

**ATTITUDES OF OLDER PERSONS TOWARD
THEIR CONTEMPORARIES**

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An Abstract
Presented to the
Graduate and Research Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Patricia Pyles Virostko
January 1991

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine whether attitudes of persons over 50 toward their peers were related to the variables of age, education, and income. Ninety persons participated in the study and completed a modified version of the survey instrument used by Bird and Fisher (1986). It was expected that attitudes toward older persons would be more negative as age increased and as education increased, and less negative as income increased. The results were in the predicted direction for age and education, but were not statistically significant for income. The increase of negative attitudes with age has been frequently documented, but the relationship of attitudes to education has received little attention. It has been specifically noted only once, and then as an incidental finding in Bird and Fisher's study. Its confirmation in the present study is intriguing because it would seem that education should be related to less stereotypical and more positive attitudes toward aging. Because the two studies differed in administration procedure and in populations studied, the consistency of the education-attitude relationship tends to support its validity and to suggest the need for further investigation with a technique such as Semantic Differential. With additional confirmation of the relationship, a follow-up study might involve an attempt to determine whether there are factors in a college education that contribute to less favorable attitudes toward aging.

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To the Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Patricia P. Virostko entitled "Attitudes of Older Persons Toward Their Contemporaries." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Jean G Lewis
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Samuel H
Second Committee Member

Susan Kyriak
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Graduate
and Research Council:

William H Ellis
Dean of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Because of the declining birth rates and increasing longevity, it is predicted that by the beginning of the 21st century 22 percent of the population in the United States will be older than 55 (Alegria, 1988). This expected demographic change has broad implications that will affect all of society. One example already evident is the increased interest shown by both the government and the private sector in older citizens as workers.

In a report from the U.S. Secretary of Labor (Labor Market Problems, 1989), older workers were described as a national resource and the significance of their role in the labor market was seen to be growing. The private sector also is reported to be viewing older persons as a valuable labor resource whose performance is reliable, loyal, considerate, and a stabilizing influence in the workplace (Alegria, 1988).

Within the past four or five years studies reported in the literature have focused on dispelling myths that were generated by earlier reports on response times, job performance, accident risk, and medical problems of older persons. Schaie (1988) indicated that inappropriate interpretations of age-related data had often become accepted as scientific bases for policy decisions, some of which had led to discrimination against older citizens. He welcomed the reports that reinterpreted the meaning of much of the age-related data.

Attitudes toward older persons appear to be generally improving, but older persons themselves seem to continue to have an unfavorable view of their cohort (Luszcz & Fitzgerald, 1986). A positive correlation between age and less favorable attitudes toward aging was reflected in several recent reports (Older Worker, 1987; Kimmel, 1988; Levin, 1988), and in the results of a pilot study by the author.¹ In that study the author interviewed, individually, six community leaders involved in work with older persons. The perceptions of these leaders about generally negative attitudes of older persons were similar to those noted in prior studies. These leaders also observed positive effects of income and education on life satisfaction, findings previously reported by Harris (1975, 1981).

The persistence of negative attitudes toward older persons may unfairly relegate this growing sector of society to a secondary role that can mean losses for them as well as for the general population. It is important to attempt to examine these attitudes and their sources and to move toward dispelling myths that limit the productivity and life satisfaction of older persons and thereby limit the aspirations of persons of all ages.

¹The six community leaders who were interviewed over the three-month period from December 1988 through February 1989 were promised anonymity. The promise seemed important to the author because of legal ramifications that might possibly be involved in statements concerning discrimination against older workers.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Age has always been a major dimension of social organization (Neugarten & Neugarten, 1987), and the population explosion of older people for the past three or four decades is affecting all facets of society (Butler, 1975). Butler commented on the puzzlement of gerontologists and demographers who do not know whether to regard the increases in numbers of older persons as "the aging problem" or a "human triumph over disease" (p. 17).

