A questionnaire was developed by the investigator to study the perceptions. The results of the study indicated that, more than half of the sample felt positive and one third of them were unable to decide about the wisdom among retired professionals. In utilizing the wisdom of retired professionals, nearly two third of the sample had positive views and more than one fourth of the subjects had neutral views in utilizing the wisdom of retired professionals. Hence it was found from the study that youngsters believed that retired professionals wisdom was considered to be beneficial to the people and society.

Keywords

Wisdom, Older adults, Senior citizens, Younger adults

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Introduction

Old age is not end of life but it is a stage of life and everyone has to pass through it like other previous stages. Today, population aging is a trend spreading across the world. It is estimated that one third of the population in developed countries and one fifth of that in developing countries will be elderly people by the year of 2050 (UN, 2002). A rapid change in the population of elderly people has been

seen in all over the world in recent decades due to increase in life expectancy and increase in health facilities and discovery of new treatment methods in modern medicine.

Traditionally research on aging has focused on the cognitive aspects of age-related changes, a "phenomenon of decline". A general belief associated with old age is declines in many aspects of cognition as well as with a variety of detrimental stereotypes of

incompetence (Cuddy *et al.*, 2005; Kite *et al.*, 2005; North and Fiske, 2012) but there is an aspect that “holds more promise than present reality may reveal”: wisdom (Baltes and Staudinger, 2000).

After centuries of trying to understand what it means to be wise, there is still considerable debate about the essential components of wisdom, how it is acquired, and how it is activated (Baltes & Smith, 2008). Despite differing views on the associated competencies and characteristics, wisdom is generally conceptualized as resulting from an accumulation of life experiences culminating in the highest form of human development (Erikson, 1982; Labouvie-Vief, 2003). The continued growth in intellectual, social, emotional and moral development required to reach this ideal end stage suggests that wisdom continues to develop over the life span. Beyond that, the wisdom of older adults is viewed as beneficial to others and can indicate a benefit to society. It describes intergenerational contacts are useful and beneficial to the society and youngsters.

Attitudes are learned or altered through different contexts (social, educational, cultural) and can have a major impact on social interactions (Suh *et al.*, 2012; Gawronski *et al.*, 2014). Knowledge and interactions between different generations are essential to promote positive attitudes (Davies *et al.*, 2011; Randler *et al.*, 2013). Intergenerational activities strengthens communication, relationships and exchange of ideas between individuals of different age groups, encouraging the formation and consolidation of social bonds that allow the subjects of such relationships to enrich their knowledge and acquire life experiences (Spudich and Spudich, 2010). In this context it is important to understand youngster's attitude towards elderly wisdom.

Materials and Methods

Sampling procedure

Sampling criteria

Equal number of men and women belonging to the young adult age group 26-40 years working from the fields of teaching, research, administration, law and medicine were selected for the study from Hyderabad city.

Technique for sample selection

The sampling technique was adopted for the study was purposive sampling technique since the study requires young adults who are working in selected category of occupation and willing to fill the questionnaire were included for the study.

Size of the sample

Young adults about 120 members were selected for the study.

Measurement tools

A questionnaire on young adult's perception towards retired professionals' wisdom was developed by the investigator. This tool had two parts in it. The first part was developed to study the young adults' perception towards retired professional wisdom and the second part measures the perception about using the retired professionals' wisdom. There were 10 statements in each part together 20 statements. The respondents must carefully read each statement and should mark their opinion using three point rating scale i.e. agree-3, neutral-2 and disagree-3. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample and needed changes were made in it.

Procedure

The young adults belonging to the age range of 26 to 40 years were purposively selected

from the Hyderabad city to conduct the study. The collected data was coded and analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussion

The table 1 reveals the details of young adult's perceptions about retired professional's wisdom. The perceptions were arranged according to age group, gender, educational qualification and profession. The details were given below.

With regard to the age wise differences in perceptions about retired professionals, more than half of the sample (57%) had positive perceptions and 1/3rd of the subjects (34%) had neutral views on wisdom of retired professionals. With slight variation in percentages, both the age groups such as: 26-30 years (59%) and 36-40 years (57%) perceived positively.

This particular age groups of sample might exposed to the guidance of senior people and might noticed the retired professionals in their occupational settings and felt that they are the valuable source of information and can get good advice from them. Hence this might have resulted in positive perceptions about retired professional's wisdom.

Gender wise distribution shows that, with slight variation in percentages both men (58%) and women (55%) perceived positively about retired professionals wisdom. This indicates irrespective of gender both men and women felt positive about retired professionals wisdom. Again small variation in percentages, men and women also had neutral and negative perceptions.

Further, education wise differences shows that, majority of the young adults, who holds doctorate degrees (73%) and half of the subjects with graduate and post-graduate

degrees had positive perceptions about retired professionals wisdom. Nearly 1/3rd of the post-graduates (39%) were unable to decide about the retired professional's wisdom. Graduates compared to other groups had more negative views about retired professional's wisdom.

This indicates the subjects with higher educational qualification had more positive views and the subjects with lower education had negative views. Because this particular group people (sample with higher education) might exposed to the guidance and knowledge of their senior advisors during their research projects. However, with increased education and awareness the young adults might have felt positive about wisdom among retired professionals. The graduates are still younger and they may not exposed to the retired people and may not received the benefits from them. Thus this might have resulted in negative perceptions.

Profession wise differences in perceptions shows that, almost 2/3rd of the sample from both the professions like administration (67%), law (63%) and teaching (54%) were positively believed in retired professionals wisdom than the other professions. 1/3rd of the researchers and doctors were unable to decide about the retired professionals wisdom. This variation in perception might be caused due to the individual differences in exposure and awareness to the retired professionals and their guidance.

