

Lifestyle of the Elder in Taiwan: Health, Body Image and Viable Policy

Jeffrey J. Guo

(Corresponding Author)

Department of Sociology, Zhejiang University

No. 866, Yuhangtang Road, Hangzhou City

Zhejiang Province, 310058 P.R. China

E-mail: jeffreyguo@zju.edu.cn

Piching Lu

Department of Athletics, National Taiwan University

No. 1, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Road, Taipei City, 10617 Taiwan (ROC)

E-mail: pichine@ntu.edu.tw

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Abstract

Aging of population and rapidly aging is a global trend in developed countries; as in the past, the body image of elder stayed in the treatment of concepts, making the national policy put effort on the improvement of expenses in medical care and cure, but not to promote the benefits of sport and design the suitable regulations for the elderly. This paper focuses on practical perspectives to examine the social construction about self-image of the elder in Taiwan, adopting qualitative methods to conduct this empirical research. At first, discussing the process of body image constructing for the elderly in aging society, while facing the changes in population structure, the society requires for a brand new understanding after the challenge. Then, the contents of this study followed by analysis of the elderly for the value of perspectives from their own health to explore the social system, judging if the elderly can have functions of reproduction, rather than just the maintenance and waiting for death. Finally, making several related policy recommendations to sport and health and future regulatory reform movement of the elderly, hoping this paper to provide some practical suggestions about the aging society and social security system in Taiwan.

Keywords: Aging of population, social construction, body image of the elder, value of exercise and sport, regulations and policies.

1. Introduction

According to the index made by the World Health Organization (WHO), when a nation whose people in the age of 65 or more are over the total population 7 percent in society, the country formally entered the so-called "aging society" (Takao, 2009:853). Thanks to development of science and technology for artificial longevity, mainly on knowledge and technology advance

and application in medical and health care, nutrition and public health decreasing mortality of the elderly population; with population policy of government and related technological advance, people get concepts not having babies to lead to new fertility reduction, by these two important factors making the formation of an aging society produced (Li, 2002).

Taking Taiwan (Republic of China, ROC) for example, around in September, 1993, it became an aging society. Council for Economic Planning, Executive Yuan predicts that the elderly aged over 65 will account for 17% of the total population in 2018 (Council for Culture Affairs, 2005). Many social welfare system-developed or developed countries in Europe had been into an aging society earlier than Taiwan, such as Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, even the neighboring, Japan was in the aging society earlier to 1970's (Kawano, 2004). All the information shows that the trend of modern aging society seems not only a phenomenon of individual countries but most of developed ones; in the end of 20th century, most countries in the world were gradually and quietly towards the aging phenomenon; the scenery of global aging population seems to be the future new appearance for us to observe, understand and adapt.

In fact, in the long social development of human history, exception for periods of war, outside the community and the experience may be very fresh when a society meets a high proportion of rapid and continuing growth in the trend of old people. However, from the perspectives of life, as being-in-the-world, the process of being born, old, sick and dead is natural, and aging is the inevitable development that almost no one can relieve the result. Although the pace of aging is different from a person to another, the degree may vary, but everybody must face the problem with aging from a variety of change and adaptation in a certain time. It is because people have flesh body (corporeal), a psychological sense of operational capacity (mental), associated with others in social situation (social relationship), as well as having a driving force due to environment and culture that shape the personal traits and behavior which are connected development of history over time (Guo, 2011:188-190).

Although this is a natural phenomenon of human development, it also directly affects other people in society, especially the young and productive population with heavy burden; meanwhile, it is a part of the pressure for government in modern society to make welfare policies. Even the elderly themselves, particular those who are suffering from chronic diseases due to aging, out of well care in a long-term, economically disadvantaged, or even the elderly with multi-plight above, feel that they cannot escape the aging urging, life stress, frustration and pain of nightmare. Thus, how to help, guide or educate senior citizens with early recognition to face the natural and inevitable fact of aging, and learn positive responses to the ensuing problems that can make them more healthy becomes one of important policies for government, and this is also the new value of the aging trend in global development (Lu & Tsai, 2011:1), shaping the motivation for this research.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Participants

