

Perception about being an Aged Person in South-Western Nigeria

Dr. Akanbi, Moses Ayokunle (Corresponding Author)

Demography and Social Statistics Program

Department of Economics and Development Studies

Covenant University, Canaan Land, KM 10, Idiroko Road, P.M.B. 1023,

Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

Mobile Phone number: +234-8032065341 E-mail:

moses.akanbi@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Alternative E-mail: moseskemi2004@yahoo.com

Professor Fadayomi Theophilus Oyeyemi

Head, Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Management Sciences,

Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo state, Nigeria

Mobile Phone number: +234- 8035978097 E-mail: olo_oye2005@yahoo.com

Associate Professor Wusu Onipede

Head, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Lagos state University,

Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria

Mobile Phone number: +234-8025750341 E-mail: onipede.wusu@lasu.edu.ng

Uyi Eboigbodin Osadolor

**Department of Economics and Finance
University of Leeds, Leeds, Westyorkshire, United Kingdom**

[Tel:+447423632291](mailto:osadoloruyi2024@gmail.com) E-mail:
osadoloruyi2024@gmail.com

Gbadebo, Babatunde Makinde
Department of Epidemiology and Medical Statistics
Faculty of Public Health, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Oyo
state, Nigeria

Mobile Phone number: +234-08033678102 E-
mail:tundegbadebo2005@yahoo.com

Adekola, Paul Oluwatomipe
Demography and Social Statistics Program
Department of Economics and Development Studies
Covenant University, Canaan Land, KM 10, Idiroko Road, P.M.B. 1023,
Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

Mobile Phone number: +234-07032217871 E-mail:
paul.adekola@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

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Olawole-Isaac, Adebanke
Demography and Social Statistics Program
Department of Economics and Development Studies
Covenant University, Canaan Land, KM 10, Idiroko Road, P.M.B. 1023,
Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

Mobile Phone number: +234-07039015597 E-mail:
lovelybanke@yahoo.com

&

Sowunmi, Akinyimika
Demography and Social Statistics Program
Department of Economics and Development Studies
Covenant University, Canaan Land, KM 10, Idiroko Road, P.M.B. 1023,
Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria
Mobile Phone number: +234-09035259418 E-
mail:sowunmiakinyimika@yahoo.com

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Abstract

This paper investigates the perception about being an aged person in South-Western Nigeria. 594 aged persons were interviewed through questionnaire administration in Lagos and Oyo states of South-western Nigeria. The univariate, bivariate and One-way Analysis of variance (F-ratios) were employed in the analyses of this research. The major findings of this study are: firstly, the univariate and bivariate results indicate that there is low-perception about being an aged person. Secondly, One-way Analysis of variance (F-ratios) show that the study location, age category, means of livelihood; and usual place of residence (Oyo and Lagos state rural settings) have significant influences on perception about being an aged person in South-Western Nigeria. Thus, the paper recommends the following: firstly, that aged persons from Lagos state who are 50-79 years should begin to admit from now that they are 'elderly people' despite the fact that some of them are retired and still physically active. Secondly, the salary earners who are still working as well as Lagos-rural dwellers should urgently assume their roles as elders both in the families and in larger Nigerian society.

Key Words: Perception, An aged person, F-ratios, South-Western Nigeria

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1. Background to the Study

Basically, the perception about being an aged person had influence the societal behavioral attitudes, expectations towards aged people; their well-being and challenges of coping with ageing process (Pasupathi & Löckenhoff, 2002; Levy, 2003; Levy & Myers, 2004).

Several studies in the field of ageing have dealt with individual differences in perception about being an aged person in most part of Western cultures, but there is increasing evidence which indicate that there are also differences in ageing across other cultures (Arnhoff, Leon, & Lorge, 1964; Giles et al., 2000).

In actual-fact, the social representations theory which posits that ageing within a particular culture is indeed a form of shared cultural representation (Moscovici, 1984, 1988). These embraced the ideas, values, and customs that are related to ageing and usually regarded by members of the society as if they were established reality.

