

Exploring Intergenerational Storytelling, Community and Culinary Arts Among Aging Populations: A Narrative Review

Pruthuvie Chandradhas, HBS Sc Candidate and Andrea Charise, PhD
Department of Health and Society, University of Toronto Scarborough

INTRODUCTION

There will be a rising increase of Canada's aging population. What programs/services and knowledge exists beyond a biomedical paradigm to support them?

This project is an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary representation of social justice, food narratives, cooking interventions, wellbeing, intergenerational storytelling, community, and experiences of aging.

Cookbooks have been studied in historical contexts, but now have a push for its social justice connection, specific to women's histories.

RATIONALE

Research Question:

What is the nature of the relationship of IGS, Aging, Cooking, and Wellbeing?

Are there any studies that present all of these themes?

METHODS

- Databases used were: **Humanities Index, Humanities International Index, Google Scholar, Web of Science**

- Grouped into five search strings, which increased in specificity (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Inter/Multigenerational, Community, Family**
- Aging, older, adults**
- Storytelling, Digital Storytelling Narratives, And Oral History**
- Cookbook, Cooking, recipes, food, culinary**
- Wellbeing, health**



OBSERVATIONS/RESULTS

Theme 1: Intergenerational Storytelling & Aging

Arts and humanities approach to experiences of aging. IGS is an emerging field and overall more research needs to be done in the field. There is a lack of cross cultural representation, and intersectional analyses (Charise et al., 2022).

Subtheme A: Oral History as Storytelling

Oral history is strongly interconnected to intergenerational communication, and is seen in the discipline of life course development. It is crucial to processing change and intergenerational storytelling (Chandler, 2005)

Subtheme B: Digital Storytelling

Life storybook review and reminiscence based therapies as the digital storytelling method. Can be used to express emotions and identity. Has been proven to positively affect wellbeing, quality of life, cognition and mood. For those with dementia/Alzheimer's it can enhance family communication, person-centered care, and stimulate memories (Stargatt et al., 2022).



Theme 2: Indigenous Knowledge & Community

Preserves culture which supports community and personal wellbeing. Explored Nak'azdli Whut'en (First Nations community in Canada) experiences of aging through intergenerational digital storytelling workshops to co-create digital stories with elders and children, as a form of preserving cultural legacies and Indigenous knowledge. Identity and preservation of culture as a factor for wellbeing (Freeman et al., 2020).



Theme 3: Food & Community

Narrative approach using cookbooks to community food work practices (can be in the form of social services and programs). Narrative approach tackles social justice goals, critical pedagogy, intersectionality, community and building resilience. (Guthrie, 2019)



Subtheme A: Psychosocial Wellbeing

Community based cooking interventions showed positive results on self-esteem, quality of life, affect/mood, and socialization (Farmer et al., 2018)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Primary Research:
Intervention of a community cookbook through intergenerational digital storytelling on aging Tamil women in the GTA

It will address:

- Cross-cultural representation
- Multigenerational households and relevant community structures
- Sense of belonging wellbeing
- Preservation of history, culture, and cooking/culinary art

REFERENCES

- Freeman, S., Martin, J., Nash, C., Hausknecht, S., & Skinner, K. (2020). Use of a Digital Storytelling Workshop to Foster Development of Intergenerational Relationships and Preserve Culture with the Nak'azdli First Nation: Findings from the Nak'azdli Lha'hut'ien Project. *Canadian Journal on Aging / La Revue Canadienne Du Vieillessement*, 39(2), 284-293. doi:10.1017/S0714980819000588
- Chandler, S. (2005). Oral history across generations: age, generational identity and oral testimony. *Oral History*, 33(2), 48-56. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40179869?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Farmer, N., Touchton-Leonard, K., & Ross, A. (2018). Psychosocial Benefits of Cooking Interventions: A Systematic Review. *Health Education & Behavior*, 45(2), 167-180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198117736352>
- Charise, A., Pang, C., & Khalfan, K. A. (2022). What is Intergenerational Storytelling? Defining the Critical Issues for Aging Research in the Humanities. *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 43, 615-637. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10912-022-09735-4>
- Stargatt, J., Bhar, S., Bhowmik, J., & Al Mahmud, A. (2022). Digital Storytelling for Health-Related Outcomes in Older Adults: Systematic Review. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 24(1), e28113. <https://doi.org/10.2196/28113>
- Xu, L., Fields, N. L., Highfill, M. C., & Troutman, B. A. (2023). Remembering the Past with Today's Technology: A Scoping Review of Reminiscence-Based Digital Storytelling with Older Adults. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(12), 998-. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13120998>
- Guthrie, J. (2019, March 29). A Cookbook Approach to Building Community: Applying a Narrative Lens to Food Work (Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Social Work). Retrieved from <https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/items/392949d8-c80f-4070-8ffe-821ec80c3fd5>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank **Kathryn Barrett** (Library Liason for Dept of Health and Society), who provided so much support and guidance through this process. Her expertise was crucial to this project.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Professor **Andrea Charise** (Associate Chair of Research, Dept of Health and Society) who inspired me to pursue this project, and provided her mentorship and support for my ideas.