

PERCEPTION OF THE ABAK PEOPLE AND THE CONCEPT OF AGEING

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Abstract

Ageing is a phase of life. The people's perception of ageing and the aged directly influences their psychological well-being. Research as shown that positive beliefs about aging lead to feeling younger and negative attitude make people feel regretful.

The aged people have their roles they play in every society as mentioned above. These roles are relevant in the development of society if they live longer, and carry –out these duties and if the family, community, religious organizations and the government at the local, state and Federal leaders have a positive perception A platform should be created by chiefs together with opinion leaders, private organizations and the government to sensitize people over unfair discrimination and poor attitudes towards the aged. Government should organize awareness programmes from time to time in order to sensitize the people on the need to shun abuse, neglect and discrimination against the aged people.

Introduction

The concept of ageing is a universal phenomenon that cuts across all facets of living things as a natural phenomenon. Old age or the aging process is not a disease. It is defined as a retrograde biological change which leads to decrease power of survival and adjustment. Ageing is irreversible and rarely subject to human manipulation. The perception of ageing and the aged vary from one society to another. While some societies have positive perception of ageing, the other society has negative perceptions.

In traditional African society, old age brings special privilege and honors, the elderly enjoyed tremendous respect and their opinion in most matters were rarely challenged. Gerontocracy (Government of the elderly invoked vital political, socio- economic decisions affecting the entire society were usually taken by the elderly on behalf of others.)

The elderly on the account of the massive volume of experience and skills which cut-cross all aspects of life where also adorn "Epitome/fountains of wisdom and knowledge. Public function like traditional marriage, Naming ceremony, festivals and funerals will be incomplete without the elderly in attendance e.g. They do not only bring forth their special blessings, but also are expected to lead the prayers for God's favour.

There were also the custodians of the people's religion, customs, tradition and norms. They thus help to prevent deviant behavior on the part of youth in respect of established mode of observances. In contemporary, societies' growing old is a challenge, the aged people are considered as being weak; slow to work and virtually worthless individuals. This is due to urbanization, modernization and globalization.

Days back in Abak society the elderly ones were appreciated and recognized, but in our present aged many of them are disregarded, disrespected, abuses for instance killing of the aged people during political activities, mental confusion, Poverty, loneliness and decline energy or vitality. Also there are communities in Abak local government area that have no social infrastructure such as portable water, electricity, health center. It results in making life very difficult for widows and widowers especially between

the age range of 65 and above. The aged suffer from ailments such as Arthritis, Heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, cancer, blindness, deafness and Schizophrenia.

In the traditional African society the elderly were highly respected and played important roles to integrate the society, they represent reference point for direction in cases of confusion, uncertainties and search for direction (settle disputes), transmit knowledge and wisdom, mouthpiece of the gods and ancestors on the earth and so should not be challenged on most issues. They are also the custodians of culture and traditions, intercessors during conflict resolution and contributors in enforcing peace in their various communities.

Today, the traditional institution responsible for care giving for the aged people has been dismantled as a result of urbanization and modernization. This institution which is the extended family is being dismantled and consequently, the ageing population is now facing a number of problems. These problems have brought some challenges to the aged people such as poverty. Also this contemporary society due to their neglect of the aged people have missed out on the wise saying which teaches ideas such as the evil of jealousy, selfishness, wickedness and greed, while in-calculating virtues such as love, kindness, gentleness, fairness or justice and humility (Dzurgar 2012). This was aimed at equipping the younger people to function effectively in the society (Erin 2008 and Abamuam 2013).

As a result of urbanization and modernization, the ageing population often lack adequate care from family members, moving from rural communities to urban industrial centers in search for greener pasture. Therefore, the elderly people are left alone in the rural areas with no family member to care for them. Bereavement is also a difficult experience because many aged people lose their spouse, the grief that follows the loss of a spouse can last for many years and can involve anxiety, depression, loneliness and other issues. Of all these problems, loneliness is perhaps the most common and the most difficult to overcome studies show that the aged people who live alone often experience social isolation and chronic feelings of loneliness, which causes depressions, illness and even death.

