

OLD AGE: Meanings, Perceptions and Situations

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This is an exploratory study of old age from the perspective of a group of farmers and fishermen in a seaside village in La Union, one of the provinces in the Ilocos Region, Philippines. Field methods of research were used such as participant observation, key informant technique and in-depth interview. Non-probability sampling was used. Inquiries were made concerning meanings, perceptions and situations of old age in a selected community.

Findings indicated that old age is perceived as being closely related with health impairment and physical weaknesses which are regarded as the forebodings of old age. Chronological age was found to be only one of the criteria of old age. Findings also indicated that the family provides the meaning of life for the elderly in this seaside village. The elderly derive their main economic and psychological support from the family. On the whole, the elderly consider the family, particularly the adult children and their grandchildren, as their prime earthly wealth. The family, therefore, is their greatest source of joy as well as the antidote for the pains and aches of old age. Neglect by the family is also considered as a source of the elderly's loneliness.

The Filipino elderly has been described as an emerging demographic concern (Domingo, 1988). While this age group is a fast evolving feature of our demography, it has become, statistically, a significant segment of the Philippine population. The increasing number of elderly has merited attention from demographers who have analyzed the implications of such an increase to population dynamics (Domingo, 1988, Domingo, & Zosa-Ferani, 1987). Sociologists and educators have also contributed to our present knowledge of the elderly in our midst (Samonte et al., 1985; Kuan, 1985). However, a recent review of the literature on aging pointed out the lack of clarity concerning the meaning of being "old" (Domingo, F. 1987), an observation that was also noted in an earlier review of the literature on aging in the context of the Filipino family (Sevilla, 1982).

The present study sought to describe the multidimensional aspects of aging in order to clarify the concept of old age as well as perceptions and situations surrounding this stage of life. Dimensions of old age included health, performance abilities, chronological age, physical appearance, attitudes, etc. Perceptions and situations were considered from the viewpoint of those

who related with the elderly as well as the elderly themselves.

Thus the present investigation proposed to answer the following questions:

1. What is "old age"? What are the characteristics of an old person?
2. In the context of this community, how does an old person live? How does the old person help his family? How does his/her family extend support to the old person?
3. What gives meaning to the life of an old person?

Theoretical Perspectives

This study subscribed to the life span developmental perspective. More specifically, this view holds that developmental psychology is a scientific discipline that studies the growth, development and behavioral changes of humans from conception to old age. While I am interested in normal development from birth, the focus of this study was old age. Old age, like all the earlier stages of life, was viewed here as a product of the interaction of inherent characteristics of the individual and the stimulation that impinges from his environmental situation. This environmental situation included the physical elements in his sur-

roundings, the cultural values of his social group and the unique circumstances of his time and life.

Methodology and Procedure

A triangulation of three field methods of research was used in this study: participant observation, key informant technique and in-depth interview. These three methods complemented one another in order to overcome the limitation of each, and thereby arrive at more valid and reliable data.

Indigenous methods of research such as *pagmamasid* (simple observation), *pakikisailimuha* ("going along with") and *pagtatanong-tanong* (preliminary interview) as explicated by Santiago and Enriquez (1976) and by Pe-Pua (1985) were also used in gathering the data. My husband (who is himself an experienced social researcher and fieldworker) conducted the interviews in Ilocano as he is fluent in the dialect while I took down the notes (since I understand Ilocano but do not speak it fluently).

1. *Choice of the Research Locale*: The research locale was a seaside village by the China Sea located in the southwestern portion of the province of La Union and administratively falling under the municipality of Sto. Tomás. There were two reasons for the choice of this village: firstly, it was rural and hence, shared common characteristics with 70% of the Philippine population, and, secondly, my husband and I had been part of this fishermen's village for some years prior to this fieldwork.

Based on the census taken by the local midwife of the Community Health Center in October, 1985, this village had a total population of 1,175 persons forming 125 families. Seventy percent of the family heads listed themselves as fishermen and 20 percent were listed as farmers. It was not unusual, however, to be both. The average monthly income per family was about P500.00 a month, depending upon the season of the year and the cycle of the moon (it was believed that the lunar cycle affects the amount of catch from the sea). On the whole, the population

of this village belonged to the lower socioeconomic level.