These demographic changes will inevitably result in disruption, opportunities, and uncertainties. Neugarten and Neugarten (1987) envisioned blurring boundaries between periods of life and new definitions of age groups and age-appropriate behaviors. Myers (1990) predicted that the basis of grouping older persons eventually will be their functioning rather than their chronological age.

The psychology of aging developed as a scientific discipline within the last 50 years, and it is only within the last decade that research has addressed the last phases of life. "Ageism" entered the vocabulary 21 years ago when Butler (1969) used the term to describe attitudes expressed in a public hearing concerning the purchase of a high-rise apartment building for use by the elderly poor. It was meant to convey the concept of systematic stereotyping and discriminating against people because of age. It is similar to the concepts of racism and sexism

regarding race and gender (Butler, 1975).

It was in the area of employment that discrimination against older persons first received concerted attention, and this seems appropriate in view of the pervasive effects of work in establishing self-identity in our culture (Okun, 1984). In 1967 the U.S. Congress enacted the Age Discrimination in Employment Act that prohibits employers from using age as a basis for hiring and firing. Withers in 1974 cited three myths about the aged that he believed were influencing the labor picture: 1. Work capacity always declines with age. 2. Older workers cannot be retrained. 3. No one will hire them even if retrained. Sheppard (1977) suggested that recurrent education and training have the optimal role as an "antidote to human obsolescence." In 1985 Shapiro and Sandell of the National Commission for Employment saw the plight of older workers who lose their jobs as a prime policy concern. But three years later Herr and Cramer (1988) reported that over several years the record of the U.S. Employment Service in placing older workers had remained virtually the same: They comprised more than 30 percent of the applicants but less than 20 percent of the placements.

In recent years, study after study has attempted to refute the negative myths about older persons. Mitchell (1988) concluded that prime-age workers and older workers do not have different patterns of job-related temporary disabilities. Jablonski, Rosenblum, and Kunze (1988), in a

report on studies conducted by the Division of Productivity Research, Bureau of Labor, concluded that there was not a large decline in average productivity between ages 25 and 64, and that there was much variation within all age groups. Sheppard (1977) pointed out that chronological age obscured individual differences and that age in itself was not a valid predictor of individual variation in behavior.

In spite of these myth-dispelling efforts it is not only the general population that continues to ascribe to stereotypes about advancing age. In two comprehensive studies conducted for the National Council on Aging (Harris, 1975, 1981), older people themselves were found to ascribe to myths and stereotypes about aging. When their own lives repudiated those beliefs, they considered themselves exceptions to the rules. Luszcz and Fitzgerald (1986) confirmed this finding with their observation that elderly adults attributed more dependence and ineffectiveness to their cohort than to themselves personally.

The increase of unfavorable attitudes with age has been documented (Kimmel, 1988; Levin, 1988; Nishi-Strattner & Myers, 1983; Older Worker, 1987). Kimmel saw this correlation as especially meaningful and commented, "Whether stereotypes exist in the minds of the general population may have less direct relevance for the lives of most elderly than their own stereotypes and beliefs about themselves" (p. 177).

To determine whether age-related attitudes are changing

in the workplace, Bird and Fisher (1986) replicated a study done 30 years earlier (Kirchner & Dunnette, 1954) on attitudes toward older employees by hourly and supervisory personnel in a nonunion manufacturing plant. Their findings were remarkably similar to those of the earlier study. There was strong evidence of age-related stereotypes and no evidence of a shift in a positive direction. There was also a tendency for more highly educated employees to hold more negative attitudes.

This observation by Bird and Fisher (1986) of a modest but significant correlation between education and negative attitudes was incidental in their study and has received no further attention in the literature. However, prior to their study Harris's two extensive surveys of older people (1975, 1981) indicated education favorably influenced life satisfaction. The results of these two surveys and observations by others (Butler, 1975; Herr & Cramer, 1988) also indicated that income level positively correlated with life satisfaction.