Judgment and snowball samplings are applied in this study, when selecting study participants. To consider the possible candidates for this study, researchers start with communities which more senior citizens live in and the recommendation from neighbors and friends. The participants must then meet the following two conditions: (a) at least 65 years old, and (b) be able to understand research topics, purposes, methods, risk and possible contribution to the study, based on free will to be interviewed and signing the consent form of interview, so that the cases can be included as participants. Among them, there are 10 senior participants have the will and agree to participate in this study from September, 2011 to January, 2012.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The method is in-depth interview in this study, mainly is from the interaction face to face by researchers and participants and telephone interviewing is supplementary to add the

information we hope to collect. In regard to self-disclosure may be uncomfortable or feeling pressure for the traditional Chinese elderly, and comes the subsequent possible “impression management,” researchers try to make natural atmosphere for the conversation in the semi-structured questionnaire to guide the research. By the end of each interview, researchers will ask the participants if it is available to request compilation of data by telephone or door interviews to complement the information again when we find the details are insufficient. Immediately, researchers write down each field note, making the process of interview from observation or perception or intuition to sign records into texts. If the process is not comprehensive or vague expression in the interview, we would give the participants a call to add records and information. These would be the basis of research and analysis on interpretation of phenomena. The themes of interview are composed of four parts: (a) awareness of aging, (b) health attitude, (c) body image, and (d) exercise experience. Finally, research data analysis is mainly conducted with the method of qualitative thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998), to deal with, classify and analyze the interview data.

3. The Concept of Health

In ancient Greek, the healthy body is directly affected the soul on the pursuit of good and honest activities (Miller & Bee, 1972; Worman, 1997); thus, it is important for the existence of human beings keeping good shapes of health. However, due to modern life, work pressure makes it difficult for people to keep good health in more than 65 years through the life span, and it is not an easy task to maintain healthy and balance the development.

For most people, there is no disease is health. However, according to International Health Conference, approving that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The bibliographic citation for this definition is: Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York (World Health Organization, 2011), from June 19 to July 22, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on April 7, 1948. The definition has not been amended since 1948 (World Health Organization, 2012).

The “body health” refers to a person’s bio-physical organs and systems of body to work properly; “mental health” refers to the individual’s inner world not only out of mental disorders, but also the consciousness or awareness can recognize his/her own potential to meet the normal stress of life, effectively dealing with routine matters in daily life and work, and make the contributions to family or communities, and “social health” refers to the social category, individuals can communicate with others in harmony and can live and lead with moral values and social systems integration. The definition is recognized for years in common knowledge and application, so that it can be regarded as basic public health-related beliefs or concepts (Callahan, 1973: 77-80).

With the progress of literacy, scientific and technological advance, people today have the concept of health updated. In Taiwan, Sports Affairs Council, Executive Yuan put forward in 2009 to strengthen the well-being and improve quality of life for the ideals concept of “wellness,” stressing that maintaining health is a common task for individuals, and good health depends on the practice of positive action and maintenance of the process in whole life. In other words, the concept of wellness advocates that everyone should learn to control the factors affecting health, through the process of self-awareness to learn, think and reflect; through the assessment of physical fitness, the possible activity of body’s self-awareness, checking the body’s warning, and to take action so that it can be closer to health of wellness, with a view to enhance happiness, quality of life and meanings (Sports Affairs Council, 2009); for that, it is a kind concept and better condition of wellness as Hajjar and Kotchen (2003) argued that the ideal personal health depends on the healthy attitude.

The health awareness contains “prevention of disease” and “promotion of health attitude.” Researchers believe that in theory, “attitude” refers to people’s inner psychological structure and behavioral tendencies. Therefore, when discussing the health attitude of senior citizens,

we should understand their cognition toward health, emotion and behavioral intentions. The majority of senior citizens, regardless of their physical and mental aging is the inevitable nature, or loss or mutation of human cells when operating, or other factors (Lee, 2007a; 2007b). At this moment, the physical, mental or the ability of social relations or condition, more or less, it cannot avoid a recession or disease to disability and isolation, so the concepts of holistic health awareness and re-learning are the active promotion and implementation of the aging-related diseases treatment to prevent or correct the situation on aging to develop ideas and attitude with their ability to have a better and successful aging process. Therefore, this study focuses on the elderly over 65 years old in Taiwan, to analyze their health beliefs, self-health awareness and healthy behaviors of daily experience.