2. *Method of Sampling*: Non-probability sampling was used in the selection of participants. The first group, called key informants, were selected because of their direct contact and relationship with some elderly persons, being a grandchild, a daughter-in-law, a barangay leader, a community nurse or a social worker, among others. There were eight key informants and data on the general situations, and perceptions of old people in the community were derived from their observations. The second group was composed of 15 old people (7 M & 8 F) with ages ranging from 60 to 92 years and comprising 30 percent of the total elderly population in the village. Some of the research participants were our own friends in the village while the rest were introduced to us by two "gatekeepers": one was the caretaker of our village house, a 42 year old housewife and the other was our *comadre* (mother of our godson on his wedding), a 46 year old proprietress of a small sari-sari store.

3. *Participant Observation and Key Informant Technique*: While several initial contacts were made with the research participants, the actual fieldwork for this study was done in April and May, 1989. This involved staying in the community, interacting with the village people, exchanging pleasantries with them, watching their daily activities, particularly the way they tended their farms and did their fishing, working in groups as they hauled their huge fishing nets.

Actually, my husband and I had had quite a number of friends and acquaintances in this community for we had been spending our vacation in this village for about three years prior to this field study. We had a small cottage which did not differ very much from the cottages of fishermen in the community. Neighbors would drop by, especially in the early evenings and spend some-time swapping stories with us. Since we also had a good water supply from our well, neighbors would come to draw water from it. In this manner, we came to meet and know a number of our

neighbors. The fact that my husband is fluent in Ilocano facilitated our interaction. When they learned that my grandfather came from Caba, La Union, a neighboring municipality, I was all the more easily accepted by the villagers. Consequently, we were taken in by the village people in our role as **kapit bahay** (neighbor) with whom they felt a sense of affinity.

It was in the context of this relationship that the data for this study was gathered. Contacts with the research participants were also facilitated with the help of the two "gatekeepers" mentioned earlier. Data from the elderly participants were gathered from **kuwentuhan** (storytelling) sessions spent in their own homes as well as in our veranda when we invited them for informal interview sessions or when they merely dropped by. When some of the perceptive participants noticed my interest in the elderly, I readily explained to them that my husband and I were planning to spend our retirement years in this community, hence, our interest in aging in the context of this community. Thus, even prior to the fieldwork for this study, we already developed stable and friendly relationships with some of our informants and participants.

On the whole, we can say that there was a positive relationship between our participants and ourselves. There was **pakikipagpalagayang-loob** in our interactions, one evidence of which was that our participants usually offered to show us pictures of the members of their family, particularly those who were absent. Furthermore, when we left at the end of our interview session, they invited us to come again.

4. In-depth Interview: An in-depth interview, based on a prepared interview schedule was conducted with 14 of the 15 research participants. Only the 92 year old participant, who at that time was quite frail, did not participate in the lengthy interview although he also provided us with some significant data. All the others, including the 82 year old **balikbayan** participated in the approximately two hours of intensive interview in the form of **pakikipagkuwentuhan** (exchang-

ing stories) in an atmosphere of rapport or **pakikipagpalagayang-loob**. Data was gathered by means of note-taking by the researcher.

Results:

The results were grouped according to the three main parts of the interview schedule. The results were largely descriptive, although some effort towards quantification was made by way of ranking several of the items.

A. The Meaning of Old Age

Three meanings of old age were given by the participants: old age as the last stage of life; old age as a product of the earlier way of life of the individual, and old age as a chronological event.

The most frequently given answer, "Old age as the last stage of life when the person is ready to meet his/her Creator," implies acceptance of death as a logical end of life. Participants further stated that "Old age is a stage of life when Death becomes a friend rather than an enemy." This view has a religious element because the individual expects to meet his/her Creator at the end of life and by implication, hopes to receive a merciful reception from the Supreme Being.

The second meaning, "Old age as a product of the earlier way of life of the individual" implies a lifespan point of view. Old age is viewed as influenced by the way the individual spent his life. It follows a folk saying: "One reaps in old age what he/she sows earlier in life." This statement usually refers to the relationship cultivated by the elderly with his family, particularly his children, wife and other close kin. It is believed that a person is treated in his old age according to how he/she treated family members when he/she was young and strong.

According to the participants, one of the most dreadful scenarios of old age is to be alone, particularly at the time of dying.