Obviously, perception about being an aged person is multi-dimensional in nature (Hummert, 1990). Of-course, this constitute both positive and negative features; and a combination between accurate pictures of age-related changes which has dented views about the aged people (Hummert, 1990; McTavish, 1971;

Heckhausen, Dixon, & Baltes, 1989; Kite, Stockdale, Whitley, & Johnson, 2005).

It is interesting to note that healthy ageing is connected with predictable biological changes (Digiovanna, 2000). In effect, there are systematic age disparities in physical abilities and cognitive performance (Christiansen & Grzybowski, 1999; Salthouse & Davis, 2006).

Moreover, perception about being an aged person depicts such biologically based differences in functioning, which might portray comparatively little variation across cultures. Nevertheless, age-related changes in socio-emotional features and social status, in contrast, seem to rely less on biology and more on motivational priorities as well as societal roles (Fung, Rice, & Carstensen, 2005; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). The emphasis here is that perceptions of age related changes with earlier characteristics may thus show a greater dimension of cross-cultural variation.

Previous studies have majorly offered tangible explanations for intercultural differences in perceptions of ageing. For instance, early studies which were carried out on socioeconomic predictors show that there are associations of higher levels of economic development and industrialization with less favorable attitudes towards ageing and a lower societal status of elderly people (Simmons, 1945; Arnhoff, et al., 1964; Maxwell, 1970; Bengtson, Dowd, Smith, & Inkeles, 1975; Palmore & Manton, 1974).

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According to Modernization theory propounded by Cowgill, (1972; 1986); he argued that such findings which indicate a shift towards industrialized means of production will lower the societal status of elderly people, devalue their

experience-based knowledge, shatter the traditional extended families network through urbanization, and shift control over the means of production from family elders to industrial entities. Although, this argument was reasonable, however, modernization theory has been criticized as an oversimplification (Quadagno, 1982). To be specific, another finding shows that modernization theory fails to consider cross-cultural disparities in values and belief systems that may picture how a given culture responds to advanced socioeconomic development (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

Also, Comparative studies have been conducted between Eastern/Asian and Western cultures on the influence of cultural values and beliefs on ageing attitudes (Giles et al. 2003). This study indicate that Asian societies are influenced by Confucian values of filial piety and the practice of ancestor worship which tends to promote positive views about ageing and high respect for elderly people (Davis, 1983; Sher, 1984; Ho, 1994; Sung 2001). By comparison, the Western societies were tailored to be youth-oriented and to hold more negative views about the ageing process and the elderly (Palmore, 1975). Incidentally, empirical evidence for the proposed East-West differences is obviously unavailable.

At this juncture, it is vital to note that some studies have found support for the finding that attitudes towards ageing are more positive among Asians when compared with Western cultures (Levy & Langer, 1994; Tan, Zhang, & Fan, 2004). However, some studies indicate negative attitudes towards ageing among Asians when compared with Western cultures while other studies failed to find any visible cultural differences (Giles et al., 2000; Zhou, 2007; Harwood et al., 2001; Sharps, Price-Sharps, & Hanson, 1998; Boduroglu, Yoon, Luo, & Park, 2006; Ryan, Jin, Anas, & Luh, 2004; Chappel, 2003; McCann, Cargile, Giles, & Bui, 2004).

Evidence from above findings indicated that socio-economic development,

cultural values and beliefs are expedient for cross-cultural differences in ageing attitudes. However, there are other vital aspects of ageing attitudes that were not covered in the previous studies. To be specific, the majority of previous studies on this subject included small groups of countries with pair-wise comparisons. The exceptions include the following: one study that compared five countries; four studies that each compared six countries; (Harwood et al., 2001; Arnhoff, Leon, & Lorge, 1964; Bengtson, Dowd, Smith, & Inkeles, 1975, Harwood et al., 1996; Giles et al., 2003) and lastly, one study that compared 11 countries (Giles et al., 2000).

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The major inferences that can be drawn from previous literature are obviously limited because various studies employed wide measurements which include: open-ended descriptions of older and younger adults; and macro-economic markers of older adults' societal status (Bodoruglu et al., 2006; Palmore & Manton, 1974). The implication is that it was tedious to integrate findings into a generalized cross-cultural pattern of ageing attitudes.