4. Body Image and the Elderly

The term of “body image” was originally offered by Austrian psychoanalyst Paul Ferdinand Schilder (1886-1940) in 1935, the core concept is an exploration of people about their perception of physical beauty and attractiveness. According to the definition from Schilder, body image refers to the “people's minds about their portrayal of the body;” that is, body image is the way people see their body shapes. Furthermore, the definition contains three elements namely: (a) self-perception of body size on estimation, such as tall, short, fat or thin; (b) the overall charm of appearance from self-concept and evaluation, such as face, body, temperament, manners, and attraction to others; (c) the overall physical appearance from emotion, such as satisfaction, self-acceptance, self-esteem and feelings of self-confidence (Schilder, 1950; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2003).

In Surface, body image is the relation between oneself and his/her own body when people realize their physical existence, begin to gaze or observe the body, and the body start to become the meaning and value of the physical mindset. Finally, the phenomenon guides people to rely on a pattern of body shape with the appearance of a collective unconscious and the social forces; in turn, to tell people what make most of the physical beauty or behavioral practice and other life experiences from perception, not to across the border of social and cultural traditions in the beauty of human body identity framework (Haworth-Hoepfner, 2000). People's body image is affected by social and cultural values, and gender differences. It can be considered that body image is the construction among personal, social and cultural interaction-oriented development (Grogan, 1999; Faircloth, 2003; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2003). Whitbourne and Skultety (2004) consider that there are three elements for adult body image in assessment: (a) appearance, such as age and physical attractiveness; (b) competence, such as physical strength and endurance, and (c) physical condition, like illness, weakness or pain experience. The stages of human development to old age, even without the sudden impact of illness or injuries, physical and mental abilities do naturally get some changes, such as more deep wrinkles on faces, cheeks or eyelids drooping, some seborrheic keratosis, often known as “old spot,” the skin pigmentation significantly, dull skin, gray hair or sparse, and so on. In the body, the waist and hip circumference thicken, muscle relaxation, rickets (kyphosis or spine is not quite straight), faltering in walking, etc. The body's tissue function, reduction of cardiovascular flexibility, smaller pulmonary capacity, decrease of the metabolism, largest muscular strength and endurance, bone fragility, joint stiffness, bladder weakness (incontinence or urinary frequently easy). In psychological aspects, the elderly may suffer from insomnia, depression, memory loss, involuntary shaking hands and legs, and even dementia.

Of these aging changes, they directly affect not only the quality of life for senior citizens, but also their internal self-concept, self-esteem and self-confidence, and even lead them to experience the meaning of life changed. Besides, these indirectly gain the burden to the national health care system in finance. Thus we can understand that “aging” is a problem in the development of life, but for its universality and makes the aging becomes a public issue for modern citizens cannot be avoided and must concern the social responsibility.

However, researching on body image from data bases of “National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations in Taiwan” and “Airiti Library,” there are lots of body image relative

studies of women, children, adolescents, obese, dancers, athletes, and cancer patients, but not directly addressed the body image research from the elderly.¹ Dissertations and theses from abroad, we find there are 11 relative articles on body image of the elderly from 1983 to now, and the number, actually is not too much.² At present, although the reasons cannot be estimated, at least researches about body image of the elderly and aging in Taiwan are still under developed, and the issue is an indisputable fact waiting to analyze.

5. Exercises and Aging

As description above, problems of aging population in Taiwan are mainly due to two factors: the high proportion of the elderly and the relatively reduction of newborn population. However, in academics, there are five aspects of the concepts on aging. First, the “chronological aging” refers to people accumulate ages from birth; the greater age, the deeper years of aging, generally it decreases people’s ability to adapt to the environment. Second, the “biological aging” refers to human anatomy and physiology of aging, the most serious is the decrease of resistance to disease or injury. Third, the “psychological aging” specifically refers to the phenomenon of aging on individual behavior, which reflects people’s maturity, and in response to related performance indirectly with the various situations of stress. Fourth, the “social aging” refers to individuals changed in social roles as a result caused by aging, such as retirement due to age. Fifth, the “functional aging” refers to the result of diminished capacity or efficiency in task caused by age, such as vision loss, function of heart and lung decline or muscle endurance (Hsu & Tsai, 1991). It shows the process of aging is a human life, although the pace is slow, but it starts after the birth and is related to healthy living, quality of life during the various changes in life, which is also an important issue that societies of high development must face.