All the respondents said that they wanted to die in the midst of their families. The old **balikbayan** respondent even remarked that the reason he came back from the United States was because he wanted to die among his people than

among strangers in a foreign land. Thus, death per se is not fearful; it is dying alone that the participants were most afraid of. Many of the participants said that they tried to relate well with their respective families so that in their old age, they would also be treated well.

The third meaning of chronological age had a wide range of variations. For the younger key informants such as the adolescent grandchildren who had grandparents living with them, a person who was in his/her early fifties was already considered "old." On the other hand, elderly respondents who were 60 years and over denied that they were old and identified those who were older than they to be old. Of the 15 participants, only two mentioned themselves as already "old" persons: an 88 year old woman who was living in the midst of her middle-aged children and their families and the 92 year old man whom we described earlier as frail, and was presently living with his 64 year old daughter who was married to a 66 year old farmer. It was interesting to note that the participants who were in their sixties did not refer to themselves as "old." It seemed that perception of being "old" was relative to the age of the perceiver. The younger the perceiver, the earlier they perceived a person to be "old" whereas elderly people perceived as "old" those who were older than they. It was also probable that elderly people did not perceive themselves as "old"; only the frail and weakened perceived themselves as "old."

B. Characteristics of an Old Person: There were five categories of responses in this area: (1) physiological and physical characteristics; (2) present and former activities of old people; (3) memory and cognition of the elderly; (4) wealth and scarcities in the life of an old person; (5) feelings about being old as perceived by the informants and by the elderly persons themselves.

(1) *Physiological and physical characteristics of an old person as viewed by the participants and the informants* included the following: a general feeling of weakness, of being vulnera-

ble to illnesses, particularly to arthritis, rheumatism, anemia and weak lungs, tiring easily, greater vulnerability to climatic changes such as feeling "cold" when exposed to strong winds; being susceptible to colds and coughs when wet by rain and getting dizzy easily when exposed to the heat of the sun were among the weaknesses and vulnerabilities perceived to be characteristic of old people.

With regard to physical appearances and attributes, an old person was described as having a face full of wrinkles, white hair, drooping shoulders and a hunched back. To be able to move about, the old person usually walks with a cane and may even hold on to someone for support while walking. His/her senses are no longer sharp: eyes are no longer keen and because his/her hearing tends to be poor, one may have to raise one's voice when speaking to an old person. Some of the old person's teeth may also be missing and thus, dentures are used: His/her body may be shapeless and the person is no longer interested in current fashion styles. Thus, an old person is characterized as weak, both in physique and sensory faculties, and no longer interested in keeping the self attractive and physically fit. Health, physical fitness and attractiveness are characteristics lacking in old people according to the key informants and the elderly participants themselves.

(2) *Present and former activities of old people:* The present activities of old people had two distinct characteristics: they were family-oriented, and were a continuation of the use of skills learned and practiced in the past though given more prominence in present-day activities. Among these were helping in the care of grandchildren; regaling grandchildren with stories which may be true-to-life experiences or fantasy, explaining traditional and common beliefs to children and youth, teaching the young about good moral values, acting as peacemaker in family conflicts, being a house "caretaker" or *taongbahay* especially when the younger ones were in school and/or at work, keeping a backyard poul-

try/piggery and/or garden, helping with home repairs, weeding the farm and/or palay seedbeds, mending fish nets, constructing/repairing motorized fishing boats, and sharpening family knives, boloes and scythes.

Former activities no longer done by the old include heavier and large-scale activities as well as those activities that tend to expose them to nature's elements. Among men's work mentioned were: fishing in the high seas (*sa laot ng dagat*); pulling fishing nets (*lambat*) from the sea; plowing the fields; carrying a heavy load, such as a sack of rice/palay; driving a tricycle to earn a living and on the whole, working regularly as an occupation. Among women's work mentioned as no longer being done were: marketing alone because of the heavy load, washing heavy pieces such as blankets, taking care of small grandchildren without taking a rest, and large-scale cooking for fiestas and weddings.

(3) *Memory and cognition of the elderly*: The following characteristics were mentioned about the memory and cognition of the elderly: they easily forget particular details of daily life but often manifest remarkable memory for details of past events, enjoy talking about the past; prefer old tested ideas rather than new ones, seem to hesitate venturing into something new, and are usually slow to learn tasks.