Exceptionally, cultural disparities in values and beliefs are majorly perceived from broad classifications into Eastern versus Western countries (Giles et al., 2000; 2003). This approach enabled us to see the differences among individual Asian cultures but ignores cultures that are not classified as Eastern or Western. This invariably confounds cross-cultural differences in socio-economic factors and value systems but underscores the vital aspects of cultural values that are most relevant in shaping perceptions of ageing. Decades of cross-cultural studies

have produced comprehensive data that culminate culturally shared values and aggregate psychological features across diverse cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994; Leung & Bond, 2004; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; McCrae et al., 2005; Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995).

In spite of the above findings, the erudite scholars in developed countries have not adequately linked cross-cultural differences with ageing perceptions.

In Nigeria, the subject of perception about being an aged person has been scantily researched by the scholars of ageing. However, other aspects of ageing have been extensively explored by the researchers in this field. To be specific, a study conducted among 277 respondents in Yoruba community of South-western Nigeria show that the perception of ageing has drifted from peaceful retirement to crises-embedded stage of life (Ajala, 2006). In addition, the author reiterated that the changing perception of ageing in Yoruba society is connected with economic, cultural and psychological challenges. Nevertheless, behavioral references show that there is no stipulated age for individuals to reach before they can be recognized as an old person. Although, the Yoruba people were of the opinions that for an individual to function properly as an aged person; he or she must be 50 years and above, yet there are some individuals in the society who are less than 50 years old, but by responsibility and family roles, they act as old persons. At this point, it is essential to note that modernization; urbanization and industrialization have drastically changed the perception of aged people from their traditional and social leadership roles in Yoruba society (Ajala, 2006).

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Another recent prominent study has indicated that an aged person is someone who has reached the age of 50 years and above (Akanbi, Fadayomi, Wusu, Tinuola, Amoo, Gbadebo, Olawole-Isaac & Adekola, 2015). In-fact, evidence from World Health Organization (2013) reports indicates that 82 percent of people living with blindness belong to age category 50 years and above. This implies that perception about an aged person is traceable to those who are suffering from blindness at the age of 50 years and above. This is buttressed with the fact that World Bank Reports (2012) show that the total years of life expectancy at birth in Nigeria was previously 50 years while recently, it is 50.5 years.

The obvious gap identified from the afore-stated research is that the author omitted in his study the fact that perception about being an aged person in South-western Nigeria varies with study location; age categories; means of livelihood; and usual place of residence. Hence, the omissions of previous authors on this issue in Nigeria are the concerns of this present study.

The justification for this recent study is premised on the fact that the data collected is more two times larger than the previous study conducted by Ajala (2006) in South-Western Nigeria. Another plausible reason for conducting this study is to verify the recent perception about being an aged person in Lagos and Oyo states (South-Western Nigeria).

More importantly, the pertinent questions raised by this study are: firstly, is it reasonable to probably infer that the study location and age category of respondents have significant influences on perception about being an aged person in South-Western Nigeria? Secondly, can we probably admit that perception about being an aged person has significant effect on means of livelihood and usual place of residence?

In-spite of the earlier-stated issues of concern, this paper tries to identify the variables of respondents with significant influences on the perception about being an aged person in South-Western Nigeria.

1.1 Research Methodology

A total sample size of 594 respondents was drawn in this study. Of-course, the reason for the total sample size selected is due to loss of questionnaires in the field. This implies that 307 and 287 respondents were selected in Lagos and Oyo states respectively. The research design employed in the study is quantitative. The quantitative aspect of the study involves the administration of structured face-to-face questionnaire interviews.

The selection was carried out by purposive sampling of eligible respondents (50 years and above in Lagos and Oyo states). However, sampling procedures were done in the following manner: Initially, a total of twenty-four (24) Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected in both areas of study (Lagos and Oyo states respectively).

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In effect, 13 Local Government Areas were drawn from Lagos state while 11 Local Government Areas were drawn from Oyo state. Secondly, from each LGA selected, there were house-listing according to Population and Housing Census (PHC)/National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) house or street numbering in the study areas. Here, it is necessary to note that systematic random sampling was also employed in order to select the number of houses where the old people are residing in Lagos and Oyo states.