Many aged people experience changes in physical appearance this include gray hair, wrinkles, loss of height, weight and decline in strength etc. They also suffer from health problems such as dementia, Arthritis, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, deafness and Schizophrenia. Also the aged people are dependent on their children and those who have retired from public service rely on pension in order to survive. Most of them suffer from poverty as a result of decline in income because of retirement and the elderly are not usually offered employment even when they still have the physical strength to cope. They are often seen as less adaptable, slower and weaker on the job than the younger adult. Stereotyping and stigmatization of the elderly, this involves negative perception of the elderly in the society. There are often perceived as dirty, non-productive, dependent, burden, worrisome, behaving like children, suspicion of witchcraft, people nowadays are scared of helping the elderly people because of witchcraft practices. Age is measured chronologically and we grow older every given year. "Ageing is the accumulation of changes in a person overtime" (Boweri & Atwood 2004). "Ageing in human being can be seen as a multidimensional process consisting of physical, psychological, philosophical and social change. Ageing is an important part of all human societies reflecting the biological changes that occur in people, but also depicting cultural and societal convention.

Perception of ageing among people and aged people implies manner in which they view or see the ageing process and, by extension, experience their own transition to old age. What forms each individual's perception and experiences of ageing is a dynamic process has to do with self, social norms and their interplay (Steverink et al 2001) and reflects the way an individual internalize social norms (Levy 2003; Westerhof and Barrett, 2005).

People view ageing as a process to suffer and endure rather than seeing it as a contingent gift of nature to be approached with gratitude. A common goal among many aged people is to remain young. Growing old for some people implies to lose acquaintance and friends to distance, illness and death.

Obituaries testify that life is the process of ageing and is the steady progress leading to dying among people. The sight of gray hair and wrinkles confronts the aged people with mortality. People are afraid of

ageing and see it as sorrow and rebellion. It has contributed to denial of reality, as being a 'youth' is now ideal and many aged people desire to stay young (Gatkouth 2011).

The negative perception towards ageing on the side of the aged people has a direct impact on their personal health. In some cases the elderly accept the idea of not being useful and as a result make little effort to keep fit, healthy and vibrant. Reason because, some believe they are getting closer to the end of their lives and no desire to eat or exercise properly. A vast majority of mankind have an extremely negative perception towards ageing. (Mbotto 2002)

The Family and The Aged

According to Ogun Bode (1997, pg. 1-10), he opined that the major phenomena of reference in traditional society relating to the aged people was the extended family. The traditional family setting is one of the close social units which emphasizes and implement support for the aged people, their security and means of meeting their needs.

The family unit consisting of members of the extended family which are parents grandparents, uncles, aunts, sisters, brothers, nephew, niece, and cousin (Abiodun 2007). Also the extended family has been replaced today with the nuclear family because of modernization. It is important to notice that the family contributes in decision and actions affecting an individual's life and even in all facets.

The family also has the responsibility in providing care and support for the aged people in whom they provide food, shelter, clothing, drugs and other basic essential needs. Presently in some cases the aged people stays with their grown-up children, who show them care, provides for their needs and in return the aged people cares for their grandchildren. The family unit as a social structure is a form of social assurance for the aged people.

Challenges of the Aged in Contemporary Societies

In the olden days in the traditional setting old age or growing old was a remarkable experience, unlike what is obtainable in contemporary African society. Traditionally, the care of the elderly was the responsibility of the extended family system. But as a result of change in the African society due to modernization has affected extended family system and many family members are now educated and work in the urban areas and leaving aged people in rural areas. Culturally contact with the Europeans through colonization disrupted the African perspectives of care for the aged people (Abanyam 2012 & Abiodun 2002).

As a result of the introduction of formal system of education by Europeans which has tremendously affected the elderly because they regard, prestige given to the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the elderly are seen as irrelevant to the modern age (Mbotto 2002). Formal education system are replacing old people in which highly trained persons transmit social knowledge such as teachers, lecturers etc. Also the pursue for education or to find a good job makes the youth to migrate from the rural areas leaving the aged without people to care for them.

The connection between education, occupation and income has affected the economic status and privileges of aged people totally. For Giddens (2009) observed that with the emergence of industries, the young people are interested in accumulating wealth thereby migrating to cities in search of education, white collar jobs, which affect the care of the aged people.

Also negative perception of health workers especially in health center residing in rural areas, they neglect older patients leaving them unattended to suffer from old age sickness. These health workers rather attend to younger people at the expense of the elderly ones because their belief is that there are at the Zenith of their lives.

In Nigeria today, there are more taboo, maltreatment, abuses of the aged people in communities. Most of those cases are over-looked today by the law enforcement agencies as a result of corruption in the system. Urban migration is a big problem which affects the aged people as a result of the young generation moving into towns and abandoning the aged people in the rural communities. Especially in Abak area they

have this negative perception of accusing their aged people of witchcraft and abusing their rights (Galkouth, 2011).