Attitudes and their often component stereotypes are of course molded by a multiplicity of factors from genetic temperament to individual life events and circumstances (Ellis & Robbins, 1990). The attitudes of this generation over 50 have been molded by their life events, and the attitudes of succeeding generations will likely vary resulting from other cohort effects. In an interim report by

the Older Worker Task Force of the Kentucky Cabinet of Human Resources (1987), the poor self-image of persons over 55 was tied to work-related issues. An adult's work experiences have continuous and pervasive effects upon identity, self-esteem, lifestyle, and attitudes (Okun, 1984). Bird and Fisher's (1986) findings concerning attitudes toward older persons in the workforce thus are believed to reflect general attitudes toward older persons.

Based on the reports in the literature, results of the present study of persons more than 50 years of age were expected to reveal the following trends: 1. As age increases, attitudes toward older persons will be more negative. 2. As education increases, attitudes toward older persons will be more negative. 3. As income level increases, attitudes toward older persons will be less negative.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were drawn from volunteers 50 or more years of age who were attending meetings of various organizations in Christian County, KY. The county is classified as a rural county by the Commonwealth of Kentucky in the 1980 census. It has 66,878 residents, 27,348 of whom live in Hopkinsville, the county seat. The following organizations were included: Friends of the Library, Christian County; Crofton Baptist Church; American Association of Retired Persons, Christian County; First Methodist Church of Hopkinsville; Housing Authority of Hopkinsville, Elm Street Complex; American Legion Post No. 233; Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville; and American Association of Retired Teachers, Christian County. Ninety persons (57 women and 33 men) participated.

Questionnaire

The survey instrument was Bird and Fisher's (1986) modification of Kirchner and Dunnette's (1954) questionnaire with four items (items numbered 25 through 28) added, revised instructions, and an altered list of requested demographic information (see Appendix A). It is herein called the KDBF (Kirchner, Dunnette, Bird, Fisher) questionnaire to acknowledge the work of those authors. Responses to the four items added were not included in the present study because those items were designed to assess effects of a variable (current work status) eliminated from consideration.

The original questionnaire was developed by Kirchner, Lindbom, and Paterson (1952) to measure attitudes toward the employment of older persons. They used a Likert method of summated rating and item analysis in its development. The final 24-item scale was found in pre-tests and in actual application to be both reliable ($r = .90$) and valid (Kirchner & Dunnette, 1954). With a few minor changes in wording of items, Bird and Fisher (1986) administered the questionnaire to a population similar to that used in the original study by Kirchner et al. Results significantly replicated those of the earlier study.

Each of the 24 items on the KDBF was scored 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 for the degree of agreement or disagreement with the item. The five points on the scale were labeled strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The 18 favorable statements were scored from 4 for strongly agree to 0 for strongly disagree, and the six unfavorable items (3, 4, 11, 15, 16, and 19) were scored from 0 for strongly agree to 4 for strongly disagree. The higher the total score on the KDBF, the more favorable the attitudes toward older persons. Total scores on each survey could range from 0 to 96 with a midpoint of 48.

An explanatory letter (see Appendix B) summarizing the purpose of the study, instructions for filling out the questionnaire, and the intended use of the responses accompanied each survey. It was emphasized that responses

were confidential and that respondents would remain anonymous. At the bottom of the cover letter was a form for requesting the results of the study. This form required the respondent's name and address and was collected separately from the rest of the survey to preserve anonymity. Demographic information was requested at the end of the questionnaire. Space was provided on this page for comments by the respondents.

Procedure

For the first four of the participating groups listed in the "Subjects" section, a contact person in each organization administered the questionnaire at a regular meeting of the organization. The author instructed the contact person in administration to insure, insofar as possible, uniform administration in all groups.

First, the contact person informed the group of the purpose of the study and the intended use of the responses as outlined in the explanatory letter. Consent forms (see Appendix C) were then distributed to those who wished to participate. As these completed forms were collected, the survey consisting of the explanatory cover letter, the questionnaire, and the demographic information sheet was distributed. Time was allowed for participants to read the cover letter and to ask questions. Those who wanted to be informed of the results of the study were directed to fill in the form at the bottom of the cover letter and to detach that

page from the rest of the survey pages that were stapled together. Those result requests were collected as the questionnaires were being completed. When the questionnaires were completed, which usually required about 10 minutes, they were collected by the contact person. All materials were returned to the author.

