

## Link People from Different Age Together: Attitude and Behavior Changes in Inter-Generational Interaction Program

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**Abstract :** Background: Changes in population structure and modernization have left traditional channels of achieving intergenerational solidarity in crisis. Policies and projects purposefully structuring intergenerational interaction are regarded as effective ways to enhance positive attitude changes between generations. However, few inter-generational interaction program has put equal emphasis on promoting positive changes on both attitude and behavior across generational groups. Objective: This study evaluated the effectiveness of an intergenerational interaction program which aims to facilitate positive attitude and behavioral interaction between both young and old individuals in Hong Kong. Method: A quasi-experimental design was adopted with the sample of 150 older participants and 161 young participants. Among 73 older and 78 young participants belong to experiment groups while 77 older participants and 84 young participants belong to control groups. The Age Group Evaluation and Description scale (AGED) was adopted to measure attitude toward young people by older participants and the Chinese version of Kogan's Attitude towards Older People (KAOP) as well as Polizzi's refined version of the Ageing Semantic Differential Scale (ASD) were used to measure attitude toward older people by the younger generation. The interpersonal behaviour of participants was assessed using Beglgrave's behavioural observation tool. Six primary verbal or non-verbal interpersonal behaviours including smiles, looks, touches, encourages, initiated conversations and assists were identified and observed. Findings Effectiveness of attitude and behavior changes on both younger and older participants was confirmed in results. Compared with participants from the control group, experimental participants of elderly showed significant positive changes of attitudes toward the younger generation as assessed by AGED ( $F=138.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, older participants showed significant positive changes on three out of six behaviours (visual attention:  $t=2.26$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; initiate conversation:  $t=3.42$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; and touch:  $t=2.28$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). For younger participants, participants from experimental group showed significant positive changes in attitude toward older people (with F-score of 47.22 for KAOP and 72.75 for ASD,  $p<.001$ ). Young participants also showed significant positive changes in two out of six behaviours (visual attention:  $t=3.70$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; initiate conversation:  $t=2.04$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). There is no significant relationship between attitude change and behaviour change in both older ( $p=0.86$ ) and younger ( $p=0.22$ ) groups. Conclusion: This study has brought practical implications for social work. The effective model of this program could assist social workers and allied professionals to design relevant projects for nurture intergenerational solidarity. Furthermore, insignificant results between attitude and behavior changes revealed that attitude change was not a strong predictor for behavior change, hence, intergenerational programs against age-stereotype should put equal emphasis on both attitudinal and behavioral aspects.

**Keywords :** attitude and behaviour changes, intergenerational interaction, intergenerational solidarity, program design

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