Challenges of the Aged

It has been observed those lawmakers are not sensitive to the plight of the aged people in Nigeria. There should be adequate sensitization of the policy makers, of the need to help the ageing population to live decent life, also create a policy which will aid in protecting the right of the population of the aged in Nigeria (Help age international 2010).

According to Mocks et al (2011, pg. 26), “treating aged people with respect and putting them on equal basis with younger people creates, the conditions that enable all people in the society to participate in and contribute to their own development”.

Social security policies for the aged people are yet to be formulated in Nigeria, it is needed presently as a result of decline in the adequate family support for the old people and the rate of poverty there are exposed to (Ajomale 2007). Pension Scheme Reform Act 2004 mainly designed for those who worked in the formal sector to help uplift poverty and it does not cover all the aged people.

The right of access to health care service should be provided by the government and basic health care services to all without discrimination. Also the peculiar characteristics and health care needs of the aged people should be considered (DE Hart et al, 2011). Also, social workers are in the position to implement and advocate for policies programmers, services and research benefitting aged people.

International federation of social workers (IFSW) encourages considerations of aged people in all policies and specifically supports the following policy principles that promote the well-being of all aged people.

- Respect for aged people quality of life (physical psychological, social, intellectual and financial and self-determination).
- Elimination of socio-economic and health disparities and discriminatory attitudes, practices and policies that hinder aged people participation in society.
- Promotion of full societal integration of aged people including people with physical, psychological, and cognitive disabilities, illness and diseases as well as intra-and international migrants through life long, learning political participation, intergenerational relationships, cultural, social and voluntary activities and paid employment.
- Labour markets, economic, psychological and support for family caregivers of all aged people.
- Safe accessible housing for aged people in community and institutional settings, physical accessibility of public and widely used commercial spaces and services.

This policy statement was approved by the IFSW general meeting in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil August 14, 2008.

Government Policy and Programmes for the Aged

The various level of government which are Federal, state and local government participation in the provision of service to the aged people is minimal. The Nigerian government believes that, it is the responsibility of families to provide for the aged people.

In Nigeria, there are no polices for social security for the aged people and neither do the government support families with fund to cater for the elderly and there is high rate of poverty, deprivation among aged people in Nigeria (Abiodun, 2006).

The pension scheme (insurance) formulated by government, it is designed for those who work in the formal sector and does not cover many aged people. The aim of the social pension was to reduce old age poverty and support households but it has many irregularities. The provision of pension schemes provides the economic foundation for retirement (Macionis and Plummer2005).Some in the formal sector are privilege to enjoy social security funds which help them live a comfortable life during old age. The present economic realities of Nigeria with a harsh government reform programmer with little or no consideration for

the aged people has created a high rate of beggars. Material deprivation and neglect of aged people has become a big social problem particularly in cities (Ajomale, 2004).

In the writings of Aboderin “the family support system, as it has developed and operates today, can no longer be counted upon to provide sufficient economic protection for the old”. In contrast “family support given to aged people in the past was largely sufficient to meet their material needs and even to provide many with a surplus”. Cases of non-support of aged parents in the past were allegedly rare, whereas today they are common because “parents” entitlement to filial support in old age is no longer unconditional but based squarely on the principle of reciprocity is contingent upon the degree to which they fulfilled their earlier parental duties to their children”. Note that it is the children themselves who judge the conduct of their parents. Even if children feel that an aged parent deserves support, this will not be forthcoming if resources are scarce, since the needs of the young have a “fundamental priority” over those of the old. Women are particularly vulnerable, since they live longer than men, they are burden for more years when economic times are difficult, adult children accuse their mothers of witchcraft of “having brought misfortune on them and, consequently, deny them support despite the nurturing their mothers gave them through childhood”.

Between 2002 and 2003, ageing well: A European Study of Adult Well-being, (ESAW) was carried out in six European countries (Austria, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The project was based on individual interviews with community dwelling aged people (age 50-90) in each of the country. The Britain sample is an important existing source of cross-sectional data that has been used in this report to provide information to determine which factors affect the material resources of aged people in Britain inequalities in income affects the standard of living. The ESAW research designs consist of questionnaire development interviewer recruitments and training sample-selection election. The research was undertaken to know the material resources available for the aged people. It was discovered that aged people are less engaged less in paid employment compared to the younger generation, and those aged people in the rural areas are more deprived of material resource than compared to those living in the urban areas.