Essentially, the lottery methods were employed in random selection of households where the old persons are residing in Lagos and Oyo states. However, in these house-lists, any house that was included initially and later discovered that the eligible respondents are not there, the contiguous house were

considered for interviews even though it was not initially included in the sampling frame. Thirdly, the old persons were picked from the selected households in Lagos and Oyo states. 307 respondents were drawn from 13 LGAs (15 urban, 8 rural settings) in general public/old people's homes in Lagos state while 287 respondents were selected from 11 LGAs (8 urban, 3 rural settings) in general public/old people's homes in Oyo state. The respondents gave their opinions during interviews about their perception on who is an aged person in South-Western Nigeria.

At this juncture, it is vital to note that the rationale behind the choice of Lagos and Oyo states is that the two South-Western states of Nigeria have functioning old people's homes apart from Benin-Edo state.

The statistical analyses of this study were done by using Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 15.0). This research embraced univariate, bivariate and F-ratio analyses. In addition, robust information obtained from face-to-face interviews with respondents was transcribed and content analyzed.

1.1.1 Interpretations of Table 1 on Univariate Analyses

Table 1 displays percentage distribution of respondents' study location, age category, means of livelihood and usual place of residence by perception about being an aged person. According to Table 1, the proportion of respondents who perceived that they are aged persons in Oyo state (58.9 percent) is higher than their counterparts in Lagos state (37.8 percent). However, more proportion of respondents who did not perceive that they are aged persons in Lagos state (62.2 percent) is higher than their counterparts in Oyo state (41.1 percent). The likely reason attributed to the higher perception about being an aged person in Oyo state is that the respondents are retired, physically frail, inactive, and less-energetic; which characterizes ageing (Akanbi, 2014).

With reference to age category, a greater proportion of 50-64 years respondents (51.8 percent) had perception about being an aged person in Lagos state compared to their counterparts in Oyo state with 48.2 percent. In essence, out of the total sample, the 50-64 years respondents who admitted that they are aged persons dominated the study areas. Of-course, this result is in agreement with the

findings of World Bank Reports (2012) and Akanbi (et-al; 2015). Obviously, more proportion of 65-79 years respondents (54.2 percent) revealed perception about being an aged person in Lagos state than those respondents (45.8 percent) in Oyo state. Furthermore, a lesser proportion of '80 years and above respondents' (46.9 percent) showed perception about being an aged person in Lagos state than their counterparts (53.1 percent) in Oyo state. Here, the deduction is that slightly higher proportion of 65-79 years respondents (54.2 percent) indicated perception about being an aged person in Lagos state compared to 80 years and above respondents (53.1 percent) in Oyo state.

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The means of livelihood in the study depict that a greater proportion of respondents who are salary earners (53.8 percent) indicate perception about being an aged person in Lagos state than their counterparts in Oyo state with 46.2 percent. Evidence from Table 1 also show that more proportion of respondents who are business-owners (60.7 percent) had perception about being an aged person in Lagos state than those respondents (39.3 percent) in Oyo state. To be specific, the dominant proportion of respondents who received supports from children (57.6 percent) indicated perception about being an aged person in Lagos state compared to their counterparts in Oyo state with 42.4 percent. In fact, the majority of respondents with pension-earnings (56.5 percent) said that they perceived themselves as aged persons in Lagos state compared to their minority counterparts with 43.5 percent in Oyo state. It can be inferred that a greater proportion of business-owners in Lagos state (60.7 percent) revealed perception about being an aged person compared to salary-earners in Oyo state (46.2 percent).

More importantly, the usual place of residence in the study reveal that a lesser proportion of Lagos-urban respondents (79.8 percent) perceived themselves as aged persons in Lagos state than their counterparts (86.8 percent) in Oyo state. In addition, a higher proportion of Lagos-rural respondents (20.2 percent) indicate perception about being an aged person in Lagos state than their

counterparts (13.2 percent) in Oyo state. The inference from this finding is that more proportion of Oyo-urban respondents (86.8 percent) showed perception about being an aged person than their Lagos-urban counterparts with 79.8 percent in the study.

