



## **Ageing and its Impact on Self Confidence**

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**Abstract:** Ageing has been one of the growing concerns in all era of life. It refers to surpassing the life expectancy of human beings. It is the end of life cycle. It is related with the dynamic changes in the biological, physiological, social, and psychological process. Ageing effects the psychological and social attributes like self-esteem, self-confidence, self-perception to a larger extent. It becomes difficult for the aged person to survive due to lack of self-confidence. The present theoretical paper entitled “Aging and its impact on self-confidence” is an attempt to highlight and gain insights as in how does ageing effects self-confidence, how can the self-confidence be retained during ageing in the light of various previous studies.

**Keywords:** Ageing, Self-confidence, Human Diseases

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### **Introduction**

***It’s a saying: “Age is just a number; it is what is in your mind.”***

Ageing has been the concern since the life existed on earth. Peoples have been bothered about their health and wealth as they grow old. This matter is not only confined to materialistic aspects but also affects the psychological well-being of the individual, who gets old with time. It has deteriorated to a larger extent the emotional, mental and social security of the individual. The attributes like self-esteem, self-respect, and self-confidence has been at risk during this period of life.

At the biological level, ageing results from the impact of the accumulation of a wide variety of molecular and cellular damage over time. This leads to a gradual decrease in physical and mental capacity, a growing risk of disease and ultimately death. These changes are neither linear nor consistent, and they are only loosely associated with a person’s age in years. The diversity seen in older age is not random. Beyond biological changes, ageing is often associated with other life transitions such as retirement, relocation to more appropriate housing and the death of friends and partners (Harvard Medical School, 2019)

In the broader sense, ageing represents the accumulation of changes in a human being over time and can encompass physical, psychological, and social changes. Reaction time, for example, may slow with age, while memories and general knowledge typically increase. Ageing increases the risk of human diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes, Cardiovascular disease, stroke and many more. Of the roughly 150,000 people who die each day across the globe, about two-thirds die from age-related causes (Harvard Medical School,2019)

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2021–2030 the Decade of Healthy Ageing and asked WHO to lead the implementation. The Decade of Healthy Ageing is a global collaboration bringing together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media and the private sector for 10 years of concerted, catalytic and collaborative action to foster longer and healthier lives.



The Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) seeks to reduce health inequities and improve the lives of older people, their families and communities through collective action in four areas: changing how we think, feel and act towards age and ageism; developing communities in ways that foster the abilities of older people; delivering person-centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older people; and providing older people who need it quality long-term care.

Generally, aversion to ageing is a Western attitude. However, in other places around the world, old age is celebrated and honored. In Korea, for example, a special party called *hwangap* with access to is held to celebrate and congratulate an individual for turning 60 years old. Susanna McMahon explains in her book “*The Portable Therapist*” (1992), that self-confidence is “a way of being in the world that allows you to know yourself and to take care of yourself.” Mary Welford (2013) says that it’s about being aware of when we’re struggling and having the strength to commit to doing something about it. Anneli Rufus (2014) asserts that self-confidence involves self-respect and having the courage to tell the truth about which you are, what you like, and what you believe. (Dietz,1996)

Self-confidence is commonly defined as self-assurance in one's personal judgment, ability, etc (Snyder & John,2009). It increases as a result of experiences of completing particular activities successfully resulting in a positive attitude and belief within self (Zellner,1970). Psychologists, like Abraham Maslow have emphasized the need to distinguish between self-confidence as a generalized personality characteristic, and self-confidence with respect to a specific task, ability or challenge (Luszczynska and Schwarzer,2005). Self-confidence, then, is the courage to know yourself, believe in yourself, and act on your beliefs.

It can be said that self-confidence is a positive feeling about oneself and the world that leads to courageous actions born out of a sense of self-respect. It helps us feel ready for life's experiences.