Researchers would like to emphasize that from the perspectives of “being,” the biological material of human body shape is the most specific and can demonstrate a more direct meaning of “a living person.” That is, people can claim the evidence of existence by body so to maintain the physical health and wellness is the ideal of holistic health and pursuit of personal physical health of body; even that is also one of basic responsibility in life from some thought. It is not difficult to understand the formed aging society, to enable senior citizens to own and maintain the life of high quality, and also for social policy to decrease medical treatment and health care, the enormous financial needs, living in an aging society, prevention or anti-aging will be the important goals in daily life of modern citizens (Mykytyn, 2006).

In fact, in contemporary developed society, under the influence of knowledge and technology and promotion in variety of knowledge and methods for good health, there are medicine, beauty, fitness, diet, relaxation, meditation, folklore and so on to improve the body shape. However, in all kinds of science, such as physiology, medicine, mental health and sports, the aids of experimental evidence, making “exercise is good for health” no longer just the slogan for professional sports or promotion of academics (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008).

In recent years, the discourse of “exercise is good for health” or “exercise is the best medicine,” is not only connected with the ancient Greek on the body of thinking from philosophers and practice of various sports tournament to realize the ideal spirit (Hall, 2002; Chiang, 2011), but also coincident with popular contemporary effective style that people can do by themselves.

The movement (exercise / sport), whether it is self-training, self-struggle or active physical fitness to physiological function of self-cultivation movement (exercise) or to compete with others by competitive movement (sport), it has to be through all kinds of body posture,

¹ Doing researches from the key terms, such as “body image and aging,” “body image and the elderly,” “elderly body image” and other words, researchers found of 322 data. After reading the titles and abstracts, we seldom found there is any directly related to body image research data with the elderly.

² In databases of DAO, researchers use the Internet to key in body image, elder, and aging, getting 19 papers retrieved by reading analyzing, we obtained 11 related papers to these topics.

movement and performances to reflect; that is, without body, people cannot exercise; out of body, movement is difficult to express. The role, purpose and function of movement are more than a large and positive nature, especially in the body to promote human with development and morphology of solid strong, full of energy and other aesthetic requirements for the fundamental reasons with the long-term development of its basic functions and the ideal (Greenberg & Pargman, 1986; Hall, 2002; Ratey & Hagerman, 2008; Plowman & Smith, 2011).

The ancient Greeks believe that “a sound mind in a sound body,” and such concept has been proved the effectiveness in contemporary medicine. According to the psychological clinical practice of the Harvard Medical School, jogging may decrease the hypertension, strengthen the heart, and avoid the stroke caused by rupture or erosion of brain micro vascular; moderate weight training allows bones to release the synaptic proliferation of growth factors to prevent osteoporosis (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008).

No wonder, over the past few years, a new social trend of global aging makes the pursuit of health become the value, and the world’s fitness and health-related industries are thriving growth. In Taiwan, the principles of “sports 333” and “111 movement” become governmental policies to promote in school sports and mass population,³ making promotion of exercise a very important strategy. Based on this, the theme of this study is to investigate the attitude and experience of the elderly toward understanding their own health and body image.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 The Consciousness of Aging

From the responses of interview with several questions to test the awareness of aging for the elderly in Taiwan, (a) what do you think the phenomenon may represent a person old? All the participants consider that “age” and “ailment” are the two major factors to judge a person who is in aging, especially “age,” which ranks the first priority:

as the days passed by, people getting older day by day...naturally, I am old (C, I)

I am 80 years old, not too old? (B, F)

Heard before that the elderly have diabetes, hypertension easily, when in this age...it seems to have the diseases... (J)

In addition to degenerative arthritis, I also have problems of memory...it seems so...only because of aging... (H)

If considering “age” is the benchmark for judging aging, here comes the question (b) with personal experience, to which age that a man or a woman should be called “an old person?” There are five participants said that the 65-year-old can begin to be the elderly:

According to law, people at the age of 65 can retire, not work... (A, D)

65-year-old, right ...I guess...I remember...the unit of the United Nations said people at 65 are the elderly population...isn't it? (B, C, I)

³ In short, the principle of “sports 333” indicates that in order to maintain or promote physical fitness, everybody has to do exercises at least three times a week, 30 minutes a time and making exercise intensity to 130 heartbeat a minute. It is because that modern life is too busy and difficult to implement the “sports 333” health principles, American Sports Medicine Institute has proposed to split up the way, taking 10-minute walk a time, to the rate of 110 heartbeat a minute, three times a day, in the morning, afternoon and evening, the perseverance will be quite good effect, which is so called the principle of “111 movement.”