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Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' study location, age category, means of livelihood and usual place of residence by Perception about being an aged person

Variable	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Perception about being Aged	Lagos state		Oyo state	
Yes	116	37.8	169	58.9
No	191	62.2	118	41.1
Total	307	100.0	287	100.0
Age Category				
50-64 years	172	51.8	160	48.2
65-79 years	90	54.2	76	45.8
80 years & above	45	46.9	51	53.1
Total	307	100.0	287	100.0
Means of livelihood				
Salary	100	53.8	86	46.2
Business	68	60.7	44	39.3
Support from children	34	57.6	25	42.4
Pension earnings	70	56.5	54	43.5
No Response	58	51.3	55	48.7
Total	307	100.0	287	100.0
Usual place of residence				
Urban	245	79.8	249	86.8
Rural	62	20.2	38	13.2
Total	307	100.0	287	100.0

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012

1.1.2 Interpretations of Table 2 on Bivariate Analyses

Table 2 clearly shows the cross-tabulation of perception about being an aged person on study location, age categories, means of livelihood and usual place of residence of respondents.

With reference to study location, a higher proportion of respondents from Oyo state (58.9 percent) perceived that they are aged compared to their Lagos state counterparts (37.8 percent). The higher perception about being an aged person in Oyo state is attributed to the fact that the respondents are already experiencing the following symptoms of ageing which include: frailty, inactivity, weakness, sickness; loss of memory and inability to do hard work (Akanbi, 2014). This result is in agreement with univariate findings (Table 1).

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The age categories indicate that major proportion of 80 years and above respondents (62.5 percent) perceived that they are aged people compared to their counterparts who are 65-79 years (57.2 percent) and 50-64 years (39.2 percent) respectively. Evidence from a study show those dominant 80 years and above respondents who perceived that they are aged people are characterized by diminishing physical activity, memory loss, serious sickness, abandonment, loneliness, little appetite for food, eye-defect, fulfillment and overtime-life (meaning the aged can die at any time in this age bracket). According to the author, they are known as ‘oldest people’. Some of the aged in these categories

(80 years and above) cannot even walk about again due to loss of physical strength (Akanbi, 2014).

The means of livelihood depict those respondents who are pension earners (37.1 percent) have a higher perception about being an aged person compared to their counterparts who depend on salary (26.3 percent), business (22.3 percent) and support from children (13.5 percent). This implies that those respondents who are pension earners with higher perception about being an aged person are retired and belong to age category 65 years and above.

The usual place of residence reflects that the highest proportion of respondents came from Oyo state rural setting (100 percent) compared to their counterparts from Lagos state rural setting (64.5 percent); Oyo state urban setting (52.6 percent) and Lagos state urban setting (31.0 percent) respectively. The obvious reason why the highest proportion of respondents came from Oyo state rural setting might be due to the fact that Oyo state is still urbanising presently (Akanbi, 2014).

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Table 2: Cross-tabulation on Perception about being an aged person with respect to study location, age categories, means of livelihood, and usual place of residence of respondents

Variables	Perception about ageing	
Location	Yes (%)	Total
Lagos state	116 (37.8)	307
Oyo state	169 (58.9)	287
Total	285 (48.0)	594
Age Group		
50-64 years	130 (39.2)	332
65-79 years	95 (57.2)	166
80 years & above	60 (62.5)	96
Total	285 (48.0)	594
Means of livelihood		
Salary	49 (26.3)	186
Business	25 (22.3)	112
Support from children	8 (13.5)	59
Pension earnings	46 (37.1)	124

No Response	113 (100.0)	113
Total	285 (48.0)	594
Usual place of residence		
Lagos/Urban	76 (31.0)	245
Lagos/Rural	40 (64.5)	62
Oyo/Urban	131 (52.6)	249
Oyo/Rural	38 (100.0)	38
Total	285 (48.0)	594
Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012		

1.1.3 Interpretations of Table 3 on F-ratio results

As previously discovered in Tables 1 & 2 findings, there are interactions of study location, age category, usual place of residence, and means of livelihood of respondents with perception about ageing. However, at this point in time, it is expedient to undertake the analysis of Table 3 (one-way Analysis of variance) in order to confirm whether there are or not significant relationship of the selected socio-demographic variables with perception about being an aged person in South-Western Nigeria.

