

Research Article

Aging and Care: Attitudes of undergraduate students towards elderly People

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Abstract

Objectives: To consider and understand how the attitude toward elderly people among the adolescents, based on experience of interacting with or receiving assistance from elderly individuals. The study aims to analyze what kind of difference there is in the consciousness of the youth to the elderly by examining the relation between experience which contacts the elderly and support from the elderly in Japan.

Methods: The subjects were first-year students from four universities in Japan. This survey was used in this study concerns effect of experience interacting with the elderly on the attitude toward elderly people, based on the concept of the "attitude toward old people" (Kogan) model. Statistical evaluation of the data was included in variance analysis.

Results: Overall, 358 participants were surveyed, 125 males (34.9%) and 233 female (65.1%). The mean score Kogan for total participants 131.2±16.2. Those adolescents who had experience volunteer activities for the elderly, having cared for the elderly, having experience received caring from an older person were significantly high total score Kogan.

Discussions: The Attitudes of university students towards elderly people should be evaluated currently to be able to improve the provision of care for elderly people and to prevent possible negative beliefs through tracking elderly people.

Keywords: Attitudes toward Elderly, Experience with Older Adults, Supportive Relationship

Introduction

The ageing of the population is one of the challenging strategy of societies. Who would provide care for elderly people, may likely have a direct effect on the quality of care in the future. However, across the international studies support the gerontology as an adolescent is not a highly choicest aging care career [1]. Discovering the attitude of Japanese adolescents toward elderly people may help illuminate reasons gerontology is not a highly choicest career in Japan. It is reasonable to elucidate how the perception of elderly people, they are more likely to be educated in geriatric environment.

Therefore, it is responsible for educators and societies to understand the factors influencing adolescent attitude that drive adolescent's experience of interacting with or receiving assistance from elderly individuals would be a good influence for positive attitudes to elderly people. The knowledge gained from this study can help guide aging related education program in Japan, thereby ensuring the developing of elderly care services of the growing elderly population. Japan's aging rate is expected to reach about 40% in 2016 [2]. It is considered that there is a direct effect on the quality of the elderly support by how young people who shoulder the future elderly care in Japan of the declining birth rate perceive the elderly. In "Comprehensive Strategy for the Promotion of Policies for Dementia (2015)" [3] of the Ministry

of Health, Labour and Welfare, it is important to examine what kind of value the young generation who shoulders the elderly care has for the elderly and what kind of education and enlightenment activity are necessary, because it is clarified that the understanding promotion to the elderly including the person of the dementia is positively taken in school education. In Japan, the majority of households are nuclear family units, however middle-age family member still plays an important role in the lives and assist care of elders. Younger family members do not live close to their elders and not interact with them.

Institutional care of elders in Japan is common, others are receiving home care services, day care support services, and Life support services at home. These services are developing in the world not only Japan, but view augment between community-based caregiving and Institutional care [4]. Since the introduction of universal long-term care insurance (LTCI) in the spring of 2000, those aged 65 and over who need nursing care in their daily lives are eligible to receive the care services of LTCI. Consumers can choose the services and providers that they want. To that end, Japan has developed several services for elders who need care but the increase in the number of elderly people requiring LTCI, and associate costs of these services, are imposing a burden on our society. It has been reported that most institutions and service provider businesses face difficulties in their operation, specific human resource.

From a health strategy for promoting understanding about elderly-including people with dementia in school education, examining the values of young people who are responsible for care of the elderly.

For the image of the elderly, it has been reported that the experience of living with the elderly is not an important determinant factor [5], the experience of interaction with the elderly, the frequency of interaction, the relationship and the way of involvement are related, and the attitude of parents and grandparents may also influence [6]. In addition, there is a tendency for people with little knowledge about dementia to have a positive image, and those who have experience of volunteering for elderly people with dementia to have a positive image compared to those without such experience. This indicates that not only knowledge about dementia, but also actual involvement with dementia may lead to a positive image.

Though it is clarified that studies which specialize affect the consciousness for the elderly of the youth, it is little examined from caring experience of the elderly, experience which received the care from the elderly. In this study, it was considered that it was necessary to examine the consciousness of the elderly by paying attention to both sides of the contact with the elderly such as learning which the youth specializes in experience, focusing on the university student who shifts from the adolescence to the adulthood. In this study, it was made that what kind of difference there is in the consciousness of the youth to the elderly by examining the relation between experience which contacts the elderly and support from the elderly. By this study, it aims at getting the suggestion for promoting the elderly understanding for the youth.

Methods

Study Sample

Participants for this study consisted of undergraduate students, who are first grade, at four universities in Japan. Students were selected using convenience sampling.

