Fear as a Predictor of Life Satisfaction for Retirees in Canada
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ABSTRACT
Laslett’s theory of the Third Age regarding postretirement life satisfaction was tested from the social participation perspective in Canada by a quantitative method. Fears about growing old negatively predicted both life and retirement satisfaction after adjusting for significant activity theory covariates. Canada’s eminent poverty-preventing strategies supported retiree life satisfaction.

RELEVANT LITERATURE
1. Views toward retirees and retirement have been dichotomous. a. In the United States, retirees had “roleless role” (Burgess, 1960, p.20). In activity theory for successful aging, retirement was a negative variable (George, 1978).
   b. In the United Kingdom, Laslett (1987, 1991) posited that one’s life comprised four stages (i.e., the First Age for learning, the Second Age for working, the Third Age for postretirement life fulfillment, and the Fourth Age for the final dependence and death) although the Third Age accompanied fears about growing old.

2. Once the Laslett (1987, 1991) theory globally prevailed, some researchers, including Sadler (2000, 2006) in the United States, conducted studies from only the positive aspects of the Third Age mostly by a qualitative method, ignoring the fears.

3. The Third Age also emerged in Japan in the 1960s (Laslett, 1987, 1991), but Weiss, Bass, Heimovitz, and Oka (2005) found well-being in only Japanese male retirees with a part-time job. This finding implied that gender difference and social participation might affect postretirement life satisfaction.

4. I examined retiree life/retirement satisfaction in Canada, which shared the same North American culture with the United States (Rokach, 2007).

PROCEDURES
• A self-administered survey by cross-sectional convenience sample at senior centers in Canada.

• A pilot study: the reliability and validity of Current Activity Inventory: Fears About Growing Old, deprived from exemplifications of Laslett (1991) ⇒ an instrument for the first time in the world.

• Perfectly completed main survey (n = 190; no missing value).

DATA ANALYSIS
• Pearson’s correlation and multiple regression; significance level: .05.

• Barrett and Murk (2009) Life Satisfaction Index for the Third Age–Short Form to predict life satisfaction; the RSI for overall retirement satisfaction.

• Research Question 1: the stepwise method; Questions 2 and 3: the hierarchical method.

• Two dependent variables: the Research Question 1: all covariates; Question 2: the covariates significant in the previous analyses and the independent variable fears about growing old; Question 3: gender, postretirement work, and the interaction term thereof.

FINDINGS
1. Fear significantly predicted life satisfaction; covariates: current activity, job circumstance, postretirement work, and social support; \( R^2 = .26 \).

2. Fear significantly explained retirement satisfaction; covariates: current activity and social support; \( R^2 = .14 \).

3. Pearson correlations were found between life satisfaction and job; fear was lost while being female and circumstance on job.

4. The highest fear was loss of family for males; having cancer, heart disease, and dementia for females. Loss of retirement income or earning power was the lowest fear among both genders.

5. No interaction effect was found.

LIMITATIONS
• No mailing survey involving all senior center members due to insufficient budget and Canada Post strike in 2011.

• No random sampling due to a senior center director decision not to share the member mailing list.

CONCLUSIONS

SOCIAL CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

NUances to increase retiree life satisfaction

Retirees • supports from friends, family, and significant others
• current activities with friends and/or family
• a volunteer job
• a longer retiree life/role like females
• less health fear of their own and family

Employers • gerontological counselor to solve job stress/circumstance
• volunteer work offer to retirees

Other countries Canada’s three steady poverty preventive strategies:
• guaranteed financial life for the poor and females victimized work history
• substantial public pension programs
• publicly funded healthcare system