For the last four groups of participants the procedure was slightly modified. The author was substituted for a contact person as the presenter of the survey. The procedure was, otherwise, identical to that for the first four groups.

Results

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between age, education, income and attitude scores were first determined. Results as shown in Table 1 significantly indicated that subjects' attitudes toward older persons became less positive as their age increased ($r = -.2092$, $p < .024$). The results support other research indicating this worsening of attitudes with age.

In addition, results also showed that there was a negative correlation between education and attitudes toward older persons ($r = -.3135$, $p < .001$), indicating a tendency for more highly educated people to hold more negative attitudes. Bird and Fisher (1986) noted a similar relationship in their study, but it has not been specifically addressed by other researchers. No significant correlation was shown between attitudes and income (Table 1).

To determine whether attitude scores were significantly different among age cohorts represented by the participants, they were divided into three groups based on age levels, and the mean scores of these groups were compared (Table 2). Group 1 included subjects from 50 to 59 years of age; group 2, those from 60 to 69; and group 3, those 70 or older. The difference in mean scores was significant ($t(48) = 2.32$, $p < .025$) for group 1 ($\bar{X} = 68.09$) and 3 ($\bar{X} = 62.41$). It was at the ends of the age spectrum that the difference was great enough to attain significance, but over the three groups the

TABLE 1

Correlations of Attitudes with Age, Education, and Income

Variable	<u>Attitude</u> <u>r</u>
Age	-.2092*
Education	-.3135**
Income	-.1560

Note: n = 90.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .001$

TABLE 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Values
for the Three Age Groups

Age group	n	<u>Attitude scores</u>		df	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
		Mean	SD			
1 (50 - 59)	26	68.07	9.09	64	1.39	.169
2 (60 - 69)	40	64.32	11.60			
1 (50 - 59)	26	68.07	9.09	48	2.32	.025
3 (70 and over)	24	62.41	8.08			
2 (60 - 69)	40	64.32	11.60	62	.71	.482
3 (70 and over)	24	62.41	8.08			

trend was consistent: Attitudes were less favorable with age.

To determine whether attitude scores differed significantly among education cohorts, the participants were divided into three groups based on education, and the mean scores of these three groups were compared (Table 3). Group 1 included those with a high school education or less; group 2, those with some education beyond high school; and group 3, college graduates. The difference in mean scores was significant ($t(65) = 2.99, p < .004$) for group 1 ($X = 67.92$) and 3 ($X = 60.37$). It was at the ends of the education spectrum that the difference was statistically significant. The trend was consistent over the three groups: Attitudes were less favorable with education.

To determine whether attitude scores differed significantly among income groups, the participants were divided into three groups based on annual income, and the mean scores of these three groups were compared (Table 4). The groups were as follows: Group 1, less than \$20,000; group 2, \$20,000 to \$30,000; and group 3, \$30,000 or more. The differences in mean scores were not significant.

TABLE 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Values
for the Three Education Groups

Education group	n	<u>Attitude scores</u>		df	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
		Mean	SD			
1 (high school or less)	40	67.92	11.21	61	1.09	.278
2 (beyond high school)	23	64.95	8.64			
1 (high school or less)	40	67.92	11.21	65	2.99	.004
3 (college graduate)	27	60.37	8.27			
2 (beyond high school)	23	64.95	8.64	48	1.91	.062
3 (college graduate)	27	60.37	8.27			

TABLE 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Values
for the Three Annual Income Groups

Income group	n	<u>Attitude scores</u>		df	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
		Mean	SD			
1 (< \$20,000)	37	65.64	11.97	63	.20	.839
2 (\$20,000-\$30,000)	28	65.10	8.43			
1 (<\$20,000)	37	65.64	11.97	53	1.19	.238
3 (\$30,000 and above)	18	61.83	9.08			
2 (\$20,000-\$30,000)	28	65.10	8.43	44	1.25	.219
3 (\$30,000 and above)	18	61.83	9.08			

Discussion

The intent of this study was to determine whether attitudes of persons 50 or more years of age toward others in the same age group are related to three variables: age, education, and income. The findings related to age and education were in the predicted direction, that is, attitudes were less favorable with increased age and with education. For income, the data were not statistically significant.

