

Study on the Changes of Old Age Images in American Movies

-- Titanic, The Shawshank Redemption, and The Last Vegas as Examples

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Abstract

At present, the aging of the world's population continues to increase, followed by a series of problems of supporting old people. Society pays more and more attention to the elderly. In American movies, the image of the elderly that appears in almost every film has gradually come to the attention of the larger public. The number of movies featuring the elderly is increasing. The author introduces the changes in the image of the elderly in Titanic, The Shawshank Redemption, and The Last Vegas to further explore how to correctly treat the elderly group nowadays.

Keywords

American movies; Stereotypes; Elder people.

1. Introduction

According to the results of the seventh national census, China has 260 million people aged 60 and above, accounting for 18.70% of the total population. 190 million people are 65 years old and above, accounting for 13.50%. Compared with 2010, the proportion of the population aged 60 and above increased by 5.44 percentage points, and the proportion of the population aged 65 and above increased by 4.63 percentage points. [1] It is predicted that by the middle of this century, China's elderly population will reach about 400 million, accounting for about a quarter of the total population. Compared with developed countries, China's population aging shows a large population base, rapid growth rate, significant aging trend, obvious regional differences, and aging ahead of social and economic development, which needs need more and more attention.

At present, the problem of aging in China continues to increase, and the problem of supporting old people needs to be solved urgently. The author will combine professional advantages to discuss how to properly treat the elderly nowadays. The author expects to be inspired by the changing images of the elderly in Hollywood films to better understand the actual needs of today's elderly population. Through the investigation and interview, the author can further understand the inner thoughts of the elderly and provide a modest suggestion for solving the problem of old age.

2. The Image Change of the Elderly Group in American Hollywood Films

The author selects the elderly characters in The Shawshank Redemption (1994), Titanic (1997), and The Last Vegas (2013) as the entry point of the research, and explores the characters and their own needs in the film through transcription and text analysis.

Red in The Shawshank Redemption shows his rigidity in many details, such as his view of prison, " But I tell you these walls are funny. First you hate them. Then you get used to them. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on them. That is institutionalized ". Compared with other

young people in the prison, Red seemed to have lost his yearning for the outside world and was settled in a corner. Brooks, who spent most of his life in prison, committed suicide not long after he was released from prison. The director depicts an old man trapped in the past. If Brooks were a young man, he would never have committed suicide when his job and housing were properly arranged. The biggest cause of his death was the words he always repeated, "I'm too old". Aging naturally in the film was equated with conservative thinking. The elderly seem to be powerless and self-giving in the face of change, which is one of the stereotypes of the elderly.

The mother of the heroine in Titanic pinned her hopes on her daughter and hoped that Rose would marry a high-class person to re-enter the high-class society, so she regarded the male protagonist without money and status as a pest and did not allow them to meet. As a common elderly image in movies, Rose's mother is feudal and old-fashioned. She shows absolute authority in intervening in the lives of children. It is also an inherent label in many works when portraying the role of the elderly. However, in recent years, with people's attention to aging increasing, some movies with the theme of the elderly have emerged, showing vivid and diverse images of the elderly and causing people to think about what the elderly need.

Released in 2013, *The Last Vegas* broke some stereotypes about the elderly and depicted several elderly people with different personalities. The protagonist Archie is optimistic and cheerful, but he is not very healthy. Although his children come to see him every week, he is very sad that he is not even allowed to hold his granddaughter because of his health. We don't know the needs of the elderly and just treat them as we think. No one knows that Archie can be so happy when he is playing with his friends. Another protagonist, Billy, is a more novel image of old age. He is afraid of getting old and will try new things to keep himself young forever. He proposed to his little girlfriend, went to bars with old friends, and had some fun. He was the "new" old man of hedonism. Movies no longer stereotype the elderly as a single image, they have also begun to change and given moviegoers a new perspective on the elderly.

Based on this, starting from the movie, this author discussed how to break the stereotype of the elderly group in traditional concepts, and combines interviews and variable analysis to understand the needs of the current elderly group.