Disengagement Theory

It was propounded by social scientists Elaine Cumming and William Earle Henry and presented in the book “Growing old” published in 1961. It is notable for being the first social science theory of ageing.

Disengagement theory of ageing claims that it is natural and acceptable for aged people to withdraw from society and personal relationships as they age and become elderly. The theory states that over time elderly people withdraw or disengage from the social roles and relationships that were central to their life in adulthood. In applying the theory in this study, we understand that mandatory disengagement of the aged people from active service is as a result of stereotype, prejudice, and discriminatory practices held against them.

In this view majority of the aged people are seen as a burden, worthless, weakling, good for nothing, witches and wizards which implies they should leave public/private service for the younger generation. The negative perception of the aged people assumes that younger people perform social roles better than the aged people. The assumptions support the mandatory retirement base on the age, human development programs for the youth. The implication is that the wisdom, order and good sense of history gained from the aged has been ignored.

Wear and Tear Theory of Aging

It was propounded by Dr. August Weismann, a German biologist in 1882. The wear and tear theory of aging may also be referred to as simple deterioration theory or fundamental limitation theory. He argued that the effects of aging are caused by progressive damage to cells and body systems over-time. Essentially our bodies “wear out” due to use. Once they wear out, they can no longer function correctly.

According to him, the organs like liver, kidney, stomach and skin are stress out by toxic in our diet and environment. This toxin emanate from excess consumption of fat, sugar, caffeine, alcohol, narcotic etc. The toxic from the environment comes from ultra-violet rays from the sun. There are many others physical and emotional stress to which we subject our body. When we are young the body’s own maintenance and

repairs system keep compensating for the effect of both normal and excessive wear and tear caused by the toxic and stresses we encounter in life. With old age the body loses its ability to repair damages caused by diet and the environmental toxic as well as those caused by stress. Thus, many aged people die of diseases they could have resisted when they were younger.

Wear and tear theory thus explains aging as products of wear and tear caused by toxic and stress we encounter in life. In applying this theory to the study majority of the aged people are seen as a burden, weakling and good for nothing. As an individual experiences aging result into deterioration in the body system, which implies that aged people cannot perform their roles effectively as when they were younger. This result into withdraw or disengagement from social roles and relationship central to their lives in adulthood. Most importantly due to their weak body system caused by toxic and stress, the aged people are prone to sickness as a result of weak immune system, in which they can no longer function effectively. Examples of old age ailment are diabetes, arthritis, hypertension and heart disease.

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory was considered appropriate to guide investigation in this study. Modernization theory assumes that developing societies can achieve development, if they follow the same processes of development that were used by developed societies. The basic tenant of this theory is the belief that development requires developed societies to aid developing societies to learn from their own progress. Modernization theorists, according to Abanyam (2011:15) “often saw traditions as obstacles to development”, hence it encourage societies to leave behind their traditional lifestyles in favour of modern industrial or technological life style in the 19th century (Age of enlightenment) with the ideas that people themselves could developed and change their society. Proponents of this theory are David McClelland Robert Belleh, Alex Inkless, Walter W.Rostow, Gabriel Almond, James Coleman, Nail Smelter etc.

In applying the theory in this study, in the traditional African society, aged people were highly respected and adequately taken care of by their extended family system. However, as the society modernizes the traditional lifestyle of taking care of aged people has changed. Changes in the structure of the society leaves aged people with many challenges, which they did not experience prior to modernization.

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	85	35.4%
31-43	90	37.5%
44-56	55	22.9%
65 and above	10	4.2%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The table 2 above shows that age-range of 18-30 representing 85 in number and constituted 35.4%, 90 respondents representing 37.5% were between the ages of 31-43. 55 respondent representing 22.9% were between the age brackets of 44-56 and while the remaining 10 respondents representing 4.2% were between the age bracket of 65 and above.

Table 2: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	164	68.3%
Single	66	27.5%
Divorced	3	1.3%
Widowed	7	2.9%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The table 3 above showed that 164 (68.3%) respondents were married, 66 (27.5%) respondents were single and while 3 (1.3%) respondents were divorced. 7 in number were widowed respondents, representing 2.9%.

Table 3: Religious Affiliation of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	240	100%
Islam	0	0%
Traditional African Religion	0	0%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The table 4 above shows that 240(100%) respondents were Christians representing all the respondents for the study.

Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondent

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
First School Certificate	20	8.3%
Secondary School Certificate	49	20.4%
OND/NCE	110	45.8%
HND/B.Sc.	51	21.3%
MSC	10	4.2%
Ph.D.	0	0%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The table 5 above shows that the numbers of First school leaving Certificate were 20 which constituted 8.3%. While secondary school certificate holders were 49 in number which constituted 20.4%, 110 respondents were OND/NCE holders which constituted 45.8% and 51 respondents which constituted 21.3% were HND/B.Sc. holders. A number of 10 respondent representing 4.2% were MSc holders and the lowest number was Ph.D. holders which represented 0% percentage.

Section B: Analysis of Research Question

In this section, the research question that guided the study was analyzed to see the results of the respondent's responses.

The Research Questions for the Study Were:

1. What are the people's perceptions of ageing people in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?
2. Does the role of the family members encourage the aged people in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?
3. To what extent has the government made provision for the socio-economic upkeep of the aged people in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?
4. What are the measures to be put in place to ameliorate the challenges faced by the aged in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State?

Table 5: Distribution of respondents responses on the extent in which people’s perception affect the aged people

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	120	50%
Great extent	80	33.3%
Little extent	30	12.5%
Very little extent	10	4.2%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 6 above shows that 120 respondents in Abak urban town and Midim representing 50% of the respondents agreed to a very great extent that the people’s perception affect the well-being of the aged people. 80 (33.3%) respondents agreed to a great extent, while 30 (12.5%) respondent agreed to a little extent and 10 (4.2%) respondents agreed to a very little extent. Therefore, it is possible to say that that the people’s perception affect the well-being of the aged people greatly in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents responses on the extent in which perception of the aged people towards aging affect their health

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	90	37.5%
Great extent	110	45.8%
Little extent	35	14.6%
Very little extent	5	2.1%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 7 above shows that 90 respondents in Abak urban town and Midim representing (37.5%) of the respondents agreed to a very great extent that the perception of the age people towards aging affect their health. 110 (45.8%) respondents agreed to a great extent, while 35 (14.6%) respondent agreed to a little extent and 5 (2.1%) respondents agreed to a very little extent. Therefore, it is possible to say that the aged people perception towards aging affects their health to a reasonable extent either positively or negatively in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents responses on the extent in which people regard the aged people in the community

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	60	25%
Great extent	20	8.3%
Little extent	72	30%
Very little extent	88	36.7%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 8 above shows that 60 respondents in Abak urban town and Midim representing 25% of the respondents agreed to a very great extent that the aged people are still regarded in the community, 20 (8.3%) respondents agreed to a great extent while 72 (30%) respondent agreed to a little extent and 88 (36.7%) respondents agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore it is possible to say that the aged people are no longer respected in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government of Akwa –Ibom State. They have this negative perception of accusing their aged people of witchcraft practices which leads into abusing their rights.

Table 8: Distribution of respondent responses on the extent in which family members care for the aged people

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	130	54.2%
Great extent	40	16.7%
Little extent	20	8.3%
Very little extent	50	20.8%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 9 above indicates that 130 respondents about 54.2% of the responses said that the family members care for the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim, 40 respondents, about 16.7% agreed to a great extent. 20 of the respondents, about 8.3% of the responses agreed to a little extent and while 50 respondents, about 20.8% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore, based on the table above it is possible to conclude that family members take care of the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government of Akwa-Ibom State.

Table 9: Distribution of respondent responses on the extent in which income of the family member' guarantee adequate care of the aged people

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	51	21.3%
Great extent	89	37.0%
Little extent	10	4.2%
Very little extent	90	37.5%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 9 above indicates that 51 respondents about 21.3% of the responses agreed to a very great extent that the income family members guarantee adequate care of the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim, 89 respondents, about 37.0% agreed to a great extent. 10 of the respondents, about 4.2% of the responses agreed to a little extent and while 90 respondents, about 37.5% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore based on the table above, it is possible to conclude that the income of the family members guarantee adequate care of the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State.

Table 10: Distribution of respondent responses on the extent families provide solutions to the challenges faced by the aged people

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	95	39.6%
Great extent	100	41.6%
Little extent	30	20.5%
Very little extent	15	6.3%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 11 above indicates that 95 respondents about 39.6% of the responses agreed to a very great that families provide solutions to the challenges faced by the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim, 100 respondents, about 41.6% agreed to a great extent. 30 of the respondents, about 20.5% of the responses agreed to a little extent and while 15 respondents, about 6.3% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore based on the table above, it is possible to conclude that families provide solutions to the challenges faced by the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa –Ibom State.