Our society has been indoctrinated with negative views of aging and the aged, so it is not surprising that even older persons themselves hold such views. Of most interest in this study is the relationship between education and such attitudes. In two comprehensive surveys of older persons (Harris, 1975, 1981), responses indicated that life satisfaction increased with education. A negative influence of education on attitudes toward aging was specifically reported only once previously and, then, as an incidental finding in a study by Bird and Fisher (1986) of attitudes toward older workers.

Although the questionnaire used in the present study (KDBF questionnaire) is nearly identical to the instrument administered by Bird and Fisher (1986), there were differences in the populations studied and in the administration. All 98 of Bird and Fisher's participants lived in an industrialized county in Ohio, were employees of a manufacturing plant, were predominantly male, and ranged in

age from 18 to 63 years. In contrast, the 90 participants in the present study lived in a rural county in Kentucky, had varied work involvement from full-time employment to retirement, included more women than men, and were at least 50 years of age.

In the method of administration, Bird and Fisher (1986) mailed questionnaires to the homes of the employees of the manufacturing plant and included a cover letter and a return envelope. Their response rate was 29.9 percent (98 usable questionnaires of the 328 mailed). For the present study the questionnaires were administered at meetings of various groups. Of the 119 questionnaires turned in, 29 had to be eliminated because of inadequate demographic information or because the respondents were less than 50 years of age.

With the differences in the administration and in the study populations, the consistency of the education-attitude relationship in the two studies tends to support its validity and to suggest the need for further investigation. The technique of Semantic Differential (Anastasia, 1988) could be useful in substantiating the KDBF results. Participants would characterize various age groups, including their own, on a series of seven-point bipolar scales, low scores indicating unfavorable characterizations. It could then be determined whether education level was related to favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the older age groups.

If the findings of the present study are confirmed, a

logical follow-up study might involve an attempt to determine whether there are factors in a college education that contribute to less favorable attitudes toward aging. Is there direct or indirect promulgation of such attitudes in an academic environment just by virtue of its focus on youth and activity? Does exposure to such an environment influence life-long attitudes? Is it possible that the broader the knowledge about the aging process the less favorable the attitudes toward aging? Does more education lead to distorted perceptions concerning the normal aging process?

The voluntary comments of the subjects noted in the space allotted on the questionnaires and in remarks before and after their participation provided no additional information about an influence of education on their attitudes. However, for the last four groups of participants a procedure revision that substituted the author for a contact person as the presenter of the survey not only improved the rate of participation but also seemed to enhance thoughtful interest in the project topic. For subsequent studies it is suggested that after the completed questionnaires are collected, the researcher encourage a discussion among the participants concerning their perceptions of the influences of education on their attitudes. This might provide useful insights and indicate the direction for further study.

As battles are waged through dissemination of accurate information and legislation against discriminatory practices

that are based on various stereotypes, the fundamental truth appears to be that these assaults may change procedures but do not necessarily change attitudes. Miller (1987) views problems associated with aging as being the product of a social construction of aging. "This process shapes the views held about the elderly, and determines . . . the shape of social policy." The hope in collecting data such as those in this study is that if a variable can be shown to relate to a specific attitude, that knowledge might broaden understanding and point the way to changing that attitude.

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APPENDIX A

KDBF Questionnaire

Important: In these statements "older" means over 50 years of age.