Some Participant even believes that more than 60 years old can be called “old.” This is a significant change from the outside to identify aging because after 60 years, people may find out something different apparently, like wrinkles on face, more and more gray hair, strength decreases significantly, and they can understand the phenomenon that the appearance of these changes are almost the same to friends, relatives and neighbors with similar age.

*Look at myself from the mirror, I found more and more gray hair...ah!
I am the old “thing”...not to mention the face...more and more
wrinkles...Little Lin living downstairs is the same...ah...mother-in-law
of my son is the same! (G)*

The other participant also considered it is because of the emergence of the third generation of grandchildren, so that their social roles changed, and being a grandparent is the symbol representing “old.”

*Grandson was born and this made me begin to feel old. In particular,
one, two, and three (kids)...coming to this world...I felt old and
helpless to take care of them... (H)*

However, the study found that there are two participants consider 70 years old is the boundary line of the elderly. It is because they are sufficient to meet the physical and intellectual work.

*The ancients said “life begins at 70 years old.” I have to work until
age 75...then retirement...next month, after the Chinese New Year, I
am 81 years old...should be considered old... (F)*

*In fact, I think if healthy...I think people are not old at 70 or 80 years
old...ah...nowadays, I am in 70s...still work...almost the same...and I
want to keep going and doing so! (E)*

In the self-perception of “old”, according to the question (c) in your current physical and mental condition, do you feel old? Participants judge such meaning based on the other factors out of “age,” such as “physical condition,” “appearance” and “growth of children and grandchildren” to determine or feel that they are old already.

*My knees often pain when walking...cannot walk for distance when I
play balls...it doesn't work to see doctors everywhere... it forced me to
admit that I am old... (E)*

*Recently it is easy for me to forget what I just did, the doctor said this
is memory degradation, I think...that means I am old... (H)*

*Around five or six years ago, when I Applied for ID card of the United
States, seeing the photo of my mug...I am stunned for a moment,
gazing at the photo...it seems to really that I am getting
old...occasionally, like such moment...I may feel old... (B)*

*In recent years...a lot of gray hair...want dye...the color black...but
the overall may be strange...so...forget it...to say...I am old...old... (A)*

*I have three grandchildren from such small figures...(putting a hand to
low position) to such a big one (putting a hand to high position)...how
can't I still be young? When I watch them growing up day by
day...every day...and I know that I am old! (G)*

The feeling of being “old” or “aging,” all participants indicated that they are undergoing this phenomenon of aging and do not feel afraid. They are inclined to think that people always

change, and it is the normal process of life getting old, every individual is getting older every day, and nobody in the world can avoid becoming old. For their age, they will not be afraid of it, and they think that most people should not feel too nervous or fear about aging. However, because of the aging degradation, in reality, certain functions of body indeed are some psychological concerns for them to worry, in addition to the body will feel uncomfortable of pain or weak, they are also afraid of their physical condition will result in the children's burden in the future.

Some participants are suffering from the aging-related diseases caused by a sense of physical pain and poor mobility, so that they feel aging is relatively not a good experience. Although they are not afraid of old, but they really feel inconvenient in life, even such feeling sometimes is related to causing uncomfortable physical and psychological conditions, when they answer question (d) do you have particular idea about getting old? Will you worry or fear?

Birth, getting old, illness and death are normal events (B, C, F, I)

Naturally, people get old...ah...do not be afraid of it...because it is useless to fear about that...never fear! (A, E, H)

Now it is very easy for me to forget things...I get angry...but there is no way to deal with it... (H)

It does not matter to get old, but the pain of knees...makes me feel so hurt...I am afraid of going out... afraid of falling down...which is relatively bad... (A, D, H, J)

In anti-aging action, all participants take multivitamin pills every day, and some people even have consumption of energy-related health and joint capsules or oral solution (A, D, E, G, H, I, J), when they are asked the question (e) do you have specific anti-aging action in usual? Although H has the problem of degenerative arthritis, he develops habits of exercise at his early age, such as morning swimming, and taking hot springs. E gives herself a facial regularly and to maintain the slim figure, relax the body and the skin care, so right now she swims at least twice every week, takes hot springs and giving herself a facial every two month. However, other people do not have additional or fixable time or will do anti-aging action.

6.2 The Attitudes toward Health

For the questions of attitudes toward health, the research analysis found that participants answer the question of (a) "what is health," the answer at the first time is "not (be) sick." After the further asking by researchers, did they then express more answers, such as "mental pleasant," "emotional stability," "cheerful," "feeling optimistic," "balanced development in body, mind and spirit," and "good social relationship with others" (B, C, D, I) to show other health-related perspectives.