It's the opposite when confidence is low. People who are low on confidence might be less likely to try new things or reach out to new people. If they fail at something the first time, they might be less likely to try again. **A lack of confidence can hold people back from reaching their full potential.**

As a person start getting old, he starts losing some confidence, since there is a change in body functioning. The person has to face life-altering events, like retirement, health issues’ and loss of love ones. Aging and the level of confidence among the individuals follows a bell curve. It gradually rises during the late teen years, peaks during middle age, and tends to decline after age 60, according to a study conducted in 2010 on people of ages 25 to 104 (Journal of personality and Social Psychology). The researchers said the main reason for this pattern is that midlife is when people typically occupy the highest positions of power, status, and importance. They're working, involved in relationships, and more adventurous about trying new things. In contrast, older adults often lose these roles as they enter the later stages of life. Another reason older adults lose confidence is ageism-the socially pervasive idea that one is too old to do certain activities. Studies have found that age stereotypes can diminish older adult’s ability to perform tasks, even if they possess the proper skills. For instance, research published in 2016, in the Journal of Applied Gerontology looked at the influence of ageism on driving ability among adults’ ages of 65 and older. Participants driving confidence was measured by a questionnaire and then everyone was exposed to either negative or positive age stereotypes.

One of the researches examines the relationship of age and two dimensions of self-esteem using a national sample of adults in the United States. The direct effects of age on self-worth and on



self-efficacy are compared to the indirect effects of age on these through role accumulation. Findings indicate those over age sixty-five experience heightened levels of self-esteem, especially on self-efficacy, compared to their younger counterparts. However, through the intervening variable of role accumulation, older age is associated with decreases in self-esteem. The implications of these findings are discussed for maturational and role perspectives on the aging self, and a more general theory of self-esteem dimensions

Number of studies conducted has reflected a connection between self- confidence and health. Some research also concludes that the loss of job, spouse or friends, illness leads to decrease in one's self-confidence. Lower self-esteem has been shown to increase stress levels among older people which can be hazardous to them. This may lead to difficulty in sleeping, increased fatigue, memory issues, raised blood pressure, depression, inflammation, and a lowered immune system. When combining age-related suppression along with low self-esteem issues, seniors can have difficulty fighting off disease and take longer to recover. (Peterson,2021). But some psychologists argue that seniors who do not believe in the age stereotype are more active and live a meaningful life.

There are several ways by which the self- confidence of the ageing individuals can be enhanced:

1. **To be socially connected:** No matter what is the age, it is good to be connected with friends and family members. Studies show that seniors who are surrounded by supportive family and friends have higher self-esteem. Socialization is vital for healthy living and attainment of self-confidence.
2. **Avoid Negative Stereotypes:** Society inundates with negative messages and images about the aging process. Avoid being in contact with such types of surroundings
3. **Understanding Strength and Balance:** One should understand his or her efficiency and accordingly do the task. Avoid proofing others and family members. Try to maintain the balance between what can be done and what cannot be done. Evaluate the things and activities that can be done and the one in which the person is expert.
4. **Sharing knowledge and wisdom:** The elderly can share their knowledge and wisdom with their younger during gathering and not imposing them to do exactly what they had done. This will open the door for further discussions by the youngsters.

Another very important factor which can enhance the self confidence among the ageing individual is positive self- perception. Positive self-perceptions of ageing are associated with better mental and physical health and well-being (Sabkitin,et, al; 2021). Positive self-perception of health has been correlated with higher well-being and reduced mortality among the elderly (Ilder,1993). Various reasons have been proposed for this association; people who are objectively healthy may naturally rate their health better as than that of their ill counterparts, though this link has been observed even in studies which have controlled for socioeconomic status, psychological functioning and health status (Heckhausen ,1999). This finding is generally stronger for men than women, though this relationship is not universal across all studies and may only be true in some circumstances.

Concluding it can be said that ageing does affect the level of confidence among elderly people. A job, spouse and other relationships are the motivating factors in strengthening the level of confidence. The loss of these affects the decrease in the level of confidence in the same manner. It can also be said that a positive attitude towards ageing can also help in building up the level of confidence among the older.



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