1. I think older employees have fewer accidents on the job.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
2. Most companies are unfair to older employees.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
3. Older employees are harder to train for jobs.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
4. Older employees are absent more often than younger employees (under age 30).
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
5. Younger people (under age 30) act too smart these days.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
6. Younger employees (under 30) usually have more serious accidents than older employees.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
7. In a case where two people can do a job about the same, I'd pick the older person for the job.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
8. I think that Social Security payments are too small.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
9. Occupational diseases are more likely to occur among younger employees (those under age 30).
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
10. The older employees usually turn out work of higher quality.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

11. I think older employees are more grouchy on the job.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
12. I believe that older people cooperate more on the job.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
13. Older people seem to be happier on the job.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
14. I feel that older people are more dependable.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
15. Most older people cannot keep up with speed needed in modern industry.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
16. Supervisors find it hard to get older people to adopt new methods on the job.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
17. Older people should get higher wages for their jobs.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
18. You'll find that the employees who are most loyal to the company are the older employees.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
19. Older people are too set in their ways--they don't want to change.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
20. I think older employees have as much ability to learn new methods as other employees.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
21. I think companies should train middle-aged employees (those aged 35-55) to handle many different jobs.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

22. I think that older employees make better employees.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
23. I think most younger people are too radical in their ideas.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
24. Pay should be based on length of service rather than on what a person does (how long a person has worked in a company should count more than the amount of work he/she turns out).
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
25. Retirement is the reward for a lifetime of work.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
26. Most people would prefer to continue working even after retirement.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
27. Most of the older people who continue to work do so because they need the money.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
28. In business I prefer to deal with an older person.
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

Please fill out the next page.

For me to understand more fully and interpret the responses to the survey, the following information is needed. Please put an X in the spaces that apply to you or fill in the required information.

Age range:

☐ 50-54 ☐ 65-69 ☐ 80+
☐ 55-59 ☐ 70-74
☐ 60-64 ☐ 75-79

Sex:

☐ Male
☐ Female

Years of education:

☐ 8 yr. or less
☐ 9 to 11 yr.
☐ High school graduate
☐ Some college
☐ College graduate
☐ Other (please specify:

Race/Ethnic:

☐ White
☐ Black
☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian or Pacific
 Islander
☐ American Indian or
 Alaskan Native

Present yearly income (including retirement income, if applicable):

☐ Less than \$10,000
☐ \$10,000 - \$20,000
☐ \$20,000 - \$30,000
☐ More than \$30,000

Thanks for your help in this research. I will keep your answers in strict confidence. If you care to make any comments about your answers or the survey, please write them below.

Comments

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter

Dear Opinion Holder:

Increasing attention is being paid to the opinions and attitudes of people over 50 years of age as the percentage of the population in this age group increases. To complete my master's thesis at Austin Peay State University, I am conducting a survey of these attitudes in our local area. I am interested in what you think.

Would you please take a few minutes and fill out the attached questionnaire. All the information will be confidential and your identity will not be known. Just read each item carefully and give your best answer by putting an X on the line before the response you choose. Answer as frankly and honestly as you can.

Here is a sample item to give you an idea of how it works.

Our part of the country had enough rain this spring.
☒ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

When you have finished please return the survey to your group leader. Thanks for your help in this research.

Patricia Pyles Virostko
Box 5432
Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, TN 37044

If you would like to be informed of the results of the survey, please provide the information below. Separate this sheet from the survey form and return it to the group leader when you have completed the survey.

Name _____

Address _____

APPENDIX C

KDBF QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

The purpose of this investigation is to survey attitudes of persons who are more than 50 years of age. Your name is not indicated on the questionnaire. At no time will you be identified, nor will anyone other than the investigators have access to your responses. The demographic information collected will be used only for purposes of analysis. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to terminate your participation at any time.

Thank you for your cooperation.

I agree to participate in the present study being conducted under the supervision of a faculty member of the Department of Psychology at Austin Peay State University. The investigator has offered to answer any further questions I may have regarding the study. I understand that I am free to terminate my participation at any time and to have all data obtained from me withdrawn from the study and destroyed.

Name (Please print)

Signature

Date