God blessing...without any sickness... (G, H)

If there is not pain, weakness, and that is health... (A, D, J)

Not getting sick is the most important... (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J)

Smiling every day...keep optimistic for everything... (A)

Good shapes...mental status...have good friends...children are filial piety...is the full blessing...ah...that is health... (B, F, I)

When participants are asked the question (b) how do you consider your health condition? In health conscious, there are six participants feel that their physical health is in decline (D, F, G, H, I, J). Four fell that their health is fair, although there is pressure with aging-related chronic diseases, not feeling too much pressure caused by feelings (A, B, C, E). In mental health, most people still feel fine the aging process (A, B, C, D, E, F, G). However, there are two indeed be angry with themselves or sulking due to aging disease caused by uncomfortable condition (H, I). J has recurrent joint pain, making her feel more depressed and helpless feeling is strong.

The answers from participants about question (c) currently, do you have any chronic diseases? If so, what is it, and how to deal with it? Is it inconvenient for living with chronic diseases? In status with chronic disease, all participants have hypertension as common chronic diseases, taking long-term chronic prescription medicine to control (A ~ J).

There are two with cardiomyopathy (heart disease), and they take long-term chronic prescription medicine to deal with (D, F); two have combined diseases with diabetes, and they also take long-term chronic prescription medicine (I, J). Several participants have rheumatoid arthritis, including lower back pain (G, J), knees pain (A, D, E, H) and so on. As long as they do comply with doctor's orders, on a regular basis back to the clinic, and really take medicine on time; in fact, diseases are in the control condition, although these cannot be cured, parts of the physical condition is stable, causing no problems in life. However, some participants are suffering from the pain of different diseases.

In recent years due to rheumatoid arthritis (pain or suddenly increase), making the morning walk housework, shopping and others slow down...I am getting a little worried to go out...afraid of falling down...finally, avoid going out (give up exercise in the park in the morning)... (A, D, J)

Participants may stop many daily activities, or ask family to do that for them, or have wills to do with family when they are able to spend some time with participants. Like participant H who is subject to the impact of degenerative arthritis pain, He has to reduce the opportunities of swimming because of this incidence.

Maintaining a healthy awareness and action in daily life is important. All participants said that "keeping life regularly" is the healthy way for them, especially doing exercise, when they answer the question (d) how do you stay health in daily life? Do you have regular exercise?

Whether in domestic or overseas life...I take a nap every day since retirement...after 3:30 pm I have to go out to walk around at least 90 minutes...unless the weather is too bad, otherwise I will not stop the regular activities... (B)

For a long time, after grooming every morning, I would do exercise in the balcony for 1 hour...then starting a day of routine life... (C)

Although they do understand and agree that "moderate exercise is beneficial to health," they do not engage in daily exercises, and only B and C keep the regular ones. In addition, most participants would take kinds of nutritional supplements, like multivitamin or glucosamine to maintain health. Participant A said she likes to walk when young but do not like other sports. Right now, she does not take any exercise because of knees pain and feeling she is obese, and this makes her not like to go out to take regular exercises. The way she maintains a healthy way is to eat vitamins and to feel happy. In addition to occasionally walk on the neighborhood school playground, the ways for participant G to maintain healthy is please the daughter to take her to hospital regularly or when she feels physical discomfort.

6.3 The Body Image

For the analysis of body image, researchers found that there is a significant difference for the perception of physical appearance, and all participants have the feeling that they look so different right now comparing with the previous. Especially, when they are asked the question (a) now, how do you think about your own appearance, such as face and body, do you have different feeling? Do you often look at yourself in the mirror? Why or why not?

There are more wrinkles on face... (B, E, I, J, H)

Around mouth...deep nasolabial folds...appear on face...oh... (E, G, I)

seborrheic keratosis...on my face... (B)

Gray hair...less and less hair... (A, C, E, G, I)

Having huge under-eye bags...very obvious (A, B, C, D, F, G, I, J)

The skin is darker...and turns color yellow... (A, D, G)

For the question the behavior of facing the mirror, all participants said that at least in the early morning a day. Every day, when they are grooming, they usually watch them once. If they have to go out to participate in activities or do things, they will be ready to wear and face the mirror again, mainly to check whether appropriate or decent clothing. Besides, normally they do not deliberately look in the mirror, and they do not have the initiative to want smart and look at themselves in the mirror. For further reasons, why not having the initiative to look at oneself more in a mirror? Almost every participant laughs or smiles when hearing so.