(4) *Wealth and scarcities of an elderly person*: What was considered wealth tended to be family-related such as having a good relationship with adult children, in-laws, grandchildren, siblings and friends, leaving a "good" (respected) name to the family and being remembered by receiving small tokens (financial and material dole-outs) from adult children. Those who were entitled to a pension considered this to be part of their wealth.

It was interesting to note that not one of the participants mentioned personal achievement as part of their earthly wealth. Neither did they mention any material possessions as their wealth.

Scarcities in their lives meant the following: very limited financial means; inadequate medi-

cal assistance when ill; limited food during times of hardship (*taghirap* which usually occurs during the monsoon season), loneliness because of the absence/death of the spouse, and the absence of children, particularly those who have migrated to urban areas and to foreign countries.

(5) *Feelings about being old as perceived by the key informants and the elderly participants themselves*: Both the key informants and the participants themselves indicated that being with their respective families, particularly their grandchildren whom they referred to as their *tubo* or profit in life, was a source of their happiness. Another reason for happiness for the elderly was having life and health which they attributed to the benevolence of God. On the other hand, loneliness was the result of neglect by the family, not being visited by them or not being included in family get-togethers and social outings. On the whole, the informants observed that the elderly seemed more sad than happy because they did not seem to be strong enough to tackle life's problems. The elderly participants, however, made no such observation of themselves.

In the context of this community, how does an old person live? How does the old person help his/her family? How does his/her family extend support to the old person?

(1) *How does the elderly person live?*

Findings in this exploratory study showed three types of living arrangements among the elderly persons in this community.

The relatively "young old" (around 50 to 60 years old) tended to live in their own homes with their adult children who wanted to stay with them (both married and unmarried). These "young old" still made significant contributions to the entire family. For instance, one of the participants, a 62 year old farmer, proudly said that he still provided the rice that his children and their families ate.

Among the "moderately old" and the "very old" (from 65 years to around 75 years for the first group and from 75 years and over for the second group), the elderly parents received par-

tial or complete support from their adult children. Most of them were no longer actively engaged in earning a living, were usually frail and thus needed support from their children. A variation of this arrangement was for the elderly to stay in a separate house (usually their old house) amidst the houses of their adult children, receiving regular support from them, such as food bought from the market or home cooked food. This kind of arrangement was usually characterized by a close but independent relationship between the elderly parents and their adult children. Another variation of the second arrangement was for the elderly parents to live alternately with their married children, moving from house to house. Thus, the elderly parents (particularly when one spouse dies) were members of several households.

This "living with" process was initiated by the elderly parents rather than the adult children, because the general view was, "An adult child should feel honored when his home is chosen as the abode of his/her parents." In fact, some of the participants observed that there may be jealousy among the children if the parent seemed to favor one family over the others by staying with them longer and more often.

A third living arrangement was for the elderly parents to live by themselves and at some distance from their adult children. They might be visited regularly if the children were not living too far. Weekly visits were quite common if the children were living only one or two barangays away. However, for those whose children were living in some distant city or in a foreign country, these visits were rare and it was not unusual for the elderly parents to feel lonely or isolated. Financial support and material things given by their distant children became a measure of assurance of their thoughtfulness. The homecoming of these absent children became events that the old parents looked forward to and the mere thought of their homecoming energized them. They made elaborate preparations for these family gatherings by fattening pigs, chickens and goats. Oftentimes, they also invited relatives

from other barrios to join them in their family get-togethers.

(2) *How does the elderly person help the family?*

How the elderly person helped the family can be gleaned from the activities of old persons as listed in the answers to the first question in this study. Caring for grandchildren, being a storyteller and a source of traditional wisdom seemed to be their primary activities. Some, especially the relatively "young and old," continued to contribute the major portion to the upkeep of the family. Serving as a house "caretaker" and helping in the maintenance of the family home were also common contributions of old persons in this community. For their hobbies, they went into backyard gardening, poultry and piggery raising, etc., from which they derived some income. Occasionally, they also helped their children weed their farms and/or repair their fishing nets. Another important role of an old person in this community was that of a peacemaker in times of conflict, particularly those occurring within the family and occasionally, within the community. Thus we could see that these old persons did not lead an idle life. For as long as their physical strength permitted it, they actively involved themselves in the affairs of the family and of the community.

(3) *How does the family give support to the elderly person?*

The family provided the elderly in this community three kinds of support. *Financial support* in the form of "dole outs" from the earnings of their adult children could be given them.