3. Research on the Needs of the Elderly and Their Influencing Factors

Based on Maslow's Self-Needs Theory and the results of interviews, the authors will project the changes in the image of the elderly in the film to the current aging Chinese society. In this context, the authors discuss how to break the stereotype of the elderly in traditional concepts and effectively understand and meet their own needs to better achieve respect for the elderly and support the elderly.

Taking the commuting into account, this survey interviewed 12 elderly people through convenience sampling in three communities: Zhenjiang and Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province in November 2021. 12 people were interviewed, including 5 males (41.7%) and 7 females (58.3%). The average age was (68.75±13.25) years old, the youngest was 55 years old, and the oldest was 82 years old. There are 6 urban patients (50%), 6 people in rural areas (50%); 9 local people (75%) (here compared to the interview site), 3 people from other places (25%), 2 people with primary school education or below (16.7%), 8 seniors with junior high school education (66.7%), and 2 seniors (16.7%) with high school (including technical secondary school) and above education.

In this interview and survey, the questions are set from the simple to the deeper. The author wants to know about the basic situation of the elderly firstly, and then start with leisure style, family relationship, social interaction, and whether they are willing to continue learning. Besides the author want to know about the life of the elderly and their material and spiritual

needs, and finally talked about the pension policy and medical system that are closely related to the elderly.

The interviews were found that the needs of the elderly focus on the physiological, safety, belonging, and self-actualization needs of Maslow's theory of self-needs. Among them, the physiological and safety needs of the elderly have been met to a certain extent, and there is dissatisfaction with pension and medical insurance reimbursement and drug prices; social needs. The elderly also have strong social needs, and many of them are willing to participate in group activities to relieve emotions and realize the value of social interaction. In terms of high-level needs, authors have learned that some elderly people are willing to continue learning to expand their horizons if they have the conditions.

Combining interviews and related data, the author attempts to analyze the factors that affect the self-needs of the elderly. In the research, the author divides needs into basic and developmental needs. The primary influencing factors of the two are income status and physical and mental status under the influence of age.

First of all, the basic needs of the elderly, such as food, clothing, housing, and medical treatment, are mostly determined by their income status. The proportion of China's aging population is increasing year by year, but the average retirement age is relatively low. More than 70% of the elderly in the city are retired or resigned, and only 0.5% of them are working now. 21.3% of the elderly have no formal work experience. In the rural areas, 44.3% of the elderly continue to engage in agricultural labor, and 8.6% of the elderly are working.

The main income of the elderly is to receive pensions from the government, and the family dependency ratio exceeds 40%. The survey on the elderly population in 2012 showed that the coverage of social old-age security in urban and rural areas reached 84.7% and 34.6%, respectively, with an average income of 17,892 yuan and 4,756 yuan, respectively.

According to a survey by the Office of Aging, the average expenditure of the urban elderly is about 3.3 times that of the rural areas, and the huge income gap is the main reason. At the same time, the rural elderly spend less on living expenses and medical expenses than the urban areas, and the rural areas have a more traditional Heritage concept. This means that most of the elderly in China, even if they have a surplus on hand, will not firstly use it to meet their own needs.

The interview found that the elderly in rural hukou without a stable source of life have fewer self-needs, and they are more resistant when it comes to personal development needs.

When analyzing the responses, the authors found that age was the primary factor that older adults considered when considering fulfilling their belonging needs and higher-level developmental needs. When asked if they like to travel and whether they are willing to continue their studies, some elderly people will say: "We are so old. We can't stand the toss". When asked what they would most like to do if they had the opportunity to be 20 years younger, it is difficult for them to jump out of the current condition. It is difficult for the elderly to imagine life after slipping the leash of age.

4. Suggestions and Measures

Given the various inconvenient factors of the elderly as revealed by the above research, the author proposes the following measures.

Given the various inconvenient factors of the elderly as revealed by the above research, the author proposes the following measures.