Table 11: Distribution of respondents responses on the extent in which the aged people participates actively in community leadership

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	30	12.5%
Great extent	15	6.3%
Little extent	105	43.7%
Very little extent	90	37.5%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 12 above indicates that 30 respondent about 12.5% of the responses agreed to a very great extent that the aged people participate actively in community leadership in Abak Urban town and Midim, 15 respondents, about 6.3% agreed to a great extent and 105 of the respondents about 43.7% of the responses agreed to a little extent. 90 respondents, about 37.5% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that it is only few of them that engage actively in community leadership not all.

Table 12: Distribution of respondents responses on the extent in which government provide basic social amenities for the aged people

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	0	0%
Great extent	5	2.1%
Little extent	116	48.3%
Very little extent	119	49.6%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 13 above shows that none of the respondents agreed to a very great extent in Abak urban town and Midim, 5 agreed to a great extent representing 2.1% and while 116 respondents about 48.3% of the responses agreed to a little extent. 119 respondents, about 49.6% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore, based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that governments do not provide basic social amenities for the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim town in Abak Local Government of Akwa-Ibom State.

Table 13: Distribution of respondent responses on the extent in which government pay pension to retirees

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	32	13.3%
Great extent	88	36.6%
Little extent	51	21.3%
Very little extent	69	28.8%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 13 above shows 32 respondents about 13.3% of the responses agreed to a very great extent that the government pay pension to retirees in Abak urban town and Midim, 88 respondents agreed to a great extent representing 36.6% and 51 of the respondents, about 21.3% of the responses agreed to a little extent. 69 respondents, about 28.8% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that government pay pension to retirees, but there are irregularities in payment

Table 14: Distribution of respondent responses on the extent in which government provide health facilities for the aged people

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	0	0%
Great extent	5	2.1%
Little extent	90	37.5%
Very little extent	145	60.4%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 14 above shows that none of the respondents agreed to a very great extent in Abak urban town and Midim, 5 agreed to a great extent representing 2.1% and while 90 respondents about 37.5% of the responses agreed to a little extent. 145 respondents, about 60.4% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore based on the findings it is possible to conclude that governments do not provide health facilities for the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government of Akwa-Ibom State.

Table 15: Distribution of respondent's responses on the extent in which the environment affects the health of the aged

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	48	20%
Great extent	125	42.1%
Little extent	100	30.4%
Very little extent	73	7.5%
Total	240	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 15 above shows that 48 respondents about 20% of the responses agreed to a very great extent that the environment affect the health of the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim, 125 respondents agreed to a great extent representing 42.1% and 100 of the respondents, about 30.4% of the respondents about 7.5% of the responses agreed to a very little extent.

Therefore, based on the findings it is possible to say that environment affect the health of the aged people in Abak urban town and Midim in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa-Ibom State.

Conclusion

Ageing is a phase of life. The people's perception of ageing and the aged directly influences their psychological well-being. Research as shown that positive beliefs about aging lead to feeling younger and negative attitude make people feel regretful.

Traditionally, the aged people are head of the family and the extended clan that dominates the communities. They represent their families in the council of Elders meeting where decisions are taken to regulate and promote the general interest of indigenes and to administer the affairs of the communities. They are known to be leaders and seen as custodians of society's treasures, upholders of history, and custodians of folklores, cultural values, ancestral values and wisdom. They settle disputes and conflicts arising from members of the family, based on their position, skill, knowledge, wisdom and experience acquired along the journey to old age.

The aged people have their roles they play in every society as mentioned above. These roles are relevant in the development of society if they live longer, and carry –out these duties and if the family, community, religious organizations and the government at the local, state and Federal leaders have a positive perception.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A platform should be created by chiefs together with opinion leaders, private organizations and the government to sensitize people over unfair discrimination and poor attitudes towards the aged.
2. Government should organize awareness programmes from time to time in order to sensitize the people on the need to shun abuse, neglect and discrimination against the aged people.
3. The government should design a program that will take care of people who did not work in formal organization but have contributed to the development of society especially the farmers and others. This programme should also include provision of free health care services, free food and homes for the aged.
4. Social amenities and infrastructures should be provided for the aged. These infrastructures should be sited close to the aged.
5. The aged people who are still strong should be used for one employment or the other to keep them active.

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