The table 1 depicts the details of young adult's perceptions about using retired professional wisdom. The perceptions were distributed according to age, gender, education and profession of the young adults.

Age differences in perceptions shows that, majority of the young adults from the age group i.e. 36-40 years (74%) had positive

perceptions. More than 1/4th percent of the subjects from 26-30 years (29%) and 31-35 years (30%) had neutral views about using retired professional’s wisdom. However the negative views percentage was slightly high among the younger age group (26-30 years). The noticeable finding from the table 2 is that, the older age group young adults (36-40 years) had more positive views and the younger age group subjects had negative views towards using retired professional’s wisdom.

It show, the young adults in their life might have encountered the circumstances or had tough situations where they couldn’t solve the issues and these were easily tackled by the

senior people. While handling the issues the young adults might exposed to the seniors knowledge and wisdom in resolving the conflicts. This might made them to felt positive in utilising the wisdom of retired professional.

Gender differences in perceptions describes that, (68%) of men and (58%) of women had positive perceptions. With slight variation in percentage, both women (30%) and men (27%) had neutral views about utilising the wisdom of retired professionals. This indicate that, young men compared to women had positive perceptions about make use of the wisdom of retired professionals.

Table.1 Young adult’s perception about retired professional’s wisdom based on age, gender, education and profession

N-120

Category	Negative views		Neutral views		Positive views	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Age (in years)						
26-30 years	6	10%	18	31%	34	59%
31-35 years	4	9%	16	37%	23	53%
36- 40 years	1	5%	7	37%	11	58%
Total=120	11	9%	41	34%	68	57%
Gender						
Male	5	8%	20	33%	35	58%
female	6	10%	21	35%	33	55%
Total=120	11	9%	41	34%	68	57%
Education						
Graduation	3	12%	9	36%	13	52%
Post graduation	6	9%	27	39%	36	52%
Ph.D	2	8%	5	19%	19	73%
Total=120	11	9%	41	34%	68	57%
Profession						
Teaching	4	17%	7	29%	13	54%
Research	1	4%	11	46%	12	50%
Administration	4	17%	4	17%	16	67%
Lawyers	0	0	9	38%	15	63%
Doctors	2	8%	10	42%	12	50%
Total=120	11	9%	41	34%	68	57%

Table.2 Young adults perceptions about using retired professionals' wisdom
N=120

Category	Negative view		Neutral		Positive view	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Age (in years)						
26-30 years	7	12%	17	29%	34	59%
31-35 years	2	5%	13	30%	28	65%
36- 40 years	1	5%	4	21%	14	74%
Total=120	10	8%	34	28%	76	63%
Gender						
Male	3	5%	16	27%	41	68%
Female	7	12%	18	30%	35	58%
Total=120	10	8%	34	28%	76	63%
Education						
Graduation	1	4%	9	36%	15	60%
Post-graduation	8	12%	20	29%	41	59%
Ph.D	1	4%	5	19%	20	77%
Total=120	10	8%	34	28%	76	63%
Occupation						
Teaching	1	4%	8	33%	15	63%
Research	3	13%	7	29%	14	58%
Administration	2	8%	4	17%	18	75%
Lawyers	3	13%	5	21%	16	67%
Doctors	1	4%	10	42%	13	54%
Total=120	10	8%	34	28%	76	63%

This might be due to the reason that, the young men might be believed in confidence of seniors that, with experience and knowledge they might handle the any situation, whereas women might felt that, they can learn the skills on their own by believing in their self-knowledge and by avoiding the dependency behaviour on elders. This might lead to the differences in perceptions of men and women about using the wisdom of our senior.

Variations in perceptions according to educational qualification shows that, more than three fourth of the young adults with doctorate degrees (77%) had positive perceptions and more than 1/3rd of the graduates (36%) had neutral perceptions and finally negligible percent of the subjects from

all the categories of education were also found on negative perceptions category. It seems sample with higher education had positive perceptions and the sample with lower education had neutral views.

This might be due to the reason that, the people with higher educational background might had sufficient exposure and knowledge about the retired professionals role and what kind of things they can do better at home, work place and to the society than the sample with lower education. This might have created a difference in perceptions

Occupation wise differences in perceptions shows that, 3/4th of the administrators (75%), (67%) of the lawyers and (63%) of teachers concurred to the positive views. Interestingly,

(42%) of doctors and (33%) of teachers were noticed on neutral level. It seems in utilising the wisdom of retired professionals, majority of the administrators, lawyers and teachers had positive perceptions.

This might be due to the reasons that, the young adults might thought that the retired people has lot of patience to manage and handle the situations because of exposure to life events made them to balance the multiple tasks. This might have helped the young adults from the fields of teaching, law and administration to had positive perceptions about using retired professionals wisdom.

In conclusion, the overall results of the present study ‘young adult’s perception about retired professional’s wisdom’ found that, more than half of the sample had positive perceptions and 1/3rd of the subjects had neutral views on wisdom of retired professionals. The perceptions about using the retired professional wisdom in different settings, majority of the young adults from the age group i.e. 36-40 years had positive perceptions than other age groups. This might be due to the reason that, the young adults belonging to the older age group might believed in confidence of seniors, experience and knowledge. Hence from the above study it was noticed that more than half of the sample had positive attitude about retired professionals wisdom and also positive in using the experiences, knowledge and awareness in different settings so that the youngsters can get benefit out of it.

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