Measures

The demographic information included age, gender, department, status of cohabitation with elder people. Additional questions included experience regarding the elderly, whether presence/absence of volunteering experience with elder people, experience care for elder people, experience being taken care by elderly people, and perception about elderly care. The Japanese version of Kogan's Attitudes towards Old People Scale (KAOP) was used in this survey. The response for favorable items and scored by assigning 1 point to "strongly disagree", 6 points to "strongly agree", and the total positive items were calculated. A high score indicated a positive attitude toward elderly people.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to report the demographic data. Statistical evaluation of the data was included in percentage, mean, Independent t-test was used to assess differences in score among categorical variables. A significant level of 0.05 was used for all analyses. SPSS Japanese version 25 was used for data entry and analysis.

Result

A convenience sample of 373 participants, among the responses excluding those with no responses to one or more items 358 responses were selected for the analysis. Participant characteristics are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants (N = 358)

Characteristic	n	% of Total Participants
Gender		
Male	125	34.9
Female	233	65.1
Age		
		18-40
MEAN		18.96 ± 2.48
Subject Faculty		
Nursing	157	43.9
Medical	95	26.5
Non-Health	106	29.6
Have experience living with an older person	156	43.5
Have experience living with a dementia older person	27	7.5
Have experience volunteer activities for an older person	131	36.5
Have experience caring for an older person	58	16.2
Have experience receiving from an older person	203	56.5

Age 18 to 40 years ($M=18.96$, $SD=2.5$), Sixty-five percent of the students were female and thirty-five percent of the students were male. Forty-three percent students have lived with the elderly. Thirty-six percent had experience of volunteer activities for the elderly, and caring experience for the elderly was sixteen percent, and the experience which received the care from the elderly was fifty-six percent.

The overall attitude score was in the positive direction ($M=131.2$, $SD=16.2$) with score ranging from a minimum of 57 to a maximum of 200 (Table 2). The participants' mean score indicated slightly positive attitude toward elders. The mean total negative item score was 51.9 out of a possible highest score of 103. The mean total positive item score was 56.4 out of a possible score of 97. Both of these scores are within the range of positive attitudes according to Tomioka [7]. Total KAOP by sample characteristics used to assess the differences in mean score between and among variables, and significant differences were found. No significant differences were found in attitude scores within categories of living with elderly people, living with dementia elderly people. Those adolescents who had experience volunteer activities for the elderly, having cared for the elderly, having experience received caring from an older person were significantly higher total KAOP and negative item scores than those who had no having (Table 2).

Table 2. Total Kogan's Attitudes toward Old People scale

		Total KAOP	Negative Item Total	Positive Item Total	P
		Median	Median	Median	
Gender	Male	123.74	68.73	55.02	**
	Female	135.25	78.12	57.13	
Department	Nursing	135.52	78.31	57.21	**
	Medicine	132.51	75.81	56.69	
	Non-Health	123.75	68.84	54.92	
Living with an older person	Yes	131.61	75.34	56.23	ns
	No	130.91	74.45	56.46	
Living with a dementia older person	Yes	132.74	75.19	57.56	ns
	No	131.08	74.81	56.28	
Have experience volunteer activities for an older person	Yes	133.12	76.22	56.89	*
	No	130.15	74.04	56.11	
Have experience caring for an older person	Yes	134.43	78.16	56.28	*
	No	130.66	74.23	56.43	
Have experience receiving from an older person	Yes	131.16	75.25	55.91	*
	No	128.64	72.68	55.96	

** p<.01, * p<.05 ns:no significant

Discussion

Similar to the study conducted by Tomioka [7], Japanese college students' attitude toward elderly in this study were generally slightly positive. Based on these results, Japanese adolescents exhibited a somewhat more positive attitudinal disposition toward elders than adolescents from other countries [8–10]. Previous study reported high negative attitude toward elderly people [8], however this study's participants nurse and medical students have lower negative attitude than expected. Because the curricular emphases include gerontology and educational preparation given in many elementary schools and junior high school. In this study, students would be having experience volunteering activities with elderly people before college students. Female students held positive attitudes compared with male students. This finding was consistent with the majority of national and international studies. One factor might help explain the gender difference that the more caring nature of females [11].

The most statistically significant was interactive with elderly people through taking care for elderly or receiving care from elderly people. Those students who expressed tracking with elderly people had higher attitude scores, as seen in the study by Turgay et al. [12]. Therefore, continuing to be existing culture norms of respect and loyalty for elders may help positive attitudes of adolescents. Overall, these findings indicate that there is room for improvement in adolescent

attitudes toward elderly people. The Attitudes of adolescents towards elderly people should be evaluated currently to be able to improve the provision of care for elderly people and to prevent possible negative beliefs through tracking elderly people. Educational preparation is a major factor in adolescent attitudes; therefore, gerontology education and experience connecting with elderly people should be important part of education curriculum.

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