Children were trained and socialized to give part of their earnings to their parents as soon as they were able to. There was no prescribed rule about this financial aid, but the common assumption was that an adult child "gives what he can afford." All the elderly participants mentioned the monetary assistance extended by their adult children. The amount varied depending on how much the children could afford. According to the elderly parents, the amount given was not impor-

tant since these "dole outs" were seen as expressions of their children's affection and concern for them. These were their children's way of remembering them and in a sense, were their children's repayment of their *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) for the care afforded them during their growing years. Informants said that giving financial aid was an "obligation" each adult child should extend to his parents. Some even expressed that doing this was like "planting a tree—you will get your turn when you grow old when your children in turn will give you support during old age." Some even said that "One reaps what he/she sows." This saying may be interpreted this way: If a person cared for one's old parents and his/her own children saw this, they would also care for him/her in old age.

Salient in the care for the old therefore, was a history of a modelling process.

The family also gave *social support* in the form of respect for the elderly. Grandchildren were still taught to kiss the hands of their elders (more precisely, to put the back of the hand of their elders on their foreheads) as a sign of respect.

Saying "opo," "po," and "ho" when speaking to an elder was considered a sign of proper upbringing of children. When family decisions were made, the elderly were often consulted, especially when questions of morals and propriety were involved. All these were expressions of respect for the elderly person.

The participants qualified, however, that the degree of respect extended to an elderly person depended on how "honorably" the elderly person conducted himself/herself during his/her younger years. Those who conducted themselves "dishonorably" were usually accorded grudging respect. The bottomline, however, was that every parent deserved respect for having brought life into this world, since life was viewed as a gift.

The third type of support was *psychological*. In times of personal and psychological problems, the elderly turned to his family for support. When he/she experienced failure and frustrations,

he/she sought assurance from the family. Even in times of distress, there was comfort in the presence of the family. When he/she suffered from poor health, the strongest consolation was that when he/she died, he/she would be amidst his family and kin. To die alone was the greatest fear of the elderly.

What gives meaning to the life of an elderly person?

The "earthly wealth" of the elderly was their family members: their children and grandchildren, their sons and daughters-in-law; their great-grandchildren and for the *balikbayan* participant, his U.S. social security pension which he, in turn, spent on his young wife and his wife's family, including her parents and siblings. One participant even added that his greatest happiness was to be amidst his complete family. Since one of his married daughters was abroad, he spent a lot of his time fattening a pig which he planned to slaughter when she and her family came home for a short vacation. Thus, we could see that the family of the elderly person was the source of meaning in his/her life.

Just as their sources of joy and earthly "wealth" were members of their families, potential sources of pain were slights and shortcomings of the same. Specially for the frail elderly, infrequent visits from their children was a major complaint.

With increased migration to the city, visits from adult children tended to be less frequent. Fortunately, all the persons interviewed had several children (the average number of children per couple was six) so that even with migration, one or two children, particularly daughters, were left in the village and could provide care to their aging parents. In fact, two of the women key informants stated that daughters and daughters-in-law had an "obligation" to take care of their old parents. Adult children who did not take care of their old parents (especially the ones who were sick and senile) were negatively perceived and were the objects of censure among their barriormates. One example was a housewife who kept

her senile mother-in-law in a separate lean-to which was a virtual "pig sty" where she was completely unattended to. While we were in the village, this woman encountered a minor accident and two of her neighbors remarked that the accident was a form of retribution for the way she treated her mother-in-law.

Discussion

From the data gathered, it was quite evident that old age is a complex event: Old age has something to do with physical weakness which occurred imperceptively at the start, gaining in severity with advancing years. Old age involves changes in social roles: from being a primary support of the family to being an auxiliary support, and finally, to being a completely dependent member of the family. There are corresponding changes in the activities and roles of the elderly in the family. Changes in physical appearance are another indicator of old age: white hair, wrinkles, drooping shoulders, diminishing visual and auditory acuity are some of the physical indicators mentioned. These changes were viewed negatively both by the elderly participants as well as the key informants.

But chronological age is only one of the indicators of old age. As one informant explained, there are some who are old in years (80 years and up) but are still "young" in their ways and outlook. On the other hand, there are some who are relatively young (in their early and middle 50s) who seem to be already old. It seems health, outlook and behavior/ways are variables which determine whether one will be described as "old."