1. Promote the national networking of the medical insurance reimbursement system, so that the elderly can enjoy the same proportion of medical expenses reimbursement in different places. According to data previously released by the National Health and Health Commission,

nearly 18 million elderly people are living far away from their hometown in China, and their medical insurance reimbursement has become a major problem. In the current medical system, remote reimbursement not only has a low reimbursement rate but also has cumbersome steps and long processes, making it difficult for the elderly to operate on their own. Therefore we must break the restrictions on the territorial management of medical insurance, realize data sharing, and balance medical resources in various regions. [2]

2. Build a multi-pillar old-age insurance system. There are many problems with my country's current pension insurance. The coverage of basic old-age insurance is insufficient, and the annuity system and personal savings-based old-age pension have problems such as lag in development and lack of attractiveness to citizens. [3] The author proposes to establish a more complete multi-pillar old-age insurance system and reform the existing old-age insurance system. Firstly, drawing lessons from the five-pillar pension system proposed by the World Bank in 2005, the current situation of "Pension Plight" in my country can be improved to a certain extent. Secondly, make overall planning for pension insurance funds; focus on building and improving professional enterprise annuities, speed up the development of personal savings-type pension insurance, and raise citizens' awareness of using commercial insurance for pensions. [4]

3. Promote the building of elderly communities in large and medium-sized cities. Referring to the American community pension system, the elderly who choose to focus on the elderly can buy or rent a house in an apartment for the elderly. Such housing will be specially designed for the elderly with infrastructures such as housing and travel. At the same time, referring to Japan's "nursing care insurance", the community cooperates with commercial insurance companies to take out part of the rent or house purchase funds paid by the elderly to insure them. After that, as long as the elderly apply and pass the certification, there will be care personnel Regular visits to provide cleaning, bathing, health care, and other services, most of the costs are borne by the insurance company. In addition, set up jobs suitable for the elderly in the community, increase the social connection of the elderly by increasing social participation, help them get out of loneliness, and meet their sense of belonging and self-actualization needs. [5]

4. Build more elderly-oriented facilities in some public places, such as providing some cash checkout in supermarkets to make the elderly feel more convenient and increase their sense of identity. As people get older, they will gradually lose their ability to actively connect with society. They have often been marginalized because of the unavailability of modern technology and the deep generation gap with the younger. In this circumstance, society should take the initiative to provide some ways for the elderly to retain their own pace of life while not being abandoned by the times.

5. Let the students in public welfare organizations cooperate with community nursing workers. In the interviews, some elderly people said that there are several problems in the current community public welfare system, such as the nursing workers' perfunctory interactions and the inability to take care of the real needs of the elderly. It can be in line with the school's moral education and labor education, and college students can regularly visit elderly people to provide them with some care services.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the constantly diversified images of the elderly in American films reflect the actual needs of the elderly group that are often overlooked. After interviewing the elderly group, the author also found that many of the needs of the elderly have deviated from the public perception. Therefore, effectively solving the problems of the elderly requires the concerted efforts of people from all walks of life.

Due to the limitations of manpower, time, and other conditions, the scope of interview coverage in this study is small which will lead to the limited sample size and difficulty in ensuring sample representativeness.

It is recommended that future researchers expand the sample source, increase the representativeness of the sample, and ensure that there are enough samples in each stratum during variable analysis. A follow-up survey is also recommended to gain a clearer understanding of the dynamic changes in the needs of the elderly. The proposed recommendations should take into account the subjective characteristics of needs, and pay return visits to the elderly.

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Appendix

interview questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is your educational background?
3. Are you a local resident?
4. How much time do you spend on recreation every day?
5. How do you relax?
6. What is your ideal later life like?
7. Would you like to live with your children?
8. Would you like to get educated at senior university?
9. Would you to travel around? Who would you like to travel together?
10. Do you have many friends around you? How do you know each other in general? What do you often do together?
11. How do you view China's pension policy? Does pension insurance cover your daily life? How do you usually arrange your pension insurance? And how do you view national health care?