Old...more wrinkles on face...do not have will...don't want to look at myself in the mirror... (B, E, I, H)

Old is old...what a good photo of...to look at myself in the mirror?... (B, D, G)

The mirror will make my feelings turn bad...because the appearance has changed... that youth is never back... (E, F, H, I)

Every time...when I look at myself in mirror...will feel the person does not seem to me...reflecting from mirror...it that me? I do not believe that one is so old...the face is changed...too old... (E, F, G, H, I)

Although sometimes I want to look at myself in the mirror...but bad eyesight...also feel I am older and older...it is very strange when I see the reflection from mirror...so it will not...take the initiative... to look at myself in the mirror gradually... (A, G, D)

For the perception of body functions and comparing the state with that of a decade ago, whole participants feel their abilities are “degraded” or “in the degradation of,” when they are asked the question (b) currently, how are you aware of your own sense of the body’s various functions? If comparing with that of 10 years ago, can you accept the present physical condition? What is the most common psychological feeling you are always aware of?

Degradation...due to the knees...feel pain easily...and reduce the frequency to go out, or try not to walk too far...and will worry about the problem of falling down...which I feel comfortable with the action...that I am not young any longer...although no alternative...have no choices...but it seems that this relatively safe, at least not create new troubles... (A, D, J)

Because of hearing degradation...often talking to people, I will ask others to speak louder...I cannot hear others...speak up when they are talking to me...or I cannot hear...which makes me feel very embarrassed...even angry to myself...so often simply do not talk to others...so easy to be misinterpreted as...looks angry when not speaking... (F, I)

Knees injuries...and arthritis to reduce the frequency and intensity of movement and exercise...which often makes me feel frustrated and helpless... (E, H)

As well as the symptoms of memory loss...often forget I am cooking and go out...the dishes cooked dry out several times...although not a catastrophe...this is so frightening to his neighbors...I also so angry with myself...feel sad I am getting a bad temper...which sometimes tear drops...feel I am very old, useless...old...nothing to gain or good, but I can do nothing... (H)

Because eyes...suffering from cataracts, but one eye is better after having operation...the blur more...recently increase the problems...based on reasons of traffic safety...I have been seldom riding a motorcycle...not as much as possible...not going too far...and often troublesome... my married daughter to go home and take me to hospital...to see doctors...which can sometimes cause dispute with my daughter...about the body and emotion...I feel unhappy... (G)

I have been more 20 years...suffered from hypertension...although long-term control with medication...these years...I feel dizziness...this phenomenon occurs often...my son will take me to hospital...I feel sorry for my wife that make her concerns about my illness...that is pressure...for me... (C)

When the question goes to (c) currently, which of your own physical appearance is the most satisfying and dislike parts? Why? The most satisfactory for physical appearance of the evaluation, there are four participants (C, H, I, J) feel that in recent years, their “figures” have not changed too much is the most satisfying part. Participant F considers having a good skin care at the age of 80, and he is very satisfied with the skin condition. Participant A believes that he “always smiling on face” is the most satisfied part. B keeps a daily spirit, upright stature, unlike the nearly 80-year-old elderly. Although D consider she is getting fat, but she like others to praise that she is always well-dressed.

The comparison of their physical appearance, here are some parts make them not satisfied with, participant A was conscious from the marriage after the birth of four children, and she began to gain weight; in recent years, almost all hair turns gray and this made her feel uncomfortable, but it is because her husband does not want her to dye hair, so she is still adjusting. It is because there are a lot of seborrheic keratosis on B’s face, making her feel not satisfied with the surface; C almost has no hair due to old age, so he is quite not satisfied with appearance, even self-deprecating “about to become a ball” (always go out with a hat). E feels that he does not look handsome as before because becoming older, but bad knees stop him enjoying the play, movement and these really make him not satisfied with. G is suffered from fat looking and poor eye sight must with thick glasses, and losing more confidence in dress because of the fat figure. H believes that skin aging, especially more and more wrinkles. Participant I does think that because of the “poor hearing condition,” so facial expression turns to be more serious, and even sometimes he feels angry with himself only because seeing his own face. However, participants D, H, I still think all things are fair and fine, in the development of life, harmony with nature is their consistent attitude towards life, although the

physical appearance has changed, they do not particularly dissatisfied with any places of body.