It was also found that personal and social perceptions of old age are not identical, so that "the feeling of being old" does not necessarily go with "looking old." "Looking old" is based on external physical characteristics, such as having wrinkles, white hair, etc.; "Feeling old," on the other hand, has to do with the elderly person's feelings of self-worth and competence.

✓ Perception of Death is another interesting facet of old age. Being in the last stage of life, Death was viewed by the elderly as a friend rather than an enemy. The 92 year old participant remarked that he was just waiting for Death to take him—hopefully up to the kingdom of God. Thus, their outlook regarding Death seemed to indicate hopefulness rather than despair.

✓ The elderly person in this community was dynamically integrated with the family. He/she remained actively involved with family matters; sharing wisdom based on experience was a common contribution to the family decision-making process.

Sharing their resources in the form of land and cash, particularly for the education of the grandchildren, was a common voluntary contribution of the elderly. The adult children, on the other hand, were expected to care for their parents when they grew feeble and weak. It was a firmly held belief in this community that just as it was "natural" for parents to take care of their young children, so also was it "natural" for these children when they grew up, to take care of their parents in their old age. In this community, care given by the parents to their young children created *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) in the children so that they were morally bound to care for their parents in their old age. It was also believed, however, that to merit this care in old age, parents should rear their children "properly." Based on their folk wisdom, "proper rearing" included the following:

- (1) Treating young children with care and teaching them to respect parents and elders;
- (2) Being a caring adult child to one's elderly parents so that the parents became a model to one's own children; and
- (3) Teaching one's children to be God-fearing.

According to the research participants, the moral lesson was: "One reaps what one sows," ("*Aanihin mo ang iyong itinanim*"; "*Ang mangga ay hindi nagbubunga ng bayabas*"). These folk sayings emphasize the value of the

socialization process and the role of modelling in developing acceptable values and appropriate behavior, not only towards the elderly but the whole society as well. This underlies the findings earlier mentioned that elderly persons who conducted themselves "honorably" when they were young were usually accorded greater respect in their old age. However, it was also a commonly held belief in this community that a person should respect his/her parents (no matter what kind of parents they were) for having given life to him/her. Being given life by one's parents binds one to an eternal debt of gratitude to them.

An elderly person's family provided meaning to his/her life. The family, consisting of the children, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren, comprised the riches of an elderly person in this community. Personal achievement was measured according to how many children one was able to nurture to adulthood. The number of grandchildren was another measure of achievement in old age. For the elderly, the quality of relationships in the family was measured in terms of the thoughtfulness of the children as expressed by the frequency of their visits and the financial support they gave their elderly parents. Furthermore, the willingness of the adult children to help each other in times of need were all indicative of the relationship prevailing among them. This was held at a high premium by the elderly. Thus, feelings of security in old age were generated by the quality of family life enjoyed by the elderly person. Old age was viewed as a pleasant stage of life in the context of "good" family relationships. In cases of "neglect" by the family, however, the old person suffered.

What constitutes "neglect"? The very old participants explained that "neglect" was not physical because when one is old, one's physical needs and wants are few. "Neglect" tended to be

more psychological, such as not being visited by one's children when one was ill, or not being invited to family gatherings such as weddings, and other festive occasions. With the increasing mobility of the family, being left out was an increasingly frequent experience of the very old.

On the whole, in this community, the family was the source of joy, and pain as well, for the elderly person.

Recommendations

The different dimensions of old age uncovered in this exploratory study is the beginning of a more comprehensive study of old age in the Philippine setting. Other dimensions remain to be examined in order to gain a more complete picture of the meaning of old age. The following topics are for future investigation:

(1) A focus on the changing abilities in old age as well as an examination of the variables related to these changes;

(2) Personality consistency and changes also need to be carefully studied, particularly as these occur within the context of Philippine family and society. The place of the individual's self-concept in old age needs to be studied;

(3) Social changes such as industrialization and migration, and their impact on old age also merit careful attention.

In sum, psychological research on old age is a starting concern in the Philippines. To achieve a higher level of precision and clarity in the area of research, basic concepts on aging need to be carefully examined and studied. The process of aging, particularly from the social psychological sense needs to be analyzed. Only then can we be in a better position to understand this stage of life and relate more effectively with elderly people, eventually including ourselves and our peers.

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