Nevertheless, Table 3 brought insight into the significant relationship between the afore-stated selected socio-demographic variables and perception about being an aged person in the study areas.

According to study location, we discovered that at $p=0.000$, there is a very high-significant interaction between study location (Oyo state) and perception about being an aged person. This implies that there is a strong perception about being an aged person in South-Western Nigeria.

With reference to age category, we observed that at $p=0.000$, there is a very high-significant relationship between age-category (respondents who are 80 years and above) and perception about being an aged person. This finding is in support of Table 2 cross-tabulation result.

Further evidence from Table 3 showed that at $p=0.000$, there is a very high significant association between the means of livelihood and perception about being an aged person. Here, this implies that pension-earning has a high significant influence on perception about being an aged person. This variance result is in agreement with that of cross-tabulation (Table 2) in the study. However, this finding is a partial justification of hypothesis two of the study.

At 5 percent level of significance, the usual place of residence (that is, at $p=0.000$) has a very strong significant relationship with perception about being an aged person. The emphasis is that Oyo state rural respondents have a very strong influence on perception about being an aged person in the study. The previous univariate and bi-variate findings (Tables 1 & 2) are in concordance with this variance result.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA showing the Perception about being an aged person by study location, age category, means of livelihood and usual place of residence of respondents

Selected socio-demographic Variables	Perception about ageing		
	D f	F-ratio	Sig
Study-Location	1	27.599	0.000

Age Group	2	10.026	0.000
Means of livelihood	3	9.925	0.000
Usual place of residence	3	29.889	0.000
Source: Field Survey, 2012			

1.1.4 Summaries of findings

Evidence from univariate findings showed that there is a higher perception of being an aged person in Oyo state than Lagos state. The respondents with age category 65-79 years indicate higher perception about being an aged person than those respondents who are 80 years and above in the study. In-fact, more proportion of respondents who are business-owners revealed perception about being an aged person than their counterparts who are salary earners. Moreover, a greater proportion of Oyo-urban respondents indicate perception about being an aged person compared to their Lagos-urban counterparts.

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The results from bivariate analyses depict the following: firstly, that Oyo state respondents show a higher perception about being an aged person than their Lagos state counterparts. Secondly, more proportion of respondents who are 80 years and above indicate perception about being an aged person than those respondents who are 65-79 years in the study areas. Thirdly, a greater proportion of respondents with pension-earnings revealed perception about being an aged person compared to their counterparts with salary-earnings. In addition, more

proportion of Oyo-rural respondents indicated perception about being an aged person compared to their Lagos-rural counterparts.

The F-ratio results of this study revealed the following: Firstly, that Oyo state has significant influence on perception about being an aged person. Here, the emphasis is that South-Western Nigerian society has strong influence on perception about being an aged person. In essence, this result corroborate the previous findings of Pasupathi & Löckenhoff, 2002; Levy, 2003; Levy & Myers, 2004 which posits that the societal behavioral attitudes, expectations towards aged people had influence on ageing perception in the Western societies. Secondly, there is a highly significant interaction between 80 years and above respondents and perception about being an aged person in the study locations. Thirdly, pension-earning has a high significant relationship with perception about being an aged person. Lastly, Oyo rural setting has a significant influence on respondents' perception about being an aged person in the study.

1.1.5 Conclusions

The study on perception about being an aged person in South-western Nigeria is concluded as follows: Firstly, Oyo state as a study location as well as 80 years and above respondents have significant influences on perception about being an aged person. Secondly, pension-earnings and Oyo rural settings have significant effects on perception about being an aged person in the study. In essence, this paper clearly show that the study location, age category, means of livelihood and usual place of residence have strong interactions with perception about being an aged person in South-western Nigeria.

1.1.6 Recommendations

This recent study offers the following recommendations: firstly, that aged persons from Lagos state who are 50-79 years should begin to admit from now that they are 'elderly people' despite the fact that some of them are retired and still physically active. Secondly, the salary earners who are still working as well as Lagos-rural dwellers should urgently assume their roles as elders both in the families and in larger Nigerian society.

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