If we...must say something...that may be because of the age...getting older, and the body's function or activity is not like as before...is the place that I might feel more helpless...(D, H, I)

6.4 Fitness, Attitude and Experience

For the sports experience, the question generally is beginning to ask (a) do you like to do exercise? Did you have any regular exercise? How about right now, having regular exercise? For the fitness experience of analysis, researchers found that male participants B, C, E, F, I have exercise habits, and they said they like to do exercise when they were young, and thank for these habits of exercise, they still keep a relative acceptable body shape.

I have habits of playing table tennis...(B, C)

I like and often play golf...(E, I)

Mountain climbing, walking...is my exercise... (F)

Among female participants, only H said she likes sports, especially swimming, and she also has confidence with her ever young body before. Participants A and D express identically that because of her own husband, the exercise taken in daily life is always with invitation from husband, the movement they often do is hiking and playing table tennis. Participant G said because working in the field for long periods at home, so she is one person to play multiple roles because her husband is not home for a long time, there are too many things need to take care, so her is quite busy having no extra time to take physical exercise, housework is her exercise. Participants J said that she has been a housewife, it is so busy looking after the family, even she has to take care about grandchildren, that is really tiresome, so she never think about the exercises she like.

When the question asked the participants about (b) do you know that exercise can promote physical and mental health and slow down the aging? For exercise can promote physical and mental health, all research participants said they do know that exercise can improve condition of health; most also agree that exercise can promote mental health, and people can also “feel good” after doing exercise, but few people make sure that exercise can promote mental health, and most of them feel that “sometimes exercise is a tiresome thing,” and that could not make themselves happier (for example: G and J), or they often feel tired after exercise. Exercise can slow down the aging for the cognitive aspects of movement, most of the participants believe that “long-term and regular exercise” can delay the aging of the theoretical perspectives (A, B, D, C, E, H, I), but in life, it is not necessarily to implement regular exercise habits (A, D, I).

Regular exercise habits, from the perspectives of “principle 333,” strictly speaking, participants who have been a regular exercise habits are only B, C and H. B walk for 90 minutes a day, C is doing breathing and stretching exercises at least 60 minutes after getting up in the morning, and H is maintained swimming twice a week, and hot springs once a week. While others would try to go out for a walk a day, but from the amount of time, heart rate intensity to judge, these cannot be really achieve fitness. Summarizing the reasons that they do not have habits of regular exercise only because “personality,” they do not like sports (A); “duty of housework” is too busy, no time for exercise (D, F, G, J); “do not know what is right and suitable exercise” (G, J); joint degeneration, pain, so inconvenient to do exercise (A, D, E, H, I).

7. Conclusions

This study focuses on the elderly of cognitive aging based on the “time of aging,” “physical function decline caused by illness” and the reality of their situation to understand and define their own aging experience from their viewpoints. On the “no sick is healthy” understanding to define health is the awareness and feelings from senior citizens, and the awareness for mental health-oriented and realization is relatively weak for the elderly. Although the elderly have chronic diseases, many of them think that their body functions are in a degraded; however, basically they are almost still tend to be cognitive them s healthy person.

Clearly, the experience of senior citizens in aging about “health” and “body image,” such cognitive feelings are ambiguous and vague. Despite the awareness to the sport healthy beliefs, they do not demand to promote good health and positive action and to develop regular exercise habits. This part of the elderly population can be designed in the future as government policy to improve the quality of population by social and school education, community development and planning that can enhance the development.

Although there are hypothetical assumptions in our hearts on life style for the elder, there is no clear evidence for the current status and description that only the limitation to understand. Body image is for the elder to tell their own health and body conscious situation; regarding to the health is the conception and attitude from the elder and from the theory of “sport is wholesome” that concerning the fitness movement in life.

On available policies in recent years, Taiwan government is in response to the rapid advent of an aging society policy planning, in addition to the existing long-term care or nursing home setting for the elder suffering from dementia or illness. Besides, the construction of daily-care center, community room service for the elder; while private institutions have the sub-health services to the elder groups, such as free fitness programs, playing chess, books and newspaper reading, blood pressure measuring, height and weight, diet and nutritional advice and so on. We believe all the social support will be able to contribute to the activation of the quality of life and vitality to the elder population, slowing down the impact for development of aging society to relieve pressure helpfully!

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