

Miya Kim

PSY 244\_ Human Growth and Development (OA)

Unit 7 Essay

**Required Question**

Late adulthood is the life span from around sixties until the death, and it can be the longest period of life span of human developmental stage. After twentieth century, most people live beyond the age of sixties. In the 2017 studies of life span in the United State, the average life expectancy is about 78.6 years. Women live 3-5 years longer than men, it is believed to be due to the health attitude and occupation, and female species of most kinds outlive males in general.

The late adulthood is the time period where physical and physiological declined, where there are varied of aspects of biological thirties that cause aging. These theories including the evolutionary, genetic and cellular process, and hormonal stress. The brain is 5% ~10% decrease in weight from twenties till nineties, which is the result of neuron shrinkage and its volume in the brain structure. The aging of the brain that the structure decline in its neuron, such as Lessing of snaps, shortening axon, decrease in dendrites is linked to the slower and shorter memory and cognitive functioning during the late adulthood. However, the declined in brain functioning can only take in part thanks to the human brain's capability of repairing function that with the healthy activity involved in the older adults can reduce and delayed the bran developmental loses.

The nun study in 2003 by David Snowdon has led many researchers believe that human brain has its ability to continue grow and alter even in the older age, and their early complex cognitive skills in early life can continue into late adulthood and may prevent from Alzheimer's disease.

While the physical appearance and mobility in late adulthood can be noticeable compared to the early age, such as the wrinkled and aging skin condition. Due to bone and muscle loss, people at this age may become slightly shorter and physically droopy looking. Movement may be slower and limited, and obesity can be higher the risk of many diseases. The more physical activity and community involvement is linked to healthier cognition and longevity, and prevention from many diseases. That said, regular exercise can benefit people's mobility and cognitive function. It is to note that falling is one of the leading cause of hospitalization or even death in the older adults.

Hearing, vision and other senses decline. When people reach late adulthood, they may need vision correction or surgery due to blurred or distorted vision. The accompanying diseases include macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts. Hearing ability can be impaired while 63% of older adult in the age of seventies may have hearing loss. The sensation turning less sensitive, as well as the taste and smell may also change at this period as well, that it may become less sensitive or impaired.

## **Chapter 15**

### ***Questions 4.***

Wisdom is the ability to cope with all life situations. People with wisdom can view things from the early experiences and predict of future through thinking and analysis; they seek the truth of the universe and constantly explore new situations; they deeply introspect and make the best judgments to deal with all difficulties. In other words, human beings are faced with ever-

changing experiences in life, wise people can put these processes in a wider and broader perspective, and embrace and treat them with a more optimistic attitude.

It seems to me that wisdom can develop over the course of adult development, and I believe that often is associated with a loving heart. It is because of love that one can inspire and develop one's wisdom, and it is also because of this spirit that one can transcend one's own interests and constantly explore the best solutions. The concern and interests of other's welfare can be more than themselves, and it lead to their acceptance and openness to be varied of experiences. That is, with wisdom, one has the ability to penetrate the essence of things, and one has the skills to deal with complex environments

From the Christian point of view, from the first Corinthians 1:30, it reads “***It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.***” I see that we are the creation of God's, and through his dwelling in us (**Corinthians 1:30**), we are made in understanding, and the wisdom to know him and his creation. The proverb 9:10, it also said “***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding***” (**Proverb 9:10**). From the Christian perspective, we recognize that the Lord is the source of the wisdom, and we are to lean on him for his work and light of wisdom to flow through us.

### ***Questions 8.***

The major mental health problem and concern of older adults are the Alzheimer disease, which is one form of dementias. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60% to 70% of the causes of dementia. It is a persistent neurological impairment with slow onset but worsening over time.

In the early symptoms, the patient's memory will decline, and the recognition of time, place and person will be impaired, because in the early stage of Alzheimer's disease, it is the hippocampus that is in charge of memory and the cerebral cortex that is in charge of personality where the nerve cells degenerate. Patients will get lost on familiar streets, forget frequently used vocabulary or language, and gradually forget their family members and memories lost.

Symptoms are the gradual severed cognitive impairment, memory impairment, learning impairment, attention impairment, spatial cognitive function, and problem-solving ability, and difficulty in adapting to the society. In severe cases, it is the difficulty in understanding the content of the conversation, unable to conduct the simple life tasks such as eating and dressing, and may be paralyzed in bed eventually.

Alzheimer's disease is partly influenced by genetic factors. Surveys show that 15% of people after the age of 80 are at risk of suffering from dementia. People with relatives who have Alzheimer's disease are also more likely to develop the disease.

### ***Questions 11.***

The nature of older adult's involvement of religion can be beneficial from several aspects:

The social context of religion provides positive social relationship that older people can gather with others on regular basis. The study has found that the involvement of social interpersonal life is linked to the maintenance function of cognition. Hence, elderly will be less isolated and lonely from the relationship and connection with others from the religion gathering with the same spirit and ritual practice. Religion provides the senior the community with a place to connect with others and provide the support they need.

Religion gives ethical and meaning to life, and while older people are often in the life stage where the search for meaning to life is in mind. For example, Christians go to church for sermons for the words of God, and it is the words of God that give wisdom and nourish the spirit and mind. Religious messages bring comfort and faith to older adults to live meaningful lives. People who "feel the power of love in life" from religious activities have higher life satisfaction. People who participate in religious activities more often have higher life satisfaction. Whereby, prayer and meditation has been found to be beneficial for people, while I see that prayer can be some sort of psychological support mentally.

## **Chapter 16**

### ***Questions 15.***

There are varied aspects onto the socio-emotional theories of aging, these including Erikson's theory, Activity theory and social emotional selectivity theory.

Erikson's theory describes human life span into eight different stages, and each stage is developed in sequences and each stage has its own conflicts to deal with. While the late adulthood is the eighth stage which is the final developmental stage of human life. It focuses on individual's emotional development in accordance with their social needs in varied life spans. Late adulthood is described as integrity vs. despair, where individual's life review from their past to evaluate their life as worth it or wish has not been fulfilled. While the other aspect of life may include the reflection of both the positive part of life experiences and also the regret where it is in-depth individual self-understanding.

Activity theory believes that older individual who have lives a more active and involving life would have better physical and psychological health than one who doesn't. It encourages older adults to form relationships with others, and participation in a variety of activities can positively lead to greater satisfaction and continuity in later adulthood.

In contrast to activity theory, social emotional selectivity theory emphasizes that as individuals age, their perceptions of knowledge seeking and emotion regulation are changing in the process. Fewer and fewer social activities and circles of relationships are considered a positive move because quality may be more important than quantity at this stage of life.

***Question 20.***

The young population is decreasing year by year, while the elderly population is continuing to increase in the society of many developed countries. The longevity has been increasing and there are more people believe that age does not necessarily limit in many aspects of life, in terms of lifestyle and social relationship. It seems to me that as individual age, the capability of viewing and approaching upon life and others becoming wider, broader and deeper. If I were an older adult, I would probably know better of who I am and what friendships are worth stay in contact. I would still open for the new friendship and explore the others' cultures and varied of people, and anticipating to be the one older adult that can be the positive influencer for others by engaging in the social relation of the community and others. I also expect my relationship and bond with my children who become an adult at his time, and may share the special relationship with their new formed family and new family members. That said, I believe that progressive support and care in various forms between generations is fun and beautiful. I expect my knowledge and wisdom can

also enable me to be involved in the younger generations with the positive impact in their life, that I expect the relationship with them for supports and love in the midst of their most and brokenness.

Individual's understanding of self and life meaning can shift to different perspectives in different stage of life, while I am looking forward to an in depth understanding of life and intimacy relationship with Christ in my faith journey. From the Christian perspective, my aspect of late adulthood is the time period to walk deep with Christ, and the dwelling of his heart enable me to love others and shed light in the darkness for him for the remainder of my life.

## **Chapter 17**

### ***Questions 28.***

Swiss-American Elisabeth Kübler-Ross worked on the theory of near-death, which divides dying individuals into a sequence of 5 emotional and behavioral stages: Denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Corey 2015).

- Denial and isolation: it is the stage right after learning about their impending death, and denial about this truth. It is hard to accept about that they are dying soon.
- Anger: following the denial dying individual experiencing the emotional distress as anger, resentment, and rage as the way to express toward their caregivers around them.

- Bargaining: the third stage of grief, where dying individual develop the lens of hope into their delayed or escaped of death. The stage they are seeking for more time on earth, often to doctors or God.
- Depression: at this stage, dying individual realizes the fact of loss, and realize that "bargaining" is useless, so the pain strikes again, and this time it really impact the emotionally negatively. That is the moment of understanding that there is no way to escape from death. At this time, people become vulnerable and negative, and feeling depressed about their situation of impending death.
- Acceptance: dying individual become calm, after the period of depression” of pondering about their near death,” developing the sense of accepting and peace of their reality of death.

According to the Kübler-Ross model (1969), we can take it as the reference in understanding about the psychological process of facing the death of a significant person, breaking up with a loved one, or suffering from a terminal illness. These five Stages of grief and are often associated with "loss"-related grief. However, I see that the psychological process is different from each person, for everyone has different situations upon near death. The caring and support form the significant family members and others can also play positive role during the process.

### ***Questions 31.***

There are many consequences associated with loosing a life partner, where the individual became a widow or widower often leading to illness physically and psychologically, great sorrow and grief and may suffer financial loss. Especially when the person has the deep relationship with the

partner, the person may suffer great pain with maladaptive to their loss of the loving partner. The widow and widower may experience the feeling of loneliness, constant moving of grief, even depression and anxiety disorder, and the financial struggle.

There are Studies found that widower suffer more mental distress and has the higher risk of mortality than widow does. While individuals who lost their lives partner with lower in social economy and education level is more likely to experience isolation and loneliness. These characteristics of a losing life partner is in variation of each person, and the support from the society is crucial in helping them cope and adapt to this transition.