

Speaking of Research

South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership Podcast

Series 1 – Episode 5 – Yifan Ge

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SPEAKERS

Catherine McDonald, Yifan Ge

Catherine McDonald 00:03

Hello and welcome to Speaking of Research, a podcast from the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership. I'm Catherine McDonald and in this first series of our podcast, we're talking about impact and how researchers can achieve it. We're recording at the amazing Cumberland Lodge, and we're speaking to doctoral researchers about their research, who might benefit from it, and how they hope it will make a difference. In this episode, I'm joined by Yifan Ge from the University of Southampton. Yifan, can you tell me a bit more about your research?

Yifan Ge 00:37

Okay, so due to the increasing life expectancy and the lower fertility rate, the aging population problem has been very seriously across the world. The UK has no expectation for that. In order to solve this problem, the UK government intended to increase the state pension age, which is the early stage the individual can claim for their state pension. The Pension act 1995 has first announced that the women's state pension age would be increased gradually from 2010, and after that, the state pension act 2011 has actually accelerate this process to make the women's state pension age achieve 65 in the end of 2018, following that, the SPA reached the 66 in the end of 2020. These changes to the state pension age have caused a long running campaign known as women against state pension inequality, or called WASPI, which mainly involves women born in the 1950s cohort, argued that there was a poor communication between them and the Department of Work and Pension. Many of them say that they are unaware of the change until they reach their 60 or the policy starts to take effect, so it is really difficult for them to re-enter into the labour market or adjust their original retirement plan or pension plan. In response, they are running campaigns to require non-mean-tests compensation from the government. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman showed there was a delay in communication and lack of tailored strategies to inform the affected women about the relevant pension policy reforms. So altogether, more than 1.5 million women has been impacted by this change, the statistics has shown that. In the future, there is obviously will be further increase in the state pension age to deal with the following, more seriously population aging problem. So, it is crucial to develop and tailor information strategy and to identify the specific subgroup of women who have been disadvantaged. So if we do that, To one side we can provide reasonable compensation strategy for the woman who has been impact, or a avoid future negative impact for the further generation of women. My research is mainly based on that. We will identify, among the 1950s cohort, the women who were the first generation to be

affected by the increase in pension age. We aim to find the most disadvantaged subgroups and examine their socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

Catherine McDonald 01:16

And how are you actually conducting your PhD? What methods? What research methods are you using?

Yifan Ge 03:45

Okay, my PhD is a purely quantitative project based on data analysis that is first things. And it's unique, because my research is not only based on the survey data, which the datasets like they ask people question and collecting data, it's ideal data that will use for research purposes. My project involve administrative data also is likely to allow me to conduct data analysis for larger scope, there is more reliable information. So yeah. And to be specific, to the methodology, there will be more like from the quantitative economic, the empirical methodology, like structural equation modelling or difference in difference or fixed effect model, yeah, that's answers are more academic one.

Catherine McDonald 04:37

And what new insights do you think your PhD will provide? And then, who do you think will benefit from those insights? Who do you hope will benefit?

Yifan Ge 04:46

First question, I will say, I hope my research outcome can benefit for the women who has been impacted by the increase in state pension age, because the previous research related to this issue has always focus on what's the impact it is. For example, is this impact women's quality of life? Is that impact for their labour market participation rates? But my research more tends to focus on who has been impacted most. We will focus on the certain groups of people that have been impacted. Because the previous findings, just show that the woman is lower education, without their partner, or they have been previously worked part time or in lower paid occupation, they have been impacting the most because the state pension is really important for them. My project intended to draw a comprehensive and a bigger picture for that (the impacted women). So hopefully, the result of this project will help to inform how potential compensation can be allocated to the WASPI woman, to the women who has already been impacted, or to gather, or develop a more tailored public communication structure for future pension reforms.

Catherine McDonald 06:03

What are you going to do to try and ensure that your research has the impact it should have, it deserves? What are you going to do to try and make that happen?

Yifan Ge 06:12

Okay, so first of all, I'm here to make a podcast, and hopefully more people can pay attention to the WASPI woman and the problem they have been faced. So secondly, I have actually wrote a article that is already published on the on the conversation with my supervisors, because the audience for this website is more for the non-academic people. They can know more about this problem. So, I will also go for the conference or write academic journal, or even provide evidence for the parliament to say, or talk to the policymaker to say how this change could be made and what are the problems. From my perspective, I want this kind of this group of women to be discussed, and I want their voice to be heard. And finally, because my PhD is funded by the Administrative Data Research UK, which is supported by the government or ERSC, they are really focused on this area. They want the administrative data to be useful to find social problems like in the UK. I think I could use the data in my research to let (this problem) be known and the voice from the WASPI women to be know, so hopefully their problem can be seen by the society.

Catherine McDonald 07:33

Brilliant. Yifan I wish you all the best with your research as it continues. Thank you for talking to us today, and thanks to you for listening to this episode of speaking of research from the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership. To find out more, please visit southcoastdtp.ac.uk. Don't forget to subscribe wherever you get your podcasts to access earlier and forthcoming episodes. This